



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

www.RockIslandPreservation.org

Membership Meetings

- November 15, 2016** **Home of Marty Bush, 1225 37th Avenue**
Tuesday
7:00 PM General Business meeting.
- December 6, 2016** **House on the Hill (Weyerhaeuser House) 3052 10th Ave**
Tuesday
6:30 PM Tour of the home, led by Kai Swanson.
See related article.
Note that the meeting is not on our usual 3rd Tues of the month & has an 6:30 start
- January 17, 2017** **Rock Island Police Department, Conference Room**
Tuesday
7:00 PM 1212 5th Avenue
Presentation by former RI Park & Recreation Director William Nelson
"History of Park & Recreation in relationship to the economy and values." See related articles

Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities

FRIENDS OF HAUBERG CIVIC CENTER

Open Houses

Holiday Open House

Friends of Hauberg Civic Center are sponsoring a special new event - an **evening Holiday Open House** at the historic Denkmann-Hauberg House, 1300 24th Street. On **Friday, December 3, from 4-8 pm**, enjoy an evening with FOHCC in the decorated home. There will be light refreshments, music, and docent-led tours beginning on each hour, from 4-7 pm. There is no charge.

19th Century Holiday Open House

The classic **Open House**, which shares the same day and time as Open Houses at the historic homes in Moline, will take place the following **Sunday, December 4, from noon-5 pm**. Santa will be present from 1-3 pm for the delight of children. Light refreshments, music and docent-tours will be there for your enjoyment. This event is free to all.

Membership Appreciation Open House

Sunday, January 15, 1-4 pm

Members of Friends of Hauberg are invited to enjoy light refreshments, renew their membership (or join for the first time) and learn what FOHCC is planning for the coming year.

Thursday Night Local History Series

On a Thursday of each month, beginning in January 2017, Friends of Hauberg is sponsoring a Local History Night with presentations from 7-8 pm.

January features Samantha Crisp, the Augustana Special Collections librarian, talking about and showing John Hauberg's glass plate images.

February will have Linda Anderson talking about Olof Cervin and the World War I Housing Project.

In March, Diane Oestreich will present Historic Rock Island Parks as Seen on Postcards.

Watch for announcements on dates and times from RIPS and FOHCC. "Like" Rock Island Preservation Society and Friends of Hauberg Civic Center on Facebook for these and other events.

EXCITING THE NEXT GENERATION

A heavy handful of RIPS folks attended the Preservation Summit, Iowa's annual preservation conference, in Davenport in mid-September (see the last issue of *RIPS News*). Among the interesting workshops was one on exciting the next generation by introducing them to historic preservation and history at an early age.

Rich Zietflow from the LeMars, IA Historic Preservation Commission talked about a multi-disciplinary approach to ignite an interest in historic preservation by having juniors in high school – both at the public and parochial schools – sign up for a monthly program entitled Youth on Main Street. The program occurs on a day the schools have an “early out.” School credit is given. The year long program covers a variety of related topics:

September – Program overview is inaugurated with a walking tour of the downtown, viewing three public art projects: ice cream cones (LeMars is home to Blue Bunny ice cream.), historic murals, and alley art.

October – Walking tour of downtown LeMars is led by the Historic Preservation Commission focusing on the history of LeMars, historic preservation, restoration, and the architectural elements downtown.

November – Learning more about preservation and restoration by examining how buildings have changed over time. Students tour several buildings to see how adaptive reuse affects second floor and higher floor housing.

December – Students go to the Plymouth County Historical Museum and look at the archives and displays relating to LeMars' newspapers, an early drug store, a family-run baker, and a diner with a representative speaking about their respective business. Additionally, students visit the genealogy room and the preservation commission's photo archive room.

January – A community enhancement project is identified. A plan is created to complete the project.

February – The story of LeMars is revealed. From a discussion of how the town was named to buildings that are no longer there, students are given a thumbnail history.

March, April, and May – Students work on the community enhancement project which is presented at a chamber of commerce coffee hosted by the historic preservation commission for school officials, community members, and parents.

What a great idea! Could something like this work in Rock Island? Teenagers could become avid preservationists while learning more about their community, its history, and the businesses in it.

Submitted by Jaan Sturgis

TOUR OF HOUSE ON THE HILL



C.1960 Postcard image of Weyerhaeuser House, RockIslandPreservation.org

Join us for a private tour of the Weyerhaeuser House, also known as the House on the Hill on the Augustana College campus, on **Tuesday, December 6th at 6:30 PM**. Kai Swanson will guide us through this beautiful Second Empire style mansion. This was the family home of lumber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser, his wife Sarah, and their seven children. He was a co-founder of Weyerhaeuser and Denkmann Lumber Company, now known as the Weyerhaeuser Company, an international forest products company that employs 58,000 people in 18 countries and is a Fortune 200 company. The home is a richly outfitted with a variety of woods with finely carved details and many embellishments.

This tour is not open to the general public and is limited to RIPS and Moline Preservation Society members. There is no charge for the tour. After the tour we will meet up at a nearby bar or restaurant (to be announced) for snacks and social time. Please note that this is a week earlier than our usual 3rd Tuesday of the month meeting and it has an early start time of 6:30 PM.

The most accessible parking is on the east side of the House. Enter on 10th Avenue from 30th Street. Go past the House and parking will be on the right.

This home was featured as a *Postcards from Home* article, which can be found on our website, RockIslandPreservation.org. For additional information and to preview some of the wonderful details of the House, read a Feb. 16, 2014 article by Alma Gaul at the Quad City Times and view the many photographs at http://qctimes.com/lifestyles/home-and-garden/where-the-lumber-baron-lived/article_4cbe0211-b43e-5b31-ae91-fe78c9169bd3.html.

THE VALUE OF PARKS

Join us on Tuesday,
January 17th, 7 PM
Rock Island Police Department,
Conference Room

for a special presentation by retired director of Rock Island Parks and Recreation, William Nelson.

Mr. Nelson will discuss how the changes in the economy and values have affected what people do in their leisure time. The intent of the program is to review economic cycles and our changing values with an eye to the future.

In the past, Mr. Nelson used these predictions to “right size” and develop programming for communities he has worked in. While these trends affect Recreational and Leisure activities and programs, the trends also give clues to what business growth and government policy decisions will be enacted in the future.

The Value of Older Parks

In an article published in 1992 in *Illinois Parks and Recreation Magazine*, Jane and Dean Sheaffer of Dean Sheaffer Landscape Architects, Dixon, Illinois look at the history and elements of older parks and the value of maintaining them in a manner compatible with their original development.

The article asks the question, “*What is the value of older parks these days? You know, the ones that have some of the biggest trees in town, usually majestic red, white or black oaks. Their arms spread long and low in an attempt to touch all horizons of the earth at once. Mid-summer sun sifts through them onto understories of flowers, shrubs and winding grassy glades. In the chilling winter winds they are symbols of strength and longevity... What are the advantages of saving some or all of the original design of an older park? Have they deteriorated beyond repair and can they offer anything to the contemporary park user?*”

As you may expect, the Sheaffers feel there is great value in our older parks and in their article remind us that in the mid-19th and early 20th century it was believed that places of natural beauty would elevate our lives. The “Prairie Style” of landscape architecture espoused by Jens Jensen and O.C. Simonds was coming into its own and these two men designed beautiful parks for small Midwestern cities, including our own. High quality craftsmanship went into building the structures located in these parks and maintaining and restoring these structures continues

to employ local craftsmen and saves natural resources. Generally located in older residential neighborhoods, these parks, when well cared for, lend stability to a neighborhood. And finally, older city parks embody the shared experiences of a community.

This is most certainly true in Rock Island. A downtown public space Union Square sat muddy and uncared for. In 1880 local attorney William Jackson, now remembered as the Father of Rock Island Parks, was asked to become our first park commissioner and take on the challenge of Union Square. He rose to the occasion laying out a grand plan including paved walkways, an ornate band stand, a fountain, sculptures, benches and plantings. Raising money through private donations, he saw the project to completion renaming the park, **Spencer Square**, a place of pleasure, pride and rest for all our citizens. Unfortunately for us today, in 1954 Spencer Square was sold to the federal government and became the site of a new downtown post office and federal building.



When Bailey Davenport died his property was put up for auction and the area known as Bailey’s Pastures was purchased by four local businessmen. These men donated the land to the city for use as a public park later named **Long View Park** (yes, it was originally three words). Nationally recognized prairie style landscape architect O.C. Simonds was retained to design the park which included open vistas, lagoons, waterfalls, drives and walkways. When dedicated in 1908, fifteen thousand people attended the festivities. Over time elements were added and elements were lost. But the shared experience of our community is well represented in the structural elements of the pond at the north end of the park; the Swiss-style Chalet added in 1917; the 3-story shelter and garage building along 17th Street built as a WPA project in 1936; the conservatory built just south of the shelter in 1937; an Olympic-size public swimming pool opened in 1956; and the floral calendar at the corner of 18th Avenue and 17th Street added in 1970. The pair of lions that are such an important element of the park were crumbling beyond repair at the time of the park’s centennial in 2008. Stanley Goldman, who wished to be anonymous at the time, donated high quality replacements.

Douglas Park embodies the shared experience of sport in Rock Island. It was the home of the **Rock Island Independents**, one of the original teams in the National Football League, from 1907 until 1925. Douglas Park was the site of the very first National Football League game on September 26, 1920. The baseball team the **Rock Islanders** also called Douglas Park their home from 1907 until 1937. During the days of the Great Depression, when people had time on their hands but little money for leisure activities, our park board responded by expanding programs and activities

~ Continued on next page

UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

As president of RIPS, I feel that not only are we responsible to help Rock Island grow and develop, but to make sure that part of the plan forward is preserving the strong history and architectural character of the past. In doing this, it is important that we proactively find ways that we can promote preservation in conjunction with the city government and other community organizations.

Two recent examples of this cooperation were the activities that RIPS coordinated at the Longview Park Conservatory and at the Hauberg Civic Center on September 22nd as part of the United Way Day of Caring.

At the Conservatory, more than 20 volunteers from around the community helped remove broken windows and abandoned electrical fixtures, repair and replace deteriorated wood trim and scrollwork, and scrape and repaint the front entrance. At Hauberg, another 20 volunteers helped clean the second floor rooms and hallways, and trim the landscaping and clear overgrowth in the forest. Many of the



volunteers had not previously been familiar with Longview Park and the Hauberg Civic Center but left with an appreciation of these unique Rock Island treasures. Both projects were very successful and we are grateful to all of the volunteers, the United Way, the Friends of Hauberg, and the Rock Island Parks Department for supporting the effort.



If you have ideas for additional projects or would like to be involved in future activities like these, please contact RIPS or attend an upcoming meeting.

*~ President Marty Bush
photos by Marty Bush*

Photos of volunteers working on the Longview Park Conservatory on United Way's Day of Caring, photos by Marty Bush

Continued from prior page "The Value of Parks" ~ for all age groups. Adult baseball expanded to include a record 143 teams. With great pride, city officials announced that Rock Island had the largest municipal adult amateur athletic program of any city of its size in the county.

In 1909 Rock Islanders demonstrated their support for public parks by purchasing "subscriptions" that raised one-third of the money needed to purchase a 23 acre wooded site on east side of the city that would eventually become **Lincoln Park**. Few amenities had been added to the site when in 1920 citizens raised their voices again, this time in opposition to an offer by Augustana College to purchase the underdeveloped land. Although landscape plans were developed, park improvements languished until 1928 when in honor of her late husband Frederick, Mrs. Christine Denkmann offered to pay the full \$45,000.00 cost of an elegant wading pool. Local architect Benjamin Horn designed an accompanying stone dressing room and shelter building. And beyond the pool, a semicircular set of Greek columns completed the installation. The pool closed in the mid-1940s and the pool house sat unused until 1964 when it became home to Genesis Guild. Since that time plays, operas and ballet performances have attracted performers and audiences alike to the park where artists, night skies, landscape, and architecture combine for a unique outdoor theater experience.



*Early View of Pool House and Peristyle,
RockIslandPreservation.org*

These short stories about just four of our older parks illustrate the points that citizens have long championed our parks, that the parks themselves do in fact embody our shared experience, and that indeed there is value in our older parks.

The full article by the Sheaffers can be found at <http://www.lib.niu.edu/1992/ip920927.html>

For additional information check out following the links:

Douglas Park and the Rock Island Independents <http://rockislandindependents.com/>

Spencer Square, Long View and Lincoln marks <http://www.rockislandpreservation.org/category/postcards-from-home/>

Article submitted by Linda Anderson