



Historical Shore *VIEWS*

www.shoreviewhistoricalsociety.org

Shoreview's 59th Year

'preserving today's history for tomorrow'

October 2016

From the President

A Year of Celebration

Aren't birthdays fun? Just like it's hard to believe that I'm turning 70 years of age, it is hard to believe that the Shoreview Historical Society is celebrating its 25th Birthday!



I've been on the SHS Board since the beginning---as we've been challenged to document Shoreview's history for the entire community.

Programs and books, interviews and parades, speakers and tours: we've done many exciting historical things. In com-

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AT HISTORIC LEPAK/LARSON HOME

SHS Celebrates with Open House Oct. 8

SHS will hold an Open House at the former LePak/Larson farm home, located across the street from the Turtle Lake School, from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday Oct 8.

The building has been a key location over the years for SHS events, starting with an Open House when the building was restored more than a decade ago.



The event is in conjunction with the annual Open House at the Johanna Fire Department station, just east of the home, where fire crews will display the latest fire fighting equipment from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

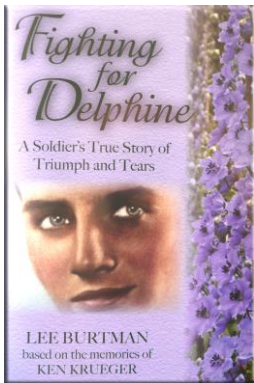
SHS members are reminded of the restored Guerin's gas service station located nearby

which will be viewed from noon to 2 p.m. The Larson home will feature several antique type kitchen ware, furniture and some other memorabilia formerly part of the Larson residence.

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Local Author Lee Burtman to Talk on WW II Soldier's Journey

SHS works to recognize local authors whenever possible and that includes an upcoming program featuring Lee Burtman and her book "*Fighting for Delphine*", a story about a Minneapolis soldier's odyssey in and after World War II.



The talk---scheduled for 7.p.m. Nov 7 at the Shoreview Library---fits in nicely with the celebration of Veterans Day in the community that week

The book highlights the journey of a 19-year-old infantryman, Ken Krueger, with U.S. units in France following the Normandy invasion and across Europe in 1944. He's a military messenger, and soon meets and falls in love with a young local French woman named Delphine.

Their plans for their future hit some obstacles and his military obligation negates a wedding day in France. The war ends and Krueger returns home, yearning to return to Delphine.

The couple's lives take several turns, and much of the book recites their respective families' feelings about a coming marriage---communicating across the ocean.

The book is self-published and the reader can readily see the great amount of research done by the author, carefully collected over the years. Its second edition includes a sequel about Krueger's return to France.

Burtman, a former school teacher, now of Lino Lakes, met Krueger when he was 81, and was so taken by his story she felt it could be made into a book--- and Krueger had hoped that as well. "A Soldier's True Story of Triumph and Tears," as the book's subtitle states, delineates the many heart-aches in the search for love lost.

Our 25th Year is Highlighted in Slice of Shoreview Activities



All Aboard The Ol' Trolley Car. Many former SHS Directors and a few Heritage family members from the past 25 years grabbed a seat on this trolley bannered "Celebrate SHS 25th Year—1991-2016", shown crossing the parade's final block at the Slice of Shoreview festival, just minutes before a huge down pour caused cancelation of the remainder of the parade. Over at the SHS tent exhibit SHS Directors Lu Slaten and Mike Cunningham put together a large layout of historical photos of early Shoreview to attract visitors. In the photo at right, former Shoreview Mayor Jim Chalmers (1992-96) looks over some photos displayed vertically on one of the many rotating stands, easy for reviewing. The photographs, with accompanying captions, helped tell our city's history.



From the President---continued

-memorating SHS's 25th birthday in 2016, we have been celebrating all year !

We started the year with two great programs---one at the Shoreview Library with a discussion of suburbia and Shoreview's example of postwar population growth. On that same weekend, a panel of former Lake Region hockey players entertained attendees with stories of the early days of outdoor hockey.

In April, in one of our largest attended programs, author Paul Maccabee (*John Dillinger Slept Here*) told fascinating tales of the early gangster days in both St Paul and suburbs.

At Slice of Shoreview, a pictorial display from our first book, *Images of Shoreview*, entertained many; the photos also stimulated much conversation. Finally, we will wrap up the year with an open house, and a program with local author Lee Burtman (see stories on page 1).

And guess what? Next year---2017---is Shoreview's 60th Birthday. So let the celebration continue ! Much is planned.

-----Jacci Krebsbach

Don't Forget to Drop By the Shoreview Community Center to



see the most recent SHS display, this time commemorating U.S. military veterans, including information on our next speaker author Lee Burtman on Nov. 7, who writes about one soldier's journey during WW II. Also included is information on the upcoming Open House at the former LePak/Larson farm home (photo, left, and stories on both on page 1.) SHS wants to involve more individuals or groups in the city; if you have an idea for a display with community-wide interest, especially if it has an historical slant, give any SHS director a call. Generally, the exhibits are on display for a month.

Railway Post Office Man Bill Foley Recalls His Days on The Rails

In a millisecond cyberworld where communications are instant, the days of transporting letters across country in a post office rail car are seen now as archaic.

But for the men that worked in Railroad Post Offices (RPOs), they remember it as the fastest means of providing next day mail service---and they did it with dedication and loyalty to the job, and with some perseverance.

Shoreview's Bill Foley, a long-ago RPO employee for 11 years, remembers: "During winter the system usually kept us warm, but sometimes there were cold winter nights---and hot summer nights" inside the railcars.

While Bill rode out on many different railroad routes from the St. Paul depot, he spent much of his RPO career handling the mail run to Noyes, Mn, a tiny community on the Canadian border. He enjoyed the rigorous work.

"The routine was that we would be out from Sunday to Tuesday and then back on Wednesday to Friday on a return trip," he explained---and then five days off, a nice perk of the job. That's when things ran smoothly, there was always those times when snow drifts or other barriers might bring the trains to a stop, making some trips a small adventure.

"There were usually 8 to 10 men in a RPO car (no women were hired); we didn't do much talking while sorting the mail, you had to concentrate," says Bill. The men basically stood up their entire work shift, never mind the constant swaying of the cars and the clickety-clack on the rails.

Another job-plus was that RPO workers were paid 10 cents more per hour than downtown postal employees. The rail cars weren't fancy, having a restroom and a bunk bed for short breaks. And, no, the men weren't served food from the train's dining car. "I carried a lunch---a sandwich on the way up to Noyes and one for the way back. And we always made good coffee," says Bill.

Mail was picked up at the small towns' depots with pouches suspended on rail side poles and hooked by the train passing through and hauled in by a worker. "You had to be quick to pick it off and

bring it back into the railcar, going at high speeds, of course," smiles Bill.

Thankfully, his days on the rails were unlike the olden days, when the train baggage mail rooms were subject to legendary robberies, in both the U.S. and Great Britain; however, Bill says "Many times we carried large sacks of coins and highly-valued registered mail."



RPO workers ready mail for distribution and drop off to towns while on the move on a daily route. Minnesota Historical Society photo.

As a man interested in history, Bill has kept some memorabilia from his RPO days, like a book with daily charts of incoming and outgoing mail, and a chart of 1,200 towns in Wisconsin on the mail routes. RPO workers were subject to exams at least once year, having to demonstrate they knew the schedules, towns and distances along all the rails.

Foley left the RPO in 1967 but stayed with the Post Office, assigned to process mail at the Twin Cities airport for the next 20 years before retiring in 1987. In April, 1970, the last RPO rolled out of the Twin Cities, ending operations.

Of course, U.S. citizens' overland mail is handled differently today, having reorganized with USPS and new technologies moving the massive quantities of mail, and with FedEx and United Parcel Service its major competitors.

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Editor's note: This is another article in a series about Shoreview seniors whose experiences have enriched our Community.

Railway Post Offices---continued



Bill Foley looks over an old listing of Wisconsin towns and rail mail pickup locations.

(The very last surviving railroad post office running on rails between New York City and Washington D.C. was discontinued on June 30, 1977. The last route with a railway post office was actually a boat run that lasted a year longer. The final date it operated with a postmark was September 30, 1978.)

In The Army ; Getting Married

A native of Eden Valley, Mn, Foley had joined the post office upon leaving the U.S. Army following WW II. He was drafted as an 18-year-old in 1944 and was soon shipped to France six months following the allied invasion of Normandy. He linked up with the famed 79th Infantry Division whose troops fought in major battles across Europe, including some where Bill was involved.

The war in Europe ended in 1945 but Bill re-enlisted. "I assumed I was going to be shipped to the Pacific Theater," he says. However, the 79th assumed an occupation role and he remained in Europe, serving some time as a guard at the infamous Nuremburg war trials where he saw up close many of the high ranking Nazi war criminals.

Following a short relationship, Bill married Mireille Boulange, a French girl from a Paris suburb. Returning to America, he attended school for a short time before joining the Post Office.

Bill has lived in Shoreview since 1950, moving later from his first house to the house next door on Island Lake Ave. His granddaughter and husband now live in Bill and Mireille's first home. Mireille passed away six years ago; the couple had been married for more than 60 years.

A big yard with many flowers occupies much of Bill's time now, and he is also a frequent visitor to Shoreview's YMCA, a short distance from his home.

Open House ----continued

Cedar wood shingles were applied in the restoration, as they were popular at the time the house was first built. Many of the old furniture pieces in the home were salvaged from the Owasso Residence, prior to its razing.

The home is now used by the Community Housing Resource Center which provides individual, high quality, and complete assistance through the purchase, financing, refinancing or construction/ renovation phases.

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(marking 25 years in 2016) for its members and friends. SHS board members

are: Carol Gross, Don Follett, Jacci Krebsbach, Bob Minton, Lucena Slaten, Michelle Reichow, John Vadnais and Pam Videen.

To join the society, contact Pam Videen, 4305 Parkview Court, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127. To contribute items to the newsletter contact editor Don Follett, Tel: 651-490-7510 email: DHFCVF29@comcast.net

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Please make your check out to: Shoreview Historical Society, c/o Pam Videen, 4305 Parkview Ct., Vadnais Heights, MN 55127.

A Historical Shore Views subscription is included in dues.

The Shoreview Historical Society was born in 1991 when a group of residents took an interest in preserving and recording both the important and informal events in the city, and those that told of our city's growth and the deeds of our people. Since its inception, the society has worked to fulfill that mission. If you are interested in participating on a SHS committee or the operating board, please give any director a call.

Don't Be Ignorant of History

"To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?"-- Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman philosopher, 100 B.C.

