

VOLUME X NUMBER I

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LAST FIRE

Walter felt that today was going to be special. They were going to stop by later that afternoon. He had the rest of the morning and some of the afternoon to do whatever he wanted. "Goin' outside, Honey," he yelled upstairs to his wife Rose. His coffee mug sat on the kitchen counter, steaming. He picked it up with both hands and felt the warmth and breathed in the curly steam wafting over his wrinkled face. He and Rose had bought the house seventy-five years ago and raised their five kids. He worked at Ford, she worked at home. He remembered borrowing money from the kid's piggy banks to pay the bills. Remembered putting money back into the piggy banks for college, weddings and even down payments for new houses. Remembered cramming three boys, a cot and bunk bed into a 10 x 10 bedroom. Remembered the girls walking down the stairway in their beautiful prom dresses. Remembered smelling the boys when they came in from playing ball all day at the school. Rose would wave them back outside and hose them off before entry into her spotless home.

Walt slowly walked down the four steps from the kitchen door to the backyard concrete patio. He liked sitting in his shady yard, watching the squirrels and the birds go at it on the bird feeder while drinking his coffee and smoking a Lucky Strike. His frail frame eased back into the padding on the faded Adirondack chair. The animals didn't even notice him as he loaded the feeder up with fresh seed. He admired the lovely flower beds that Rose slaved over. Every bush, every tree and every flower looked like they had just walked out of the barber shop. Rose and Walter were one of the last

original owners on the block. After the war, all the guys bought places in Allen Park. They all lived together on that small block, drank together, pushed each other out of snowdrifts together, had block parties, borrowed sugar, and now had buried each other.

He picked up a few pieces of dry firewood from behind the garage and walked back inside. His cup of coffee slowly cooled on the patio table. One more fire, he thought. That will take the chill out of my bones. He set the logs into the fireplace, opened the flue, and lit the crumpled up newspaper underneath the small logs. One more trip out to the woodpile and Walt was ready to sit back. "Come on down now Rose. I've got a roaring fire going on here." He sank back into the cracked leather sofa and stared at the fire. He could see evergreens and Christmas tree lights around the fireplace. Rose's kitchen filled the entire house with the pleasant smell of Turkey roasting. He poked the fire with a stick and sat back down on the sofa. His eyes grew heavy.

They walked up the broken up driveway to the side door. The landscaping had been overgrown for some time now. The trim and garage could use a good scraping and a couple of coats of paint. The garage door was not quite closed. Two clothes lines waited for someone to hang something out to dry. They twisted the handle on the wooden oak door. It opened easily. It always did. Walking up the stairwell, they paused. "Do you smell smoke?" "Don't be crazy. No one has lived in this house for years." Someone knocks at the door and they go into the foyer to answer. It is the Realtor.

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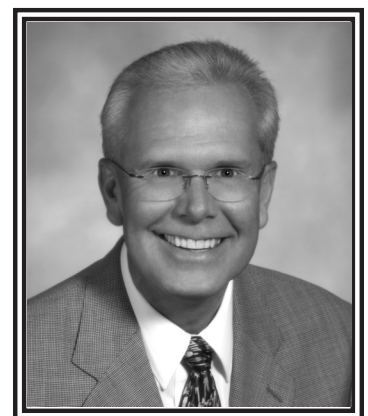
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LYNN KETELHUT
Broker/Owner

ALLEN PARK - PLEASANT PAST, BRIGHT FUTURE



My weakness for old black and white photos of Allen Park and Downriver is insatiable. I found the photo above on a very cool website called Downriverthings.com. Taken in the mid-fifties, the photographer could have been standing on the roof of the Allen Park Bar looking towards Southfield. Does anyone remember the Allen Park Drive-In on the left side of the photo? I spoke with several folks and no one recalls the business. Remember Pure Gasoline (on the right hand side of the photo)? Back then, gas stations had no canopy over the pumps and the pump jockey would come out to your car to pump gas, check your oil, wash your windows and put air in your inner tube filled tires. Remember Cunninghams in the upper right? The corner still looks very similar, but most of the businesses have moved on.

If you enjoy surfing the web, there are several other cool websites to find photos of our area. Try going on [FACEBOOK](https://www.facebook.com) and look for:

Allen Park Michigan...The Allen Parker...Allen Park Page for Complaining...and Downriver Things That Are Not There Anymore.

My website, lynnketelhut.com, also has many old photos, history and fiction about our wonderful City.

My belief, as attested to by the article on the next page, is that young people are growing up in a different world than we did. Their perception of everything is found on the World Wide Web, which is now 25 years old. Allen Park must take that into consideration for our future planning. We should consider having free Internet Wi-Fi access for everyone. What an attraction to our City if families and businesses knew we had that to offer. We could bid out the service to one of the cable companies, cell phone companies or some other utility to provide this service, transferring the cost from an individual's cable bill to their taxes. I feel we should bring in younger people to serve on City Council, to get their perspective of the present and future. It would be great to have a non-elected high school or college student to serve in this position. Most older folks still think the way to get the word out on events is to print up fliers and leave them on countertops throughout the city. I am amazed at how many functions I miss because I never heard about them. We need fresh ideas from some optimistic minds. I see the kids from Mr. Lloyd's Government class in the meetings on a regular basis and I am sure one of them would love to volunteer. Let's shake things up Allen Park.

There is more to life than increasing its speed

~ Mahatma Gandhi

Back in the middle of the twentieth century, when Allen Park was growing faster than potholes in the Spring, folks who had telephone service used dial phones and had party lines. I remember having up to eight families sharing one telephone line. We would pick up the phone and quite often could hear one of our neighbors talking on the phone. We would politely hang up and check a little later to see if they were done. All of Southeast Michigan was one area code (313) and your home number started with two letters. Allen Park was Dunkirk or DU2-2300. All phones were black. A single solitary phone was permanently attached to the kitchen wall or politely sitting on a desk somewhere where the whole family could hear your conversation. Teenagers were limited to a three foot long cord. The solitary black and white television was nestled in a wooden cabinet and you had to get up from your easy chair and walk across the room to change the channel.

In the sixties, most people had converted to a private line and the letters disappeared from the telephone numbers. Pay phone booths were still plentiful (to aid Superman when he needed to do a quick change). Dials were replaced by push buttons (touchtone). Phones also started coming in different colors. Answering machines would take messages while you were gone. Wealthy CEO's had portable phones in a bag that they could use while driving their cars. Computers, FAX machines and cell phones were non-existent to the common man. Color TV was the rage and just perfect for highlighting the wild clothes we wore back then.



The eighties came and we all had call-forwarding, call-waiting and three-way calling. Phones were installed in your car with a wire antenna strung up on your roof. It cost thirty-five cents a minute, so conversations were kept short and sweet. Pagers were popular. Phones were in almost every room in the house...even the bathroom! Realtors printed an inch-thick book with all of the listings that were available for sale. It was published every two weeks. There was one black and white photo of the house for agents and buyers to look at. We advertised in the paper and held open houses on Sundays to market our listings.

In the nineties, car phones became cell phones and we were free to walk around with our phones. FAX machines with shiny paper made it possible to no longer have to hand-deliver documents for signatures. Computers became common in both home and office. We no longer needed to pull the antenna out of the phone for reception as flip-phones yanked signals out of the air with greater clarity. Realtors stopped printing the thick MLS books and converted the multi-list to the Internet. The computer hogged over half of our desk space. Pagers disappeared in the blink of an eye. Digital cameras became cheap.

We all survived Y2K and technology moved at the speed of light. Teenagers now carry small cell phones in their back pocket. Smartphones have sadly become a big addiction. Most of us are tied into the World Wide Web in one way or the other 24/7. Facebook has kids believing they have 659 "friends." I can now list a house, shoot photos with my phone, enter the listing onto the multi-list and download over 25 color photos of the house all within hours. Buyers are instantly notified if something comes up that they are looking for via e-mails. Televisions are now taking up half of the living room wall space and are in every room. People meet for lunch and talk on their cell phones to friends who are not at the table while eating. Everyone at the lunch table is busy staring at their phones, ignoring the people they are dining with.

Soon, buyers will be able to tour a house for sale while manipulating a small flying camera through each room. Folks will buy houses without even walking through them. Allen Park will have free Wi-Fi for anyone within our borders. Cars will steer themselves while we focus on our devices. Our biggest fear would be having the grid taken down by some hacker in Eastern Europe. Very sad...and strange. Anybody know where Superman changes clothes now?

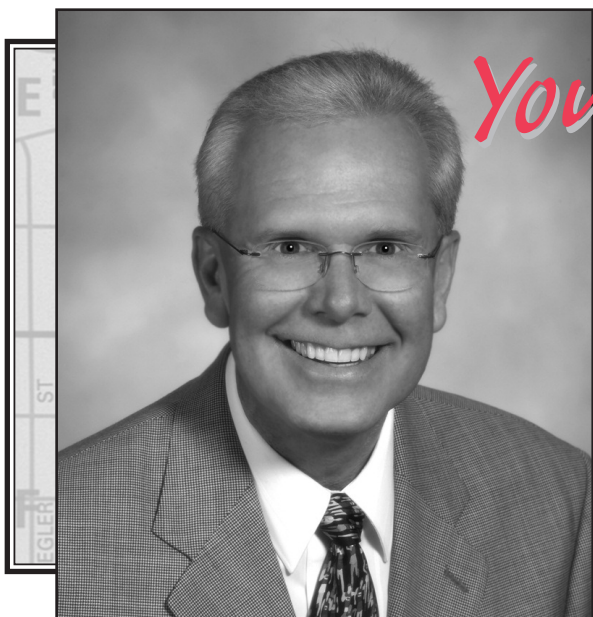
ALLEN PARK SALES RESULTS

Over \$12,000.00 was added to your homes equity jar last year. The handy chart below shows that for the last two years straight we have observed solid growth in our real estate market. Not exactly a long-term trend, but still mildly satisfying.

YEAR	# OF HOMES SOLD	AVERAGE SALES PRICE	PRICE CHANGE
2005	330	\$150,392.00	+\$1,660.00
2006	251	\$138,681.00	-\$11,711.00
2007	246	\$127,360.00	-\$11,321.00
2008	310	\$103,691.00	-\$23,669.00
2009	349	\$73,680.00	-\$30,011.00
2010	341	\$69,993.00	-\$3,687.00
2011	376	\$66,187.00	-\$3,806.00
2012	422	\$68,543.00	+\$2,356.00
2013	470	\$80,827.00	+\$12,284.00

I believe we will see even greater growth in 2014. Our number of homes sold volume has also increased dramatically. In the last two years we have observed the largest number of homes sold since I started tracking sales 28 years ago. People are fighting to get into Allen Park. Foreclosures and Short Sales are slowly disappearing. Cheap houses are far and few between, pushing flippers and landlords out of the market. Our assessments should be rising this year, adding a little more income to our City's budget. Our housing inventory has been running around 70-100 homes for sale at any given time, compared to over 250 homes for sale at the peak of the foreclosure crisis. Sellers now have the advantage over buyers in this current market. Smart Buyers realize that interest rates will not stay this low for long, prices are rising and now is the time to make their move. It is much cheaper to buy than rent now-a-days. No one wants to have a house payment when they are retired. Start young, pay it off and rest easy.

If you wonder what your house is worth, give me a call and I would be happy to come out and give you an estimate. I am always thankful when you mention my name to anyone looking to buy or sell real estate in the Downriver and Allen Park area. Referrals keep me in business. Thank you for taking your time to read my Newsletter!



You can count on me!

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