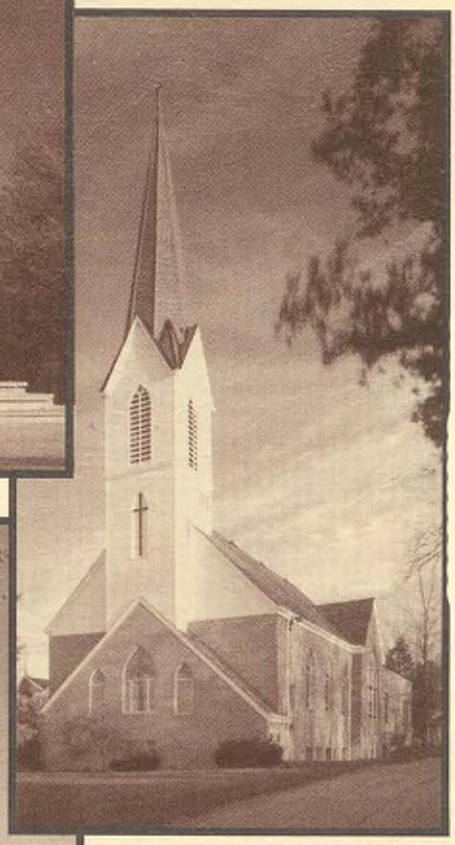
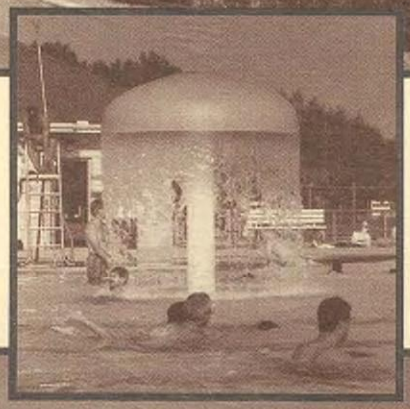
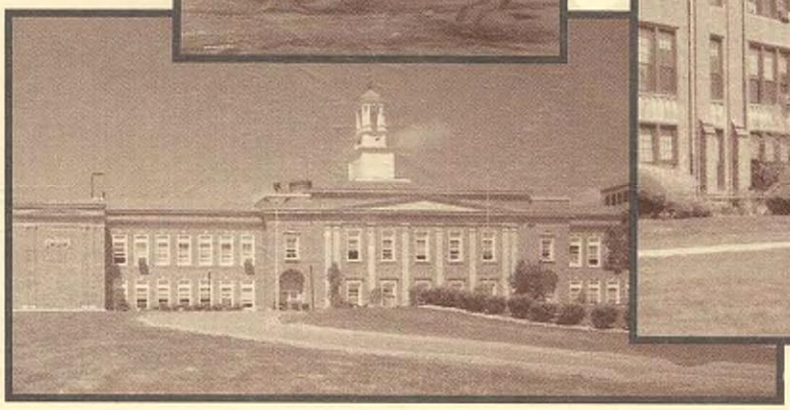
On the Threshold of a New Century

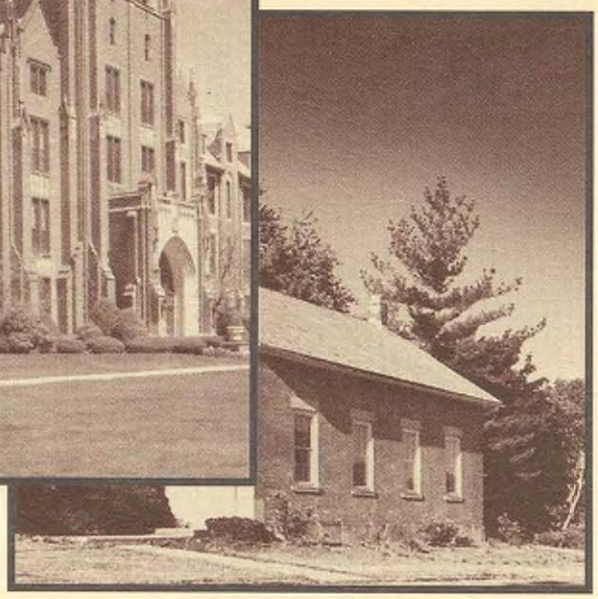
The City of South Euclid

1967 -1999









On The Threshold of a New Century

The City of South Euclid

1967 - 1999

By Nancy L. Schuemann

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be demanding more money and that the only place that it can come from is the people."

Having passed a city income tax of one-half of one percent on a reciprocal basis with Cleveland and other municipalities, the city's budget had increased. Later in the year, council voted to increase the income tax to one percent, further strengthening the city's finances. The mayor was hopeful of adding to the tax duplicate if proposed building plans were approved.

Building proposals had become controversial with quality-of-life issues being pitted against increasing tax revenue. The issues of parking and traffic also caused heated debates.

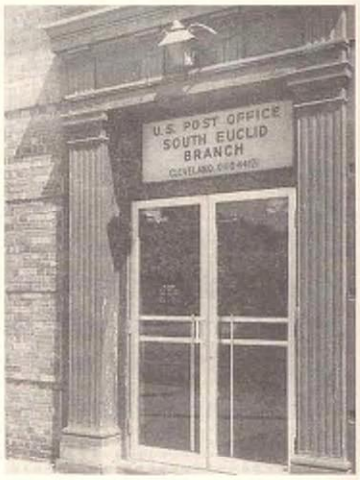
Since the summer of 1965, one particular issue had been in the forefront: the May-Green/Maymore Shopping Center conflict. The Walter Smith family, owners of the May-Green property at Green Road, had erected a chain-link fence separating their center from Maymore, which fronted Mayfield Road. The rift began when Smith and the Maymore merchants had differing opinions over the use of Smith's land for parking, as a drive-through from Green Road to Mayfield Road unifying the two centers, and Smith's plans to build a supermarket. Mancuso's Bi-Rite had objected to having another competing supermarket nearby. An A&P and Fisher's were already located in the center.

Besides building a larger supermarket, the Smiths had wanted to purchase a lot from Mancuso's and demanded that merchants pay an annual fee for access through their property. When the city balked at their proposal, they locked the gate and the two lots were completely separated. The gated fence prevented customers from driving through the lots for easier access to the stores and limited parking. Council members kept up efforts to negotiate a deal to unlock the fence and open the lots.

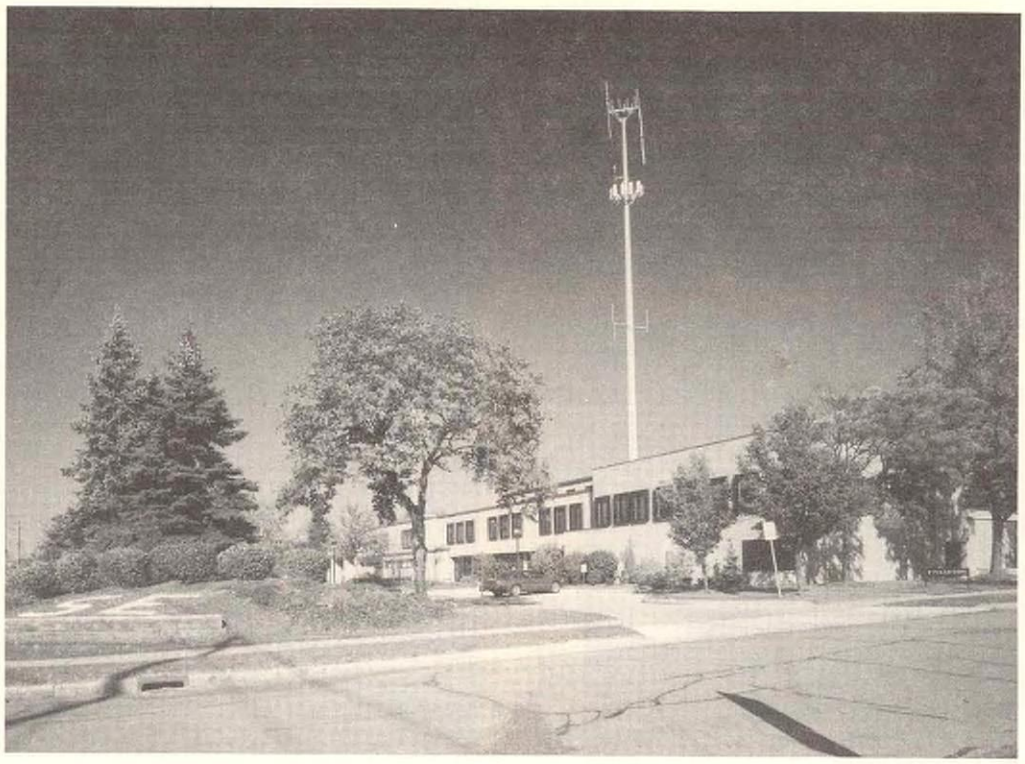
Another controversy erupted over a proposal to build an 80-suite high-rise apartment building on five acres at the intersection of South Belvoir Boulevard and Mayfield Road (abutting Prasse Road and Francis Court). Residents protested the proposed rezoning of the property. Though some council members balked at the loss of tax revenue, the proposal was defeated.

The builders of the proposed open-deck parking garage at Green and Greenwold roads were denied a permit.

Parking, or the lack thereof, had become an issue for area businesses. State Savings and Loan Co. (later, Fifth Third Bank) at 4065 Mayfield Road asked for rezoning on a lot it owned on Plainfield Road. The bank planned an addition to their building, including offices and a community room, and additional employee parking to reduce jammed conditions in its parking lot.



Next door to State Savings, the South Euclid branch of the post office also suffered traffic woes. An official announcement was made that a new post office with adequate parking was to be built. Land wasn't yet purchased for the new facility, partly because of the high price of land on Mayfield Road where some desirable property had been located.



The City of South Euclid
1999 City Administration

Mayor
John T. Kocevar

City Council
Joseph J. Coreno, Councilman, Ward 1
Modestino Romeo, Councilman, Ward 2
Edward A. Icove, Councilman, Ward 3 and Council President
Ronald Rosenfield, Councilman, Ward 4
Sunny M. Simon, Councilwoman-at-Large
Chelly Tufts, Councilwoman-at-Large
James Boyle, Councilman-at-Large

Finance
Janet Bihary, CPA, Director

Municipal Court
Patricia Ann Kleri, Judge
Mary Beth DePasquale, Bailiff
James Farrell, Bailiff

Law Department
Vincent A. Feudo, Director

Police Department
Thomas W. Lucha, Chief

Fire Department
Thomas R. Cannell, Chief

City Engineer
Stephen Hovancsek, Engineer

Building Department
Jack Clifford, Building Commissioner

Service Department
Kevin P. Lynch, Director

Swimming Pools
Joan Bush, Supervisor

Community Center
Marilyn Doehring, Director

Tri-City Consortium on Aging
Bernice Harel, Director

As we enter a new century, it is time to reflect on our past and to contemplate our future. The past thirty-three years, from 1967-1999, have been marked by decades of pronounced development and change.

During these three decades, our nation has seen monumental achievements and tragedies, technological breakthroughs and breakdowns, war and peace. Under the leadership of seven presidents, we have dealt with inflation, unemployment, recession, the energy crisis, and prosperity. We have survived scandals like Watergate, Iran-Contra, Whitewater, and President Clinton's impeachment hearings. We have mourned the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy, Anwar Sadat and tragedies like the World Trade Center bombing and the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. We were eyewitness to the triumphs of space travel like Neil Armstrong's first step on the moon and catastrophes like the Apollo fire and the Challenger explosion. We have dealt with race rioting, urban decay, and renewal. We have adapted to an electronic world of VCR's, personal computers, CD's, faxes, cell phones, caller ID, voice-mail, and e-mail. Just as the nation has moved forward, the city of South Euclid has weathered the storms along the way. Under the leadership of three dynamic, yet very different mayors, the city has grown in activities, residential and commercial development.

In 1967, the city celebrated its Golden Jubilee. In 1997, the city rejoiced at eighty years. We are now entering the new millennium.

We look back upon these past thirty-three years with fond recollection and contemplation. To know where we have been can guide us onward to where we are heading.

1967

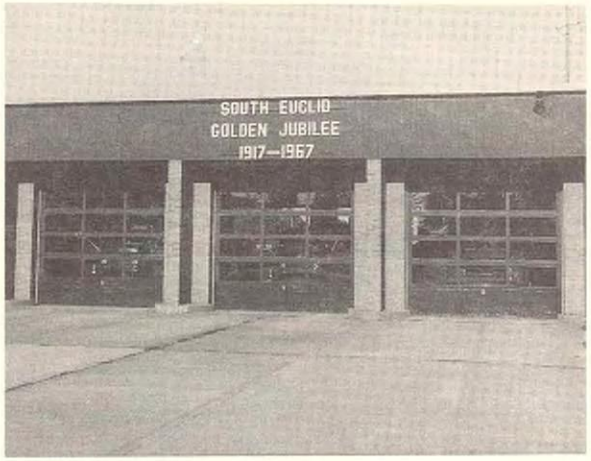
Top Films: *The Graduate, In the Heat of the Night, Bonnie and Clyde*

Major Events:

* The first Super Bowl was played. Coach Vince Lombardi's Green Bay Packers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs, 34 to 10.
* A flash fire swept through the first Apollo space capsule while it was on the launch pad, killing astronauts Virgil Grissom, Edward White, and Roger B. Chaffee.
* The worst race riot in the nation erupted in Detroit, Michigan, leaving 38 people dead and causing $500 million in damage.
* The U.S. Senate approved Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court, the first African-American justice.
* The world's first heart transplant was performed by Dr. Christiaan Barnard.
* The world's first successful coronary artery bypass operation was performed at the Cleveland Clinic.
* Carl Stokes was elected mayor of Cleveland, the first African-American mayor of a major American city.

What's Hot: "flower power," Twiggy, *Star Trek*

For the city of South Euclid, 1967 marked a year of celebration. This was South Euclid's "Golden Jubilee" year, the city's 50th anniversary. From its origin in 1917, the city in 1967 was a community in the midst of significant growth.



George J. Urban was serving his 19th year as mayor of South Euclid. At the time, the office of mayor was a part-time position. He was the ceremonial head of the city who also set policy. The executive director, Melvin Waldschmidt, carried out the administration of the policies. In addition to dealing with the day-to-day operations of the city, these men had to ponder retail, commercial, and residential development. Mayor Urban's philosophy was to operate the city according to the "people's choice" concerning growth and development.

Mayor Urban was also a visionary. He had championed the possibility of purchasing a 1.8 mile-long right-of-way for a future rapid transit line through the city. He had inquired about buying the Euclid Railroad easement running from Belvoir to Green Road and downhill to Euclid Avenue. This rail line, built in 1883 to serve the Bluestone quarries and later industrial areas of the city, had been

George J. Urban
Mayor, The City of South Euclid
1947 - 1971

George J. Urban was born on May 14, 1906, on Edna Avenue in Cleveland. His grandfather's construction firm built St. Francis Catholic Church on Superior at East 71st Street where he was baptized. His parents were John and Anna Gardner Urban. He attended East Clark School in the Collinwood area.

In 1913, the Urban family, using four horses to pull the moving van through the mud on Green Road, settled in a home on Ardendale Road in South Euclid. George attended South Euclid schools for ten years. He attended Hawken School on a scholarship from the Bolton family, founders of the school, and graduated in 1924.

He went to Ohio Wesleyan University from which he graduated in 1928. In one of his college classes he met Helen Williams. She was from Oil City, Pennsylvania. He had been attracted to her high IQ. They were married on September 14, 1929, during her junior year.

Following college graduation, George worked for his father in the construction business. After, he went to work at the Northern Ohio Food Terminal. He served as market master, chief maintenance supervisor, and, in 1964, was named general manager.

In 1930, George and Helen built a home at 4518 Ardendale Road where they raised five children.

George Urban ran for village council in 1935 and was defeated. In 1937, he ran again and won, serving two years at $48 annually. He was defeated again in 1939 by a dozen votes. Not one to give up, he ran again and, in 1941, was elected to council. In 1947, he ran and was elected the Mayor of South Euclid. After his first few terms in office, opponents quit running against him. He served 24 years as mayor.

During his years as mayor, George Urban saw the city's population increase from 9,000 to 29,579. Transportation to Public Square was established, as was the city charter. A new, expanded city hall was built. Land was acquired, and three city parks with pools were created. A full-time fire department was established. A new zoning code and a master plan were created.

In addition to serving as mayor, he was president of the Cuyahoga County Mayors and City Managers Association. He also was Republican precinct committeeman. He was also on the Board of Managers of the Hillcrest YMCA and was a long-time trustee of South Euclid United Methodist Church. He was a member of the National Association of Produce Market Managers, the Lions Club, the South Euclid Historical Society, and the Garden Club.

As the years went on, his health declined. After a serious heart attack on May 1, 1968, he was hospitalized for 40 days. In 1971, he decided to retire from the rigors of politics. He also retired from the Northern Ohio Food Terminal.

He and his wife wanted to spend their retirement years "doing some gardening" on the 120-acre farm and site of their new home in Clarion, Pennsylvania.

In 1978, George Urban died of cancer at age 71. Services were held at the South Euclid United Methodist Church. He was buried at Knollwood Cemetery.

declared unsafe by owners Norfolk and Western. Mayor Urban saw a potential in repairing the lines, hoping to some day provide a rapid transit line with an extension from Windermere.

Since the end of World War II, South Euclid had undergone a surge in population. From 5,000 residents when the city was incorporated in 1917, it had grown to 30,521 residents in 1967. With the increased population came increased needs. South Euclid felt the growing pains.

Construction of a 64-home residential development, off of Anderson Road, was approved by city council. The new Royal Stuart Estates would include streets named Queen Mary, King George, Queen Ann, and Royal Courts. Council also passed "open-housing" resolutions welcoming "all people, irrespective of race, creed, religion, color, or national origin."

Commercial development was on the upswing. In 1967, 10% of the city's land was devoted to commercial and industrial development, concentrated along Mayfield Road and Monticello Boulevard. The city felt the need for more development to create further income to bolster the city's finances.

Approval for a 1,250-seat Fox Movie Theater was granted at Cedar Center, on property occupied by several vacant buildings, including a fire-damaged bowling alley. Council also approved a variance allowing a second story addition to be built above Cedar Center near Corky and Lenny's Restaurant.

The building of a third funeral home on Mayfield Road, by the Flynn-Froelk Company, was also approved by council. A new dormitory was built at Notre Dame College.

Construction of additions to the city's three swimming pool bath houses were completed and the city was reviewing a proposal to enlarge city hall.

Not all development, though, was welcomed. Residents were quick to voice their objections to rezoning proposals for new commercial ,development and apartment projects. Residents wanted their community to be "homey," primarily single-family homes.

During the previous year, residents had objected to plans by the Heights Baptist Church (later, First Baptist Church) to purchase "Whigham's Woods," a forested property at Delevan, Hartley, Trebisky, and Monticello Boulevard, for construction of a church. Neighbors had wanted to preserve the 4-1/4 acres of trees as a community park. They formed "The Neighborhood Committee to Save the Woods." William Scheele, Director of the Cleveland Natural Science Museum (later the Cleveland Museum of Natural History) backed them. U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, a conservationist, wrote to offer moral support for their cause. The land, though, had been "quietly" sold to the church and construction was set to begin.

Residents who had formed the Greenwold Good Neighbors Association protested plans for an open-deck parking garage fronting Green Road and Greenwold. Their objections were based on safety considerations and the appearance of the structure.

As with any increase in population, there was an increase in crime. A sudden rise in vandalism caused city council to call for stricter enforcement of the city's loitering and curfew laws. To prevent auto theft, council passed a law allowing police to confiscate ignition keys left in unoccupied vehicles and

Remember? . . . Whigham's Farm

The Whigham's farm was the last remaining farm in South Euclid and was famous for its farm market. During the 1960's, hundreds of visitors from Shaker Heights, Cleveland Heights, Pepper Pike, Euclid, Willoughby, and other eastern suburbs flocked to purchase produce from the farm. Indian corn, lima beans, and summer squash were among the products offered. At Halloween, elaborate displays featured two acres of pumpkins. The farm and the market have been gone since the early 1970's. The century-home at 4765 Anderson Road was torn down to make way for Daryl Estates.

The farm's original 15 acres was acquired by John P. Whigham in 1864; the title passed in June of 1865. He was a bachelor when he purchased the farm. John first built a granary and bunkhouse on the site. In 1870, he built a house when he married Lydia Krebel of South Euclid. Her family, at one time, lived on a six-acre parcel where the Jewish Community Center in Cleveland Heights now stands. They had two sons, Oliver H. and John C.

John P. Whigham died in 1912. His son, Oliver, took over the farm. Oliver also served as Mayor of the Village of South Euclid from 1930-1932, during the Great Depression. He married Agnes MacDougall of Chesterland. Oliver died at home in 1954 in the same room where he was born.

His only child, O. Haydn Whigham, inherited the farm. Over the years, the farm was whittled down to 10 acres. O. Haydn married Jean Laude and ran the farm. In addition, he was a detective with the South Euclid Police Department. He died in November of 1982.

Their only child, Oliver Haydn "Jiggs" Whigham was born in 1943. He began to study the piano and music theory when he was seven. His father was a trombonist and introduced him to the instrument. He had natural talent. At age 14, "Jiggs" was considered the best trombone player in Cleveland. He had also studied piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music. While at Brush High School, he was awarded the John Philip Sousa Award, voted by fellow band members. The day after his high school graduation he toured as solo trombonist with the Glen Miller Orchestra. He also toured with Stan Kenton, Larry Elgart, and Maynard Ferguson. He won an international contest and was considered the best trombone player in the world.

"Jiggs" was offered a teaching position on the faculty of Berklee School of Music. Instead, he moved to Cologne, West Germany, becoming the first trombonist in the staff orchestra of the German Radio Orchestra. He also traveled the world playing with such greats at Count Basie, Bert Kaemfert, Thad Jones, Mel Lewis, and had his own quintet. In 1978, he was appointed Germany's first university-level chair for jazz studies.

"Jiggs" is director of the jazz department at the Hanns-Eisler Hochschule Fur Music in Berlin and is Chief Conductor of the Berlin Radio Orchestra. In addition to directing the department, he also teaches jazz trombone, big band, ear training, and harmony. He is married with two daughters and spends summers in Cape Cod.

to fine persistent offenders. The city was commended for this effort.

New motorcycle laws were passed requiring the use of helmets and other safety features. Bike stealing and stripping were on the rise.

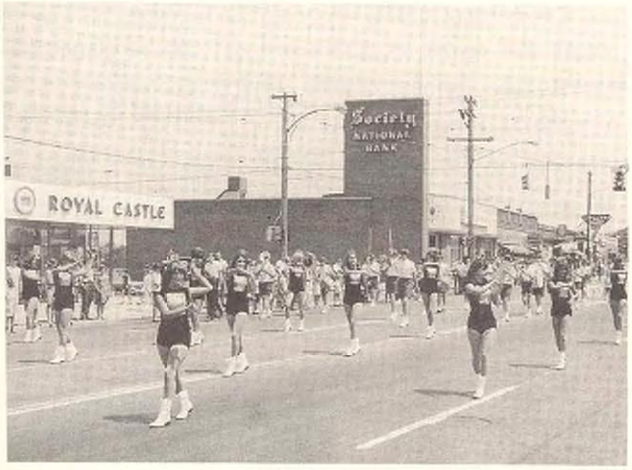
A new weapon, mace, was introduced for use by police forces around the country, including South Euclid's. Chemical mace was used to subdue perpetrators and was especially effective for riot control.

After a year's absence, the police department's one-man motorcycle patrol was back on the streets. Patrolman James Mc- Laughlin was at the wheel. Police Chief William Van Veghel urged the construction of a new building on the site of Memorial Hall, behind city hall, to house the police depart- ment and the court.

In 1967, South Euclid's Municipal Court marked its 15th birthday. The court was honored in Honolulu, Hawaii, at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association for

improving practices and procedures in 1966-67. The court's growth was rapid under the leadership of Judge Jerome Klein. In 1952, the court staff consisted of only a clerk and a part-time bailiff. In 1967, the court had grown to five persons, including a deputy clerk, two part-time deputy clerks, and a part-time bailiff. Judge Klein noted a significant increase in young persons in court and attributed lack of parental supervision as the main cause.

During the summer, the city celebrated its "Golden Jubilee" in a grand fashion. The special Home Days celebration ran for five days, from Wednesday, August 2nd to Sunday, August 6th. Beginning with the Wednesday morning flag-raising at Victory Park, the



festivities at Bexley Park included a square dance, fashion show, pet show, talent show, pageants, a teen dance, a band concert, and ended with a Sunday evening fireworks display. An estimated 25,000 persons walked on the Bexley Park midway and watched Sunday's mile-long parade that featured antique cars, more than 40 units and marching bands. The 50th anniversary party was promoted as the "biggest ever" Home Days event.

In November, Mayor George Urban, who had run unopposed, was re-elected.

1968

Top Film: *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Deaths: Helen Keller, John Steinbeck

Major Events:

* President Lyndon Johnson stunned the nation when he announced unexpectedly that he did not intend to run for re-election.
* In Memphis, Tennessee, an assassin's bullet ended the life of civil rights activist Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, age 39. James Earl Ray was arrested.
* Democratic presidential nominee Senator Robert Kennedy was killed by gunman Sirhan Sirhan at the Ambassador Hotel while giving his California primary victory speech.
* Richard M. Nixon was elected President in one of the closest votes in history, defeating Hubert H. Humphrey.
* The *Apollo 8* astronauts became the first men to orbit the moon.
* In Cleveland, the Sterling Lindner department store closed.
* The Glenville riots erupted in Cleveland.

What's Hot: The Beatles, the rock musical *Hair*

As the city entered 1968, inflation was of major concern. Mayor Urban worried about the spiraling costs of everything that the city purchased and about the needs of the school system. He felt that "everyone will