



# FLASHBACK



THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARCH 2006

www.hammondindiana.com

flashback@hammondindiana.com

## BOARD MEETING JANUARY 15, 2006

Meeting of the board of directors of the Hammond Historical Society was held on January 15, 2006 in the Suzanne G. Long Room of the Hammond Public Library. President Ken Stromberger called the meeting to order at 1:40 PM; thirteen members were present.

Report of the November meeting was given by secretary pro-tem Richard Lytle and was approved as presented. Larry Knoezer presented the treasurer's report and it was approved as given. Membership committee reported one new member this month. Since November, we have three new and three life members. It was MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED to accept the report.

OLD BUSINESS. WOODMAR COUNTRY CLUB DONATIONS. It was reported that records, minutes of board meetings, photographs and other items have been given to us on permanent loan from Mr. Gasvoda. MARGE SOHL LEGACY. We have boxes of material from the family, HOHMAN HOMESTEAD MARKER. The marker has been ordered and we expect to have a sketch to be approved by the members soon. The marker is to be installed in the spring of 2006. SCANNING EQUIPMENT. Grants are being pursued for the purchase of equipment.

NEW BUSINESS. ANNUAL DINNER MEETING. Mary Ann Carter reported that she has been in contact with the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 6910 Walnut in Hammond and that the pastor, Dr. Allen Shepherd, indicated the congregation's willingness to provide and serve a dinner at our annual meeting. It was agreed that the price will be \$10.00 per attendee, and that a donation will be made to the church. RAILROAD PARK AND MUSEUM. Are being considered for Hammond by different groups. WELCOME CENTER. Has requested the Society to create a display on women in March. First planning meeting is scheduled for January 30.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 P.M. Program on the German influence on early Hammond was presented by Ken Stromberger and Richard Lytle. Esther Kristoff, Secretary

*Please Join us for  
our March Program  
This month's scheduled event*

"Kolas Christian  
Bookstore Hammond"  
Roy Kolas — Speaker  
and longtime owner of the  
store located at 5512  
Hohman Avenue, Hammond

**SUNDAY @ 2:30 pm  
March 19th, 2006  
Community Room  
At The Hammond  
Public Library  
564 State Street**

**PLEASE NOTE: All board  
members are encouraged to  
attend the Board of Directors  
Meeting at 1:30 pm in the  
Suzanne G. Long Local His-  
tory Room 2nd floor prior to  
today's General Meeting.**

Reminder — Due to the  
Easter Holiday on the third  
Sunday of April there will be  
**NO GENERAL MEETING in  
April—enjoy your holiday!**

Editor in Chief — William J. Uzdanovich  
Co-Editor — Roy J. Speelman  
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The Hammond Historical Society — President, Ken Stromberger — First Vice President, Margaret Evans —  
Second Vice President, Richard Lytle — Secretary, Esther Kristoff — Treasurer, Larry Knoezer 2005-2006

# WOODMAR

## *Out with the old In with the new*

Woodmar Mall is set to be reborn once again with ambitious plans recently announced by city officials. The mall today is all but a shell of its glorious past.

Although its not really a dead mall, it's a shopping center on the critical list, only a small handful of stores remain out of the fifty plus shops that once called Woodmar Mall home during its heyday.

New life will be brought back to the struggling shopping center. Work will be underway soon as the southern portion of the mall is demolished to make room for a new Carson's. Once a new Carson Pirie Scott store is completed the remainder of the mall will be leveled. A linear style mall is planned with several big name retailers to locate in the New Woodmar Mall and its out lots.

During the early 1950's, the Calumet Regions economy was in high gear, it was on a thrill ride of economic prosperity, the result of postwar prosperity. Many of the mills and factories here had three shifts of employees who were working around the clock. This large flux of disposable income helped to expand the neighborhood shopping districts that reached beyond mammoth thriving main central business district, more commonly called Downtown Hammond.

Enter a group of developers who envisioned a different future for retail shopping for Hammond and the Calumet Region. Landau & Heyman foresaw the shift towards a multi-store shopping center, where customers could "*one stop shop*" allowing customers to conveniently shop at one location.

This concept was a bold move in 1953. There were many small strip centers with four or five stores, but there were only a few shopping centers with 30 or more stores in existence across the entire country.

Herbert H. Heyman and partners Howard H. Landau along with Elias Perlman, had a long standing record of commercial real estate development throughout the Calumet Region. As they began to realize that time pressed shoppers wanted convenience and choice, the idea of Woodmar Mall was born.

Partners of the proposed mall choose Hammond because of its excellent public transportation and central location. They found a site along the west side of Indianapolis Boulevard between 165th and 167th Streets. This 20 acre site had originally been planned for a corporate office building for the meat packing plant of Swift & Company. Swift had never built the facility and sold the land to Landau & Heyman in 1953.

Now with a tract of land, the partners new that they needed a large anchor store with name recognition to attract potential customers. Negotiations were underway with Carson Pirie Scott & Company to build its first store in Indiana. Carson's agreed and signed a fifty year lease and planned to open the store during their 100th anniversary in 1954.

The original design for the mall featured a single 135,000 sq ft building, with an adjacent 64,000 sq ft pentagon shaped two story building to house Carson's. Free parking was available for 1,500 cars in the lot surrounding most of the complex.

Cost to build Woodmar Shopping Center was \$3 million. The location and original design of Woodmar was met with skepticism and criticism from many seasoned retailers. Critics faulted its location, since it was located in the middle of an industrial area. The front of the Carson's store faced away from the street, so all one sees is its sheltered loading dock. "But Landau & Heyman wanted Carson's front to face the Mall to expose shoppers to the other stores in the shopping center."

A three day Grand opening event took place in late spring of 1954 with a twenty page advertising circular with news and sales of the new stores located at the mall. — *story continued on page three*

# WOODMAR

— continued from page two

An array of prizes were offered, they included a brand new 1955 Mercury Montclair worth \$3500 with \$100 gasoline, Amana Upright Home Freezer, Frigidaire room air conditioner, Ranch mink stole, a boy's & girl's bike and 10—\$10 gift certificates.

Carson Pirie Scott & Company opened their new store on November 1, 1954, just in time for the busy holiday shopping season.

The eight original tenants of the mall were J. J. Newberry; Kinney Shoes the company's 340th store and only the second store to operate in a shopping center; National Food Store; Andes Candies; Maling Shoe; Maternity Modes; Ritz Millinery; and Chapman Laundry & Cleaners.

On May 19 fourteen other stores were opened. They included Benson & Rixon Menswear; Einhorn's Women's Sportswear & Apparel; Hansel & Gretel Shop; Hoosier State Bank; Lerner Shops; Miles Pain & Wallpaper; O'Conner & Goldberg Shoes; Powell Bakery; Rothchild's Womenswear; The Cotton Shop; Fabric Fair; Walgreen Drugs; Watland Brother Camera; and The Woodmar Grill.

While the concept of the climate controlled indoor shopping mall is just over 40 years old. Landau & Heyman saw this in the mid 1960's as the wave of the future. So when Carson's decided to do a \$1.5 million expansion of its Woodmar store, Landau & Heyman drew up plans to create one of the areas first enclosed shopping malls to Hammond.

The Carson's expansion added a third floor with 34,000 sq ft and 13,000 sq ft on the first floor, increasing the store size to 110,000 sq ft. The enclosed mall opened in late March 1966, followed up by the enlarged Carson's opening in June of 1966.

Woodmar Mall has undergone six major renovations and expansions sine it was enclosed in 1966. During the middle to late 1970's leases for two large tenants were not renewed. J. J. Newberry and Sterk's Super Foods (National Foods was the original tenant) giving Landau & Heyman the opportunity to introduce yet another new retail trend—the mini mall.

In 1975 the vacated Newberry store located near the center of the mall was transformed into a European style cobble stoned courtyard housing 15 boutique style stores. It was modeled after the Court of Lions in Seville, Spain, the new mini mall was given the same exact name. Several shopping center trade publications hailed this new mini mall for its success and originality. It was reported that the new stores in the Court of Lions did three times the amount of business of the Newberry store in just the first year. During this renovation new street lights were also installed in the parking lot.

A year and a half later a second mini mall was built in the empty Sterk's store. Named the Court of Turtles and featured a more modern look. In 1982 a six store expansion was made to the southern part of the mall. In 1985 a six tenant Woodmar Food Court replaced the Walgreen Grill.

Woodmar Mall was not just a shopping center, it was an integral part of the neighborhood serving as a kind of community center, a gathering place for the many special events that were held in the mall. Before the Auto show in Chicago at McCormick Place, area residents had a chance to see the latest in autos at the Woodmar New Car Show. "People came from all around to see these new cars."

The Pinewood Derby brought dozens of boy scouts to the mall to race their soapbox cars. Holidays were a festive time at the mall, who could forget Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Woodmar was host to numerous fashion and bridal shows. Health fairs and Fire Prevention Week. Hobby and Craft and Home Improvement shows were also very well attended at Woodmar Mall. These are all just memories.

In May of 2001, Woodmar Mall was sold at a Lake County sheriff's tax sale for \$6,000,000 to Great West Life and Annuity a Denver Colorado insurance company. Ironically it was the same company that wrote the mortgage for the mall back in the 1980's when it was also sold. It was the lone bidder on the property.

The new owners will be working with city officials to help revive the economically deprived mall. Plans also call for rejuvenating, not only the mall but street and intersection improvements as well.

*Source information for this story: advertising supplement from The Times newspaper on October 1994, articles: January 2001 and May 2001.*

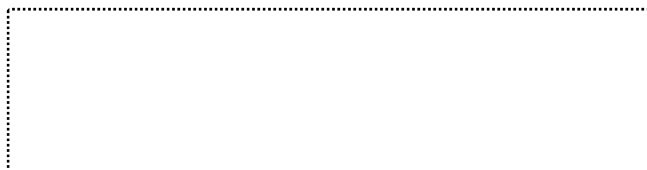


**THE HAMMOND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
564 STATE STREET HAMMOND IN 46320-1532

Nonprofit Organization  
U. S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Hammond, Indiana  
Permit No. 1843

**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS:**  
Sunday, March 19th at 2:30 p.m.  
"Kolas Christian Bookstore of  
Hammond" Roy Kolas Speaker —  
And longtime owner

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**



*DATED MATERIAL*

Postmaster Please Deliver by March 18th, 2006

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY -



**20 YEARS AGO MARCH 1986**

Lower gasoline prices are creating a positive financial windfall for region motorists while creating headaches for state highway budgets. The drop in the price at the pump will generate lower sales tax revenues, which the state in turn redistributes monies from the gasoline taxes to local communities for road projects. The state of Indiana has a separate 14 cent a gallon fuel tax for this purpose. While state highway officials maybe drowning in their tears, the motoring public is jumping for joy. The price for a gallon of regular gas just 71.9 cents and a gallon of lead free can be had for 78.9 cents. Some area prices have dipped to as low as 69 cents a gallon. Across the state line in Illinois prices are generally a bit higher, due to the higher fuel taxes imposed by state, county and local municipalities.

AUGUSTFEST 1986 budget request submitted. Festival organizers asked the Hammond City Council for \$249, 500 for this years annual Wolf Lake summer event. It was pointed out that the festival would recoup some \$75,000 through various concessions. Councilman at Large George Carlson, who was highly critical of last years event stated " They're talking about a built in deficit of almost \$175,000." Parks Department Superintendent Patrick Moore said "We want to work with the council on AugustFest." A breakdown of costs for the festival: Advertising \$20,000; Main Stage Entertainment \$50,000; Bar Stage Entertainment \$7,500; Children's Stage Entertainment \$4,500; Sound \$5,000; Portable Toilets \$4,000; Labor \$15,000; Fireworks \$6,000; Tents \$5,500; Miscellaneous \$8,000; Carnival \$65,000; Adult Beverages \$27,500; Security \$5,000; Petty Cash \$5,000; Advertising Book \$12,000; Soft Drinks \$6,500. Organizers hope to recoup \$35,000 from carnival tickets; \$23,000 from Adult Beverages; \$6,500 from soft drink sales; and \$10,000 from the ad book. Last year's festival lost \$25,130.

*Source info: The Times microfilms of March 1986*