

THE ALLEN PARK INSIDER

VOLUME XI NUMBER I

Published by LYNN KETELHUT

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Time Travel

We were taking a Sunday drive and decided to go Downtown Detroit and look around. First stopped by The Heidelberg Project on the East side of town (Conant and Heidelberg). Temps were in the upper thirties, sunny and calm, so we got out of the car and took a stroll to admire Tyree Guyton's abstract art spread out over the two block area. Sadly, over half of the houses in the project, built before the great depression, had been torched by an arsonist. A half-dozen college age urban explorers chatted with us for a few minutes. After I gave them directions for how to get to the old Packard Plant, they dashed back to their cars and sped off.

Next, we drove up Conant towards Jefferson and swung by the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, another old hangout. Used to go in every Tuesday at 6:00am to do food prep for the breakfast shift. I would leave around 10-11 after chopping buckets of onions, making fifty-pound batches of granola and serving food. Seeing how so many people depend on projects like this, just to survive, gave me a real appreciation of how well I have it. Over five years I kept doing my shift. I learned so much working at the kitchen. They are doing amazing work down there.

Belle Isle was our next destination. A block away from the entrance to the Isle, we turned onto Field Street and parked the car in front of a vacant lot. I told Jill that my very first home was in that vacant field many years ago. Mom used to push me in my stroller over the McArthur Bridge and onto the beautiful park in the middle of the river. I remembered the tunnel that used to go under Jefferson

from the island...the World's Largest Stove...Pinky's Restaurant...the submarine that was anchored right off the bridge next to Jefferson...the smell of the water and trees...and the screeching of the seagulls. We walked around the Scott fountain, took a tour of the oldest aquarium in the United States and stopped to smell the roses at the horticultural building. The island is very neat and clean now and I am happy that the State is putting some time and money into that treasure.

My parents moved to the Warren and Alter area where we lived on Wayburn. That house is also gone and a new one was constructed in its place 5-10 years ago. I remembered the neighbors edging their lawns, hosing down the sidewalks and streets and keeping their tidy 30' lots ship shape. Many spoke little or no English. None of us were rich, but we were happy. The Japanese Beetle wiped out most of the tall majestic trees along the road in the late fifties. We would run behind the huge City trucks that were spraying bug spray (probably DDT), happily inhaling the deadly fumes. We would play curb ball in the streets and play in the alley behind the garages without any thought of getting in trouble. In 1959, my folks moved to Garden City, which was out in the country in those days. I moved with them. We can never go back in time, but thanks to a foggy memory, we can relive those few moments that are hiding in the corners our minds. I sometimes wonder if some young boy or girl walking around Allen Park today will find themselves taking a similar journey through time in 2070, searching for their memories. What will our City look like then?

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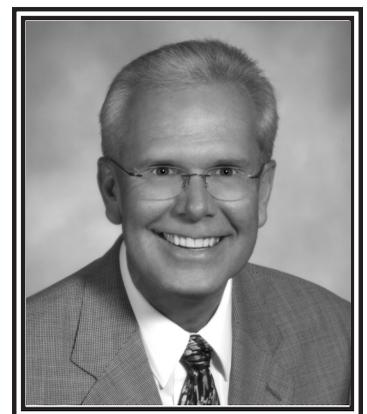
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ALLEN PARK - PLEASANT PAST



Front view of house and display.

For over thirty years, the Marks Family treated the entire Downriver area to a beautiful Christmas Display located at their home on Dasher. Work would begin in August every year, setting up the displays and getting everything ready for the big show. Cleaning Santa's Outfit, stringing colorful Christmas lights and stocking up on candy canes were just some of the jobs William and Donna Marks carried out for decades. A steady stream of visitors toured the display from Thanksgiving through January 3rd. As time went by, kids grew up and brought their own offspring. Some couples even got married in the tiny church in the Christmas Village.

Bill and Donna met each other in Pennsylvania, got married and found themselves buying a nice bungalow on Dasher in 1963. After settling down and starting a family, they started building their Christmas display in 1973. They started with the little church, some lights and

a few caroler statues. Over time it just got bigger and bigger. William's brother Herman loved being the official Santa for many years. Donna laughed and rolled her eyes when I asked her how much their electric bill went up every year. Somehow the bill got paid. Many people may also remember the nice Easter display that was constructed every Spring. After 33 years, Herman passed away in 2006 and the Christmas display would soon fade away. William followed his brother December 16, 2014. Donna told me that people still drive by to take a peek at the cozy bungalow on Dasher, especially during Christmas. The Marks Family made so many beautiful memories and traditions for countless families and will always be remembered by all good kids Downriver. Please enjoy a few of the pictures Donna shared with me.

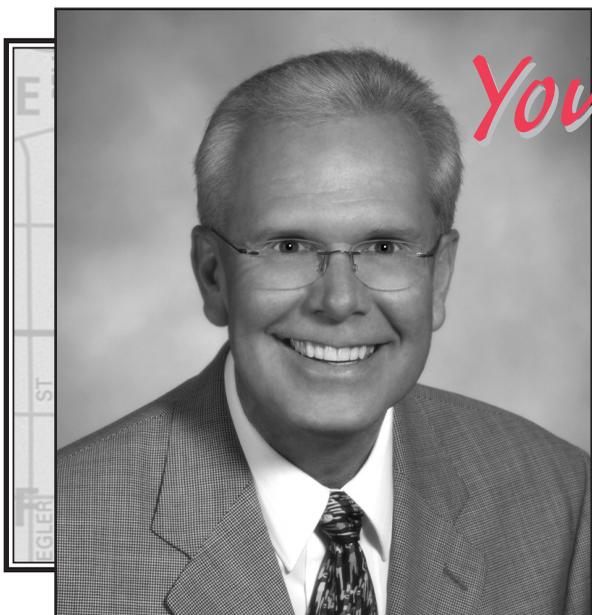
ALLEN PARK SALES RESULTS

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
2014	450	\$93,405.00	+\$12,578.00

Last year continued our upward climb back to our peak sales prices of 2005. Average sales price went up over \$1,000.00 per month in 2014, continuing two solid years of steady growth. Average sales price ended up at \$93,405.00 in 2014. We also sold 450 homes to ready, willing and able buyers last year. This was the second highest total since I started in the business over 25 years ago! We are not seeing as many short sales, where the seller owes more than he can get for the house, or foreclosures, as the large amount of sales the past three years are wiping out the distressed market inventory. 2015 should see more of the same with steadily rising prices, good interest rates and a good amount of homes to sell. Interest rates have been very favorable to entice both buyers who want to buy or sellers looking to refinance. I would call it a draw as to whether we are in a sellers' or buyers' market. Right now it is a win-win for both. Check out the handy chart above to see how we have been doing since the great recession started in 2005.

If you are curious as to what your home is worth in today's market, please give me a call or send me an e-mail, text or Facebook message. There is no cost or obligation for me to give you this valuable advice.

Thank you for taking your time to read my Newsletter!



You can count on me!

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