

THE LINCOLN PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

Established 1955

November, December 2019, January 2020

Hours: 1:00pm-6:00pm, Wednesday & Saturday

1335 Southfield Rd, Lincoln Park, MI 48146

313-386-3137

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also visit our Facebook page



Zoltan Sepeshy in his studio working on the Lincoln Park Post Office mural, *Hauling in the Net*, now located on Beaver Island, Michigan. Credit: Collection of Cranbrook Archives, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research.

Hauling in the Net installed in the Marine Museum, Beaver Island Historical Society. Credit: Photograph by Greg Wittkopp

The Story of the Lincoln Park Post Office Mural ∞ November 13th

The commemoration in August of our Lincoln Park post office opening in 1939 and the celebration of the building's 80th anniversary now leads us to a related anniversary. In early 1940 the post office received artwork from the U.S. Treasury Department's 'Section of Fine Arts', which enlisted artists to create murals for over 1,300 federal post office buildings built during the depression years. Beginning in 1934, the Section of Fine Arts, like the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Federal Arts Project, was one of many government programs created to help bring the country out of the Great Depression.

The Lincoln Park mural, created in egg tempera by artist **Zoltan Sepeshy** in his Cranbrook studio, was entitled "Hauling in the Net". It measured 5 feet by nearly 14 feet across, made to fit the wall where it was installed above the entrance to the postmaster's office, with a cut out center portion to accommodate the door's height – a uniquely common practice.

The mural entered a second life in 1967 when it was removed from the post office and given to the Beaver

Island Historical Society and Marine Museum in northern Michigan. There it has remained on exhibit for 52 years.

Retired postal employee Dorothy Jesue, who was a postal clerk in accounting department in 1967, recalls that the mural "was there one day and gone the next." It's understood that the mural was removed in four sections before traveling to its Beaver Island home. The "why" of its removal remains an unanswered question.

Zoltan Sepeshy became a Director of Cranbrook Academy and later served as its second President, retiring in 1968. He died at age 76 in 1974.

Gregory Wittkopp, Director of the Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research, has been instrumental in working with the Beaver Island Historical Society and overseeing the mural's current extensive conservation project. Greg will be our featured speaker on **Wednesday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m.** when he will share the fascinating story of the mural and artist Zoltan Sepeshy. We hope you can join us then.

Following the completion of the mural's conservation, a high-resolution color image will be taken from which a full-color, full-size replica will be made for installation and a new dedication in its original home here in the old post office -- all with the blessing of our friends at the Beaver Island Historical Society. We will let you know of that date.

VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATION & MILITARY EXHIBIT

Please join us on Monday, November 11 for the annual Veterans Day commemoration ceremony. At that time, we will gather to honor our community's veterans who have served in the armed forces during war time and peacetime.

The ceremony begins at **11:00 a.m.** on the lawn of the museum with the Presentation of Colors conducted by the Lincoln Park High School Junior ROTC. Lincoln Park Mayor Tom Karnes will lead a contingent of local officials. The ceremony concludes with the traditional ringing of the old Goodell School bell in honor or in memory of family members and friends who have served.

A reception will follow indoors with the opening of the museum's newly-updated Military Services exhibit. We are grateful for the response to the Military Service registry that was announced in the last newsletter and for the many folks who made time to respond to that request. Forms are always available at the museum – we need your help to continue to grow this project which aims to accurately reflect the many contributions of the Lincoln Park community to the armed services.

Lincoln Park Coloring Book Project Update

The Jack Hinske Memorial Fund has raised \$700 thus far to help with publishing the new Lincoln Park history coloring book. Additional support is needed to cover the costs of the book which is expected to be printed in early 2020.

Contributions toward this project may be sent to: Lincoln Park Historical Society at 1335 Southfield Road, Lincoln Park, Mi 48146.

Please mention Hinske Memorial in memo line.

Thank You!

Dig out those old things! An antique appraisal clinic will take place at the museum in the spring of 2020, conducted by Detroit's DuMouchelles auction house and gallery, and sponsored by the Lincoln Park High School class of 1970's 50th Anniversary reunion committee. Look for more information in our February newsletter.

Fundraiser Update

The Historical Society's Flea-Arts Market held in September brought in a combined \$1,300 from vendor fees, booth sales and bake sales, and donations for refreshments. We are very grateful for all those who came and shopped, and for the additional 15 vendors who joined us on what was a beautiful fall day - we only wish there had been more foot traffic to benefit all the participating vendors.

The monies collected will help toward several current projects including the Lincoln Park History Coloring book; the restoration of the Sears Clock; the Post Office Mural replica and installation; and the eventual acquisition of a 1950s era juke box for exhibiting our collection of vintage 45s.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

The public is invited to attend all Society events.

Monday November 11, 11:00 a.m.

Annual Veterans Day observance, with bell-ringing ceremony on the museum grounds; an indoor reception and the opening of the museum's new military services exhibit follows. All are invited, with a special invitation extended to our local vets and their families.

Wednesday November 13, 7:00 p.m. – (please note program scheduling shift of First Wednesday evening to the second Wednesday this month only.)

Historical Society Fall Lecture Series: "The Story of the Lincoln Park Post Office Mural" with Greg Wittkopp (see article on first page)

Saturday, November 30 – 6:00 p.m.

Annual City of LP Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony, sponsored by the Lincoln Park DDA. Following the tree lighting, visit Santa and enjoy some hot cocoa in the heated tent on the museum lawn. The museum will be open to the public until 8:00 p.m.

Sunday December 8, 2p.m. - 4p.m. The Lincoln Park Historical Society **ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE.**

The Museum will be closed during the month of January for cleaning and for exhibit/collections work.

Al Petri & Sons Bike Shop

The Petri Bike shop would like everyone to know that they are still very much alive and doing well. The Woodhaven store located on Allen Road continues the legacy of the family business that began on Fort Street 73 years ago, in 1946. First located in a small space at 2080 Fort Street, the business begun by **Alexander Zoltan Petri, Senior** was named “Alts Bike Shop” to avoid confusion with another bike shop in the area. Alex Sr and Joyce Petri kept their home in Ecorse, but spent a good deal of their time in Lincoln Park, where their three sons Al Jr, Don, and John literally grew up with the business. A sister Helen died of polio at age 11.

The name was changed to Al Petri & Sons in the 1950s at the time the business moved a block down Fort Street to a newly-built store at 2176 Fort (see photo). There the shop remained for twenty years until moving to the former Dobbs Furniture store at 2160 Fort Street in 1974, when Al Jr. became President of the corporation.

A testament to the family’s dedication to their business was most exemplified by Al Jr’s wife Pat, who remained involved in operating the family business from a hospital bed installed at the shop while struggling with multiple sclerosis, prior to her death in 2011.

The third generation, Al Jr’s children Debbie VanCleave, Al III, and Diane Dean continue involvement in the business, now extending to their own kids and grandkids. Melanie Petri, married to Al III’s son Jason, has most recently moved from managing the Lincoln Park store to helping run the Woodhaven store.

Al Petri & Sons is today a fifth-generation business, with the involvement of Melanie and Jason’s son Brendan, age 21, and cousin Anthony Kaleugher, age 20. Other family who continue to help with the business include Al III’s daughters, Erin Petri Stoner and Elizabeth Petri Basim, who now manages the Woodhaven store.

A 1957 photo shows the new Al Petri & Sons shop at 2176 Fort Street which opened in 1954. The business moved to the former Dobbs Furniture building next door in 1974.

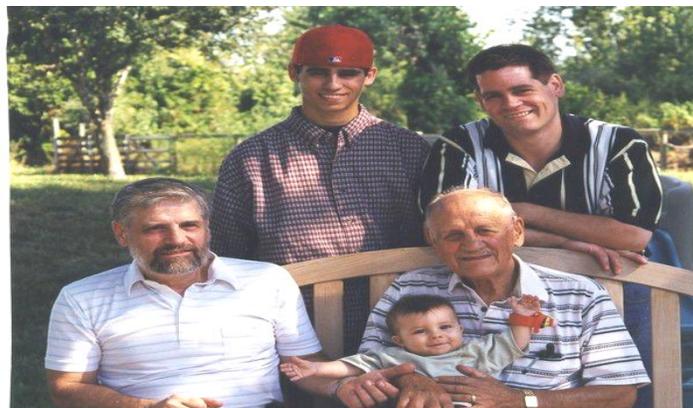


Petri family members have also been extensively involved in bicycling activities outside of the shop and in sponsoring local bike clubs and bike shows. Al Jr. celebrated his 60th birthday in 2001 by taking a leisurely 60-mile bike ride. He has also participated in the One Day Ride Across Michigan covering 153 miles in one day!

The Petri family has for many decades participated in Lincoln Park community affairs and organizations, including the Lincoln Park Exchange Club and the Downtown Development Authority. Al Petri & Sons has also been recognized for their work with handicapped riders and other special needs customers.

The decision to close the shop in August was a heart-wrenching one for the family with their long-established community and loyal customer relationships. Debbie met her husband Don VanCleave when he was hired by the store in the 1970s. Don went on to manage the Lincoln Park store for its most successful years, and was often mistaken for one of the “Als”. When Don passed away in 2014, it was a huge loss both for the family and for the business. It became apparent that there would be difficulty maintaining the two stores. The large size of the Fort Street store at 5800 square feet, and keeping it filled with inventory, became a challenge that could not be overcome. The wisdom of keeping or not keeping the store became self-evident.

Concern that their regular loyal customers might not make the short trek down I-75 has proved unfounded. Longtime customers are even known to travel by bus with their bikes from Lincoln Park to Woodhaven. Remember to continue to give your bike business to Al Petri & Sons and thank them for all they have done for Lincoln Park for over seven decades.



This 1999 photo shows five generations: (seated) Al Petri Junior, Al Petri Senior holding great, great grandson Brendan Petri (now 21); (standing) Brendan’s father Jason Petri, and Al Petri III. (photos courtesy of the Petri family.)

A HUGE THANKS to all those who helped out with the museum grounds clean-up day on a beautiful September Saturday! These volunteer efforts have not gone unnoticed – our Thanks to garden maven **Annette DeMaggio**, in yellow shirt, and her helpers Mike Higgins, Sandi Horst, Larry Jesue, and Jeff Day, with Starr Warnke, Robert French and Tom Riggs doing a fine job with the outside painting work on porch and concrete flower pots. Yay team!



Among recent finds: a cleaning-up of our lower storage areas produced this 36-inch square card table from 1948. The red leatherette top design shows advertising for over fifty LP businesses of the time period. It appears to have been a possible fundraising effort by Lincoln Park V.F.W. Post 552, as the card table also lists the names of past commanders of the post (1930-1948) and the current year officers. Most businesses noted on the table top are gone now, a truly “Lost Lincoln Park”. See our Facebook page for a list of the businesses that are named.



Lincoln Park Historical Society Board 2019-2020

President/Treasurer	Jim Nelson
Vice President/Secretary	Dolores Walker
Trustee/Membership Chair	Alyce Riggs
Trustee	Bea Partridge
Trustee	Jim Mixer

Museum Curator & newsletter editor: Jeff Day
 Director Emeritus: Muriel Lobb

 Board meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 1:30 P.M. The Society Newsletter is published quarterly. To be added to our email list and help save on postage costs, send us an email at: lpmuseum@gmail.com

LOST LINCOLN PARK?

A new *Lost Lincoln Park* book project has entered its first phase of research here amid the museum’s archives. Author **Craig Hutchison** has written the Arcadia “Images of America” book on *Dearborn*, co-written with his wife Kimberly Rising. Most recently, Craig has penned the book *Lost Dearborn* for Arcadia’s History Press. This is a project we are very excited about. When *Lost Lincoln Park* goes on sale later next year, it will provide a unique opportunity to take a look back at our community’s distant and not so distant past, as we enter the centennial of Lincoln Park in 2021.

LP Historical Society Membership

New members, both near and far, are always welcome. Contact us for more information and our reasonable membership rates. Current members who’ve not yet renewed their memberships for 2020 year will see a friendly blue reminder slip tucked in their newsletter mailing.

