



# PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community  
News & Views

FEBRUARY 2009

## Meetings and Announcements

**Portage Park  
Neighborhood Association:  
Next Meeting -**

**Feb. 9, 7:30 p.m.,  
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.**

**Business Introductions:**

**Computerland**

**Shiraz Restaurant**

## C.A.P.S. Meetings

All meetings at 7 p.m.

**Beat 1624 - Weds., Feb. 25**  
at Biagio's Banquets,  
4242 N. Central Ave.

**Beat 1633 - Tues., Feb. 17**  
at Merimack Park  
6343 W. Irving Park Rd.

**Beat 1634 - Thur. Feb 26**  
at Portage-Cragin Library,  
5108 W. Belmont Ave.

**16th District CAPS Office,  
312-742-4521 for more info.**

## PPNA On-Line

**Get the most current info  
from the PPNA on our  
website: [www.portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org)**

**Contacting the PPNA board:  
[board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org)**

**General questions or info:  
[membership@portagepark.org](mailto:membership@portagepark.org)  
[communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org)  
[seniors@portagepark.org](mailto:seniors@portagepark.org)  
[web@portagepark.org](mailto:web@portagepark.org)**

## NEW! Renew or Join OnLine!

You can join or renew your PPNA membership online. You can get directly to the form via:

**<http://www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html>**

**Pay with your credit card or  
your PayPal account.**

## Time to Vote...Again

by *Dian D. Chapman*

The Portage Park neighborhood is within the bounds of the 5th Congressional District of Illinois. Our representative in Congress was Rahm Emanuel. But as you should know, he's gone off to Washington to help our former state senator, now President Obama, run the country. Rahm is now President Obama's Chief-of-Staff, the President's whip cracker. So here we sit with a mess in the state legislature, a new governor, a new senator (Roland Burris) busily reading the Senate's how-to manuals and no representative for our district. That's why it's very

important that we all take time to make our voices heard by casting our votes for a new state representative.

Unlike our governor's appointment of a senator, vacant representative seats require a special election. At the time of this writing, there are 25 people running in this election. The primary will thin the herd to one candidate from each party. This primary election will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2009. The final candidates will then battle it out until the special election is held on Tuesday, April 7, 2009, resulting in one winner taking over Rahm's place in Congress.

To learn more about this special election and to learn about each person vying for your vote, see this link: <http://tiny.cc/5thElection2009>. And if you need to verify your polling place, head over to the Chicago Board of Election site, here: <http://www.chicagoelections.com>. Enter your name and address and you'll be able to not only validate your voting status, but locate where you need to go to cast this important vote. Pundits are estimating a low voter turnout. Prove them wrong. Mark your calendar and make your voice heard!

## Summertime, and the Buyin' is Easy...

by *Babette Novak*

Do you remember the taste of a ripe organic peach, the juice running down your arm in the hot sun? Or a fresh tomato, busting with flavor and rich color in your tote bag? Maybe you like the creamy, fresh yogurt and cream from the local dairy. These dreams of summer farmer's markets seem far away now that we can barely make it from house to car without freezing our eyelids.

Soon we may not need to dream. Wouldn't it be great if we had our own farmer's market, within a short walk or short drive? Enough Portage Park residents have voiced an interest that it spurred action from Friends of Portage Park (FOPP). Now FOPP is working to begin a farmer's market at Portage Park this year. Members of FOPP are attending the annual Farmer's Forum to meet farmers and vendors for our market. The group plans to hold the market every other weekend during the summer of 2009.

Some of you came to a small 'test' market during the Pumpkin Patch in October of 2008. Residents who attended the market greeted it with much enthusiasm. They offered ideas regarding the types of vendors they wanted to see. If you would like to give your own input into this idea, or are interested in volunteering, please email to: [portagemarket@friendsofportagepark.org](mailto:portagemarket@friendsofportagepark.org).

We can't organize a sizzling sun, but we can organize the farmer's market it heats during the summer. Then you will buy that ripe, juicy, organic peach in your own neighborhood park!

## WHAT'S OUR OPINION?

**Should the police camera  
stationed over Dickinson Park be  
relocated? Send your thoughts to:**

**[communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org)**



# The Health Benefits Of Qi Gong

By Paula Lazarz

Many people have heard of an Eastern form of exercise called Qi Gong, but few people really have a good understanding of what it is.

Qi Gong is a form of exercise that originally developed in China. This form of exercise energizes the internal organs by combining disciplined breathing techniques with subtle but focused movement. Qi Gong does not employ as much movement as Tai Chi and is not as physically strenuous as Yoga, but will move and enhance your "qi" or "prana."

"Qi" or "prana" are Chinese and Indian terms for internal energy. Internal energy is an abstract concept which means "that which animates you" or "that which gives you buoyancy" or "life force." Qi has not been quantified according to the standards of Western science and medicine, but our medical community does not deny the posi-

tive benefits people who practice Qi Gong enjoy.

Some of these benefits include a deepening of the breath which leads to increased oxygen utilization and greater lung capacity, more mental concentration and focus, a feeling of greater psychological and emotional well-being, an increase in energy levels, greater flexibility and an improved ability to functionally move.

Qi Gong can help people with high blood pressure. It can help people recovering from a traumatic event like an accident or a battle with cancer. It can give seniors more energy and vitality. It is an alternative therapy for people with chronic problems like headaches, sinus problems, allergies or asthma.

For already healthy people, it can help keep the connective tissue vibrant, strong and

elastic. It will help correct muscle imbalances to improve movement efficiency. It will increase oxygen utilization. It will stimulate the internal organs, keeping you healthy from the inside out as opposed to the outside in and it is a good complement to more physically demanding forms of exercise.

Under a qualified instructor and with a bit of patience and disciplined practice, Qi Gong can provide amazing benefits to a practitioner.

Paula Lazarz is the owner of Energy Fitness Active Arts Center at 4222 N. Milwaukee. To find out more about the Active Art Center's Qi Gong program or about the other fitness programs available, please visit [www.energyfitnessinc.com](http://www.energyfitnessinc.com). or call 773-879-0063.

## Show your neighborhood pride!

**Final 2008 block counts! Renew for 2009 Today!**

9 members - 4100 LeClaire  
9 members - 4100 Leamington  
8 members - 4100 Lawler  
7 members - 4100 Lavergne  
7 members - 4000 Milwaukee  
7 members - 5300 Cullom  
6 members - 5100 Hutchinson  
5 members - 5300 Berenice  
5 members - 5300 Pensacola  
5 members - 5200 Warner

**Don't see your block listed above?**

Join or renew your membership today at:  
[www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html](http://www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html)

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## Color Your World

By Laura Heitz, Right Now Redesign, Inc.

Each year, there are certain colors that rise to the top of the decorating palette. Pantone is a strategic color company that is used by manufacturers, designers, and other organization to predict which colors will be popular years down the road. For 2009 they are calling Mimosa the COLOR OF THE YEAR. It's a very cheery yellow, reflecting the need for a positive outlook in these challenging times.

Paint company Sherwin-Williams says in their Colormix Forecast '09 that, "Color is on the move. The bold, saturated hues that dominated palettes for the past few seasons are yielding to more complex, toned-down shades." Here are the themes they are predicting for this year:

Blue/Violet

There's a move to more red based violets and plums. Some lovely blues, especially Celestial SW6808 and Dignity Blue SW6804 (a nod to environmental issues).

Red/Orange

The reds have a touch of orange as shown in Enticing Red SW6600. Orange is less intense; see Tiger Eye SW6362 and Constant Coral SW6325. The colors overall are more restrained than in recent years.

Yellow/Green

A very sunny, cheery palette - Daffodil SW6901 and Gambol Gold SW6690. The greens have more gray, with a touch of blue. Alexandrite SW0060 is a very strong green-blue and Lemon Verbena SW7726 would work very well with Tiger-eye (see above).

Neutrals

These hues are related to the environment, with wood, stone and natural fibers the influence. I really like the mid tone range: Mesa Tan SW7695 a nice tan-brown, and Keystone Gray SW7504, a very warm gray.

For Portage Park residents, our closest Sherwin-Williams is located at Milwaukee and Berneau. Or, feel free to call me for a color consultation at 773-972-6548.

Portage Park resident Laura Heitz is an Interior Decorator and Redesigner. She can be reached at 282-7702 or [laura@rightnowredesign.com](mailto:laura@rightnowredesign.com).

## Tony Award-Winning Musical Comedy "City of Angels" is Coming to the Historic Portage Theater

The venerable Portage Theater, a fixture in the Portage Park neighborhood since the 1920s, is enjoying a remarkable renaissance as it transitions from operating exclusively as a movie palace into being a premier multi-purpose venue.

Well-known as the home of the Silent Summer Film Festival, The Portage has also recently been the locale for many other community activities, including concert events. One thing has been missing since the theater was renovated and reopened--high quality theatrical productions. But that is all about to change.

Portage Theater general manager Dennis Wolkowicz, has now enlisted a unique ally to prove that The Portage is also an excellent choice for theater companies who are looking for a great place to stage a play.

Michael A. Fudala and Craig J. Engel, co-leaders of the heralded theater troupe Theatre-on-the-Hill, are bringing an imaginative staging of "City of Angels" to The Portage on the weekend of February 6.

Mr. Wolkowicz says, "We've been looking for the right partner to show that The Portage is ideal for virtually every type of entertainment, especially theater productions. Mr. Fudala and Mr. Engel have an unrivalled track record of producing outstanding plays and we're privileged that we have the opportunity to work closely with them."

Wolkowicz continues, "City of Angels is the perfect show for our theater, a fantastic musical comedy that was inspired by the old film noirs that are so popular with many of the same folks who attend our Silent Summer Film Festival. Even better, we're going to offer high-quality live entertainment for a fraction of what the big downtown theaters charge."

A witty, steamy, and riotously funny take of the classic film noirs of the 1940s, City of Angels was hailed by Liz Smith of the New York Daily News as "One of the most innovative, brilliant, perfect, breathtaking, entertaining pieces of theatre I have ever seen."

Winner of the 1989 Tony Award for Best New Musical, City of Angels was written by legendary screenwriter Larry Gelbart (A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum; Tootsie; M\*A\*S\*H) and is complemented by Cy Coleman's sizzling jazz score.

"City of Angels is two musicals in one, where two seamless and very funny plots mesh into one amazing story. One half deals with the heartburn of writing a Hollywood screenplay; the other half is an enactment of the screenplay as it endures endless rewrites, forced upon the writer by an unscrupulous studio honcho. These alternate realities being told at the same time cre-

ate a sensational world, where real time characters are performed in color, and the fictional characters are dressed in shades of black and white, just like a vintage 1940s film noir."

Vocal Director Sharon Hand adds, "The characters are pure Hollywood cool, from the femme fatale and the bad little sister to the vindictive cop, egomaniacal director, millionaire cuckold, and cultured thugs. And the music--wow! We're so lucky to have incredible performers in the cast, and we are having a blast doing this show!"

City of Angels opens on Friday, February 6 at 8:00 pm. There will be an 8:00 pm show on February 7, and the final show is a 3:00 pm matinee on Sunday, February 8. Tickets are \$18.00 for adults and \$15.00 for students and seniors. Group rates available. In addition, anyone who brings an actor's head shot or resume will enjoy a discounted price of just \$12.00 for any of the shows.

The Portage Theater is located at 4050 N. Milwaukee Avenue, just west of Cicero Avenue, in the Six Corners community. For ticket information, please call 630-759-2970.

### News for residents of the 38th Ward

The Shared Cost Sidewalk Program has reopened for 2009 with a few changes. The unit cost charged to property owners will increase to \$3 per square foot from \$2.25 per square foot. Mid-block property owners will now split the cost of the courtesy walk, which runs perpendicular to the main sidewalk all the way to the curb. CDOT will no longer build the catwalk/landing step, the small strip of concrete sometimes found parallel to the curb. Owners of corner properties will be charged for the sidewalk on the non-address side of the property.

Applicants will be accepted on a first-come-first-serve basis. The Department of Transportation expects that demand will exceed the program's capacity and that at some point it will have to close the program and ask property owners to reapply next year. Paper applications will no longer be used in the program, to ensure the first-come, first served processing. The 38th Ward Service office will be happy to enter your request on the 311 system or you can call your request into 311. If you have any questions regarding the Shared Cost Sidewalk Program, you can contact CDOT at 312-743-1422 or email [cdotnews@cityofchicago.org](mailto:cdotnews@cityofchicago.org)

To help shorten the long winter, the City of Chicago is sponsoring Snow Days Chicago. It is a free five-day winter festival on Michigan Avenue in Grant Park featuring a national snow sculpting competition, dog sled demonstrations, a snow board rail jam and kids activities. Bring the whole family and watch as the city is transformed into a winter wonderland, showcasing over 27 beautiful and unique sculptures made entirely out of snow.

Snow Days Chicago will take place from February 12, 2009 to February 16, 2009 from 11am to 8pm from Thursday to Sunday. Monday hours are 11 am to 6pm.

If you should have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the 38th Ward Service office at 773-545-3838 or via email at [ward38@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ward38@cityofchicago.org)

- Thomas R. Allen, Alderman, 38th Ward

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**BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR...  
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**DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR**

Coordinate mailing and delivery of newsletters to members and local businesses. Contact John Arena at [communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org) for more information.

**CAPS REPORTER**

Attend and provide report back to board and communication committee on issues raised at monthly caps meetings. Contact Maria Pollack at [web@portagepark.org](mailto:web@portagepark.org) for more information.

**SECRETARY**

Secretary is an officer level position on the board of directors. Responsibilities include attending board and public meetings, keeping and distributing minutes. Contact [board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org) for more information.

**GRANT WRITER**

We have an opportunity to apply for a grant to fund the Kids Parade & Picnic. Application is due April 1. Contact [board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org) for more information.

**PPNA Financial Report**

*Balance sheet as of Dec. 29, 2008*

**GENERAL ASSETS**

Previous Ending Balance ..... \$7,380.89  
Current Ending Balance ..... \$5,792.09

**REVENUE**

Newsletter Advertising ..... \$50.00  
Membership ..... \$259.00  
Holiday Party Donation ..... \$793.60  
Holiday Party Raffle ..... \$335.00

**Total Revenue ..... \$1,437.60**

**EXPENSES**

Newsletter Printing ..... \$1,456.00  
Membership Committee ..... \$28.98  
Communications Committee ..... \$311.49  
State License ..... \$10.00  
Holiday party ..... \$1,219.93

**Total Expenses ..... \$3,026.40**



**MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT—show your card and receive discounts from these PPNA business partners**



Membership cards can be used to receive discounts at participating area businesses. Participating businesses and their discounts:

BUSINESS	DISCOUNT OFFERED
City Newsstand	10% off everything on Tuesdays
Drehobl Art Glass	10% discount
Dutch Cleaners	10% off dry cleaning
Easy Copy	4¢ b/w, 75¢ color copies everyday \$75 for 100 Business Cards
Energy Fitness	10% discount on all programs offered
Hands Over Stress	\$10 off 1 hour wellness massage \$5 off any 30 minute massage
La Peña Restaurant	10% off entire check, every day
Liberty Tax Service	50% off individual or business tax return
Meisa Cafe	10% off entire check, every day
Maria Pollock-Piano Tuning	\$10 off (773 286-6368)
New Six Corners Flowers	15% discount
Portage Park Handyman	10% off with proof of membership
Portage Theater	\$2 off ticket price. (except silent films)
Right Now Redesign	\$50 off a Room Redesign
Rudy's Cycles	10% off non-sale parts & access.
Veranda Lighting	10% discount on non-sale merchandise
Wong's Chinese	10% off entire check, every day

*As businesses are added, they will be listed in this newsletter and on our web site. If you are an area business and would like to participate, please contact the PPNA at [membership@portagepark.org](mailto:membership@portagepark.org). If you have not yet joined or renewed your PPNA membership, please do so to take advantage of this benefit. Cards will be mailed to each paid member, and will be valid through Dec. 31, 2008.*

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**Monday, Feb. 9th, 2009**

**7:30 p.m.,**

**4839 W Irving Park Rd.**

- I. Call to Order:  
Gerard Staniszewski
- II. President's Opening Statement
- III. Committee Reports:
- IV. **Guests Speaker-**  
**Dennis from Computerland**  
**Roman from Shiraz Restaurant**
- V. Old/New Business
- VII. Meeting Adjourned



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Refresh, reclaim, redo

## Advertise your business in the PPNA newsletter

PPNA News & Views is distributed to 4,500 homes and businesses within the boundaries of the Portage Park Neighborhood Association (Montrose Avenue to the north, Grace Street to the south, Cicero Avenue to the east and Central Avenue to the west) on a quarterly basis (March, June, September and December).

In addition, we also publish 6 Member issues in the months of February, May, August, October, November. In these months, the newsletters will be mailed directly to paid members. 1,200 additional copies are available to the general public only at business locations that are current advertisers or business members.

Electronic issues will be emailed to those members who request it and to certain individuals and institutions outside of the Association boundaries at the discretion of the PPNA Communications Committee. Past issues are available for download from our web site, [www.portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org). Quarterly and yearly ads will be posted on our web site sponsor page, with a link to your web site.

The newsletter is delivered on or about the first weekend of the month of publication. Ad deadline is the 15th of the month preceding the issue date.

### **RATES (per 3.5" x 2" ad)**

**10 issues—\$350.00 (4 quarterly, 6 Member Issues)**

**4 quarterly issues—\$180.00**

**Individual month—\$50.00**

To reserve your ad space contact John Arena at 773-283-9887 or e-mail [newsletters@portagepark.org](mailto:newsletters@portagepark.org)

## PPNA 2009 Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

This is a \_\_\_\_\_ New Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Would you like to receive email updates on PPNA news and events? Yes / No

Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Household \_\_\_\_\_ Business

Dues: \$15 per Household, \$8 per Senior Household, \$25 per Business

Please check any and all areas for which you would be willing to volunteer/participate:

<input type="checkbox"/> Community Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Children's Activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development/Zoning*	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden Club
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising (Parade, Holiday Party)	<input type="checkbox"/> History
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior's Activities
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (Distribution, Writing, Layout)	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Activities (Members Only Events, Portage Park Palates)
<input type="checkbox"/> Safety/CAPS	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Website Development	

\* Restaurants/Entertainment/Cultural Venues, Residential/Retail Development, and TIF Advisory Committee

Please list any issues and/or topics that you feel the PPNA should address this year:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please list any special skills you have which may be helpful to the PPNA:  
(Public Relations, Legal, Accounting, Musical/Artistic, Bilingual, etc. )

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Membership renewals are due January 1 and expire December 31.

Bring completed membership form with payment to the next public meeting, held the second Monday of each month at 7:30PM.  
Peoples Gas & Coke Building  
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

Or, mail completed membership form with payment to:  
Portage Park Neighborhood Association  
Attn: Jill Staniszewski  
5159 W. Montrose Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60641

## AUSTIN-IRVING LIBRARY EVENTS

### CHICAGO MOB ULTIMATUM: PAY, QUIT, OR DIE

Wednesday, February 4, 7:00 p.m.

Please join us for an author appearance and book signing by Don Herion, a retired Chicago Police Detective Sergeant, who spent forty years battling the Outfit's gambling operations in Chicago and Las Vegas. This event is co-sponsored by the Austin-Irving Community Council.

### WINTER STORYTIMES!!!

#### Toddler Storytime:

Ages 18 months-3 years

Tuesdays, thru March 17, 10-10:30 a.m.

#### Preschool Storytime:

Ages 3-5 years

Wednesdays, February 4-March 25,  
10:30-11:30 a.m.

Hope you can join us!

### AUSTIN-IRVING BRANCH

6100 W. Irving Park Road

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Mon. – Thurs.: 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Fri. & Sat. – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sun. – Closed

by Jan Kupka

Spring is closer than you think and with that in mind it's time to start planting your garden. Plants coming up and flowers blooming. A great pick me up for the spirit!

How about planning a Butterfly Garden by making your garden welcome butterflies in every stage of their development. Provide hospitable spots for sunning and laying eggs, host plants for hungry caterpillars, shallow water sources, and safe harbor when the time comes for metamorphosis. Most flowers that attract butterflies require at least six hours of sunlight each day. It's also helpful to create your butterfly garden in a spot that's sheltered from the wind.

Butterfly caterpillars each have their own food preferences. It's easy to see adult butterflies fly from flower to flower sipping nectar. It's harder to watch caterpillars feeding because they eat only a particular host plant. Each species lays eggs on the plants the caterpillars favor. That's why it's important to plant specific food sources to attract specific types of butterflies. Favorite caterpillar cuisine includes parsley, dill, fennel, milkweed, and white clover.

To lure the greatest variety of butterflies to your garden, select an assortment of bright flowers that produce nectar throughout the season. Some of the best include alyssum, butterfly bush, columbines, coral belles, cosmos, purple coneflower, heliotrope, larkspur, milkweed, salvia, sunflower, Mexican sunflower, and zinnia. Species with clustered blooms, such as phlox, offer several sips in one swoop for butterflies.

Butterflies are more likely to notice big displays of single colors. Massing individual flower species in large, informal groups – such as sunflowers, black-eyed Susans and phlox -- advertises all-you-can-sip portions that butterflies can hone in on from a distance. Butterflies like fast food. Blossoms that face upward, offering unobstructed landing pads, make it easy for butterflies to grab a quick sip.

In nature, butterflies flock to the muddy edges of puddles, creeks, or ponds, where water is fortified with minerals. You can satisfy their thirst just as well by placing a shallow saucer filled with wet sand among your flowers. Butterflies usually will not risk drinking from deeper water sources, such as birdbaths.

Good news! The Chicago Flower & Garden Show is returning after a two-year absence, to Navy Pier's Festival Hall A and B, near the east end of the Pier, from Sat., March 7, through Sun., March 15, 2009. The all new 2009 Show offers something for everyone. From themed-gardens, to hands-on demonstrations and in-the-soil workshops, to realistic garden displays that will give you ideas for your own yard or balcony. You'll find Chicago's first blush with spring to be invigorating. There will be free educational seminars daily that will range in topics and skill levels from novice to expert. Hands-on, in-the-soil, workshops on container gardening, planting and perennials will also be offered. Tickets for adults are \$12 on week-days and \$14 on week-ends. Children between 4- 12 are \$5. The hours are Monday –Saturday 10:00am – 8:00pm, Sunday 10:00am – 6:00pm. Navy Pier discounted parking is \$15. Special ticket rates for groups of 15 or more.

The February Garden Club will hold its planning meeting for 2009 Saturday, February 21 at 9:30am in the Community room on the 2nd floor (there is an elevator) of the Austin-Irving Library, 6100 W. Irving Park Rd. 312-744-6222. Refreshments will be served. For more information call the Portage Park Garden Club at 773-794-1984 or e-mail the PPGC at portageparkgc@comcast.net

## HOME CENTER

### Don't get "escos slammed"

#### (How not to be scammed by deceptive sales techniques)

As a result of the deregulation of our local power companies, YOU CAN CHOOSE your third-party energy supplier through Com Edison or The Gas Company. Don't allow a stranger to FORCE YOU TO CHOOSE through deceptive, coercive or even illegal sales techniques. There has been an epidemic of local residents being intimidated into changing their provider due to misrepresentations by third-party sales staff of regional Energy Service Companies (ESCOS) going door-to-door claiming to "save you money on your electric or gas bill." If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

**Here's How not to get scammed and "ESCOS Slammed" if you are visited or called by a sales representative claiming to work for a utility company.**

**1. Know the scam:** "ESCOS slamming" begins when a representative of an ESCOS such as U.S. Energy Savings Corporation either misrepresents him/herself ("Hi, I work for Com Ed/The Gas Company/ US Energy") OR misrepresents his/her intent

("Show me your Com Ed/The Gas Company bill—I want to save you money.")

**2. Know the "slam":** "ESCOS slamming" happens when a third party provider's sales reps (usually door-to-door salespeople) entice you into signing up for their "service" (e.g., IDT Energy misrepresents itself as being a direct provider to energy companies and thus if you "buy direct" from them, you will see a 7% reduction on your energy bill) OR sign you up for their service without your permission, by obtaining your personal information (name, address, utility company account number) or even by forging your signature. In many cases, instead of a reduction, you will see an increase in your monthly bill by \$100 or more.

**3. Know your rights:** It is your choice to use a third-party energy supplier and only your choice (for more info, visit [www.poweryourway.com](http://www.poweryourway.com) for a list of ESCOS and options). If you get pressured into switching to a third-party provider, JUST SAY NO. If you were pressured to sign up with a different provider, feel you were misled and signed up or were switched to a different energy company without your permission ("slammed") call the number on your Com Edison or The Gas Company bill immediately. You can refuse the service over the phone. You may still need to call the ESCOS to confirm the change has been made. Do it immediately!

**4. Take Action:** Even if you have not been scammed or "slammed," you can take immediate control of your energy accounts by asking for an "ESCOS freeze" on your accounts, requiring any changes to your account to come from you, not from a third-party ESCOS. If you have been scammed or "slammed," request the "ESCOS freeze" immediately once you have restored Com Ed or The Gas Company as your energy provider.

**5. File a complaint:** If you have been scammed or "slammed," you can file a complaint and make a difference. Complaints can be filed with:

Better Business Bureau <http://welcome.bbb.org/>

City of Chicago – 311

Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection <https://www.ftc-complaintassistant.gov/>

You can always contact your local elected officials and Community Board for assistance. the best consumer is an educated consumer. Don't get scammed or "escos slammed." if you do, or know someone who has, take action today!

*Prepared by the Concerned Citizens of Greenwood Heights / [www.ccgreenwoodhts.com](http://www.ccgreenwoodhts.com) / 11.19.08. Modified by Michael Jones 1/28.2009 for Chicago*

## Portage Park Palates *by Jan and Jill*



This month I'm highlighting Duke of Perth at 2913 N. Clark Street near the Century Shopping center close to Diversey.

We went there because we were in the area seeing Christopher Kimball, of America's Test Kitchen, and they have 'all you can eat' fish and chips on Wednesday's and Friday's. They also have a 'buy an entrée, get an entrée' offer on Monday's. We couldn't get a table right away, so I indulged in a pint of Bell's Haven beer. I ordered a bottle of McEwan's beer with diner because this is one of my favorite imports.

This is a Scottish pub opened in 1989 and this night it was full of locals having a good time ordering the 'all you can eat' fish and chips, a fine rendition of beer battered cod with fries and peas.

Perfect with a dash of malt vinegar. This was our choice as well. The place has great service and the ambiance was so much fun. I didn't hear anyone singing at the bar, but perhaps the night was young. This was a place that just might inspire you to break into a ditty or two. Check it out.

*We invite members of the PPNA to join us as well as continuing to ask for suggestions naming your favorite restaurant in the area. In 2009 we hope you will continue to suggest restaurants and join us when we meet. If you would like to join us, our only requirement is that you do not notify the restaurant. We all pay for our own portion of the check, share the dishes and offer opinions for the review. An article about the restaurant will appear in the following PPNA newsletter. Send your emails to [membership@portagepark.org](mailto:membership@portagepark.org). or [communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org).*

## St. Robert Bellarmine School's "Tiny Tots" Program

The winter 2009 session of St. Robert Bellarmine School's "Tiny Tots" program for two-year olds is underway. The program will meet weekly on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. through April 2, 2009. Children, accompanied by a parent or caregiver, will enjoy a range of activities led by Mrs. RoseAnn Loch, an experienced early childhood educator and parent. The program is open to the community at large; participants do not have to be members of St. Robert Bellarmine parish. The 12-week program cost is \$60. For more information or to register, visit [www.srb-chicago.org](http://www.srb-chicago.org) or call the school office at 773-725-5133.

## Calling All Alumni of St. Robert Bellarmine School

St. Robert Bellarmine is looking for ways for graduates to stay in touch. We are planning an all-class Alumni Reunion for Spring 2009. Alumni are asked to send your current contact information including name, maiden name (if applicable), year graduated, address, telephone, and email address. We also invite alumni to share memories of your time at the school or thoughts about the impact it has had on your life. Please send information to Sue Calcagno, Alumni Reunion Chair, c/o St. Robert Bellarmine School, 6036 W. Eastwood, Chicago, IL, 60630 or email it to [scalcagno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scalcagno@sbcglobal.net). You can also download an alumni information form from the alumni page of the school's website, [www.srb-chicago.org](http://www.srb-chicago.org).

## Our Lady of Victory School

Spring Open House Saturday, March 14, 9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. For PRE-K 3 through 8th Grade. The school offers a half-day and full-day pre-kindergarten programs for children ages 3 and 4, half-day and full-day kindergarten, a school day from 7:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., extended care from 6:30 to 7:45 a.m., from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Our Lady of Victory School offers Art, Spanish, Computer and Physical Education programs for all levels. Intramural & League Sports Programs.

The full schedule of tuition rates for 2009-2010 is available on the school web site, [www.olvchicago.org](http://www.olvchicago.org). Tuition assistance is available. Registration is open for the 2009-2010 school year. Please contact the school office if you are interested in a personal school tour, observing the classrooms in action, or having your child shadow a current OLV student.

Our Lady of Victory Elementary School is located at 4434 N. Laramie Ave (corner of Laramie and Sunnyside). Call 773-283-2229 or email [OLVictory-elem@archchicago.org](mailto:OLVictory-elem@archchicago.org) for more information.

## Members needed to fill Board and Committee seats

Current board member and Secretary, **Maria Pollock**, is up for reelection. She will be running for a seat on the board but will not seek a second term as Secretary.

New interim board member **Jill Stanizowski** will be seeking a permanent seat on the board and will take up the Membership Committee Chair.

**Ellen Stoner** has resigned from the board leaving the Economic Development Committee without a chairperson as we open a new year. The community owes Ellen a debt of thanks for her many years of service. She will be missed.

Remaining board members will continue in their positions and responsibilities. Please consider joining them in realizing the mission of the PPNA.

The board has ten seats open. Adding directors in the coming year is critical for the PPNA to continue to represent the community at the level it has in the past. If you are interested in seeing the PPNA hold more social events, improve neighborhood parks, communicate issues or improve the business district then consider running for a seat on the board of directors.

Contact Gerard at 736-3076 for more information. Visit [www.portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org) for more information on current PPNA activities.



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## Have You Noticed?? *By John Arena*

As we welcome in the New Year, it is clear to me that events in our world are just going to get more and more interesting. I mean, in 2008 we elected our new president, Barack Obama, and pushed past a social milestone. Inspiring. But as this year gets underway, many amazing events have already transpired.

As our consumption driven economy stalls I was entertained with free-market ideologues berating Obama as a Socialist out of one side of their mouths while making the 'tough' choice of handing over billions of public money to private banks. I feel so much better knowing they are there for me when the tough choice needs to be made. How it must so pain the free-markets-know-best-so-just-get-out-of-the-way-and-let-them-be-free profiteers to make this one-time exception to their principals. (Aside from that Savings & Loan glitch, or that Enron blip, or MCI thing...)

Just this week I witnessed our august and noble state senators solemnly vote out that self-professed man of the people, Citizen Rod. Must have been a tough vote for Emil Jones. After all, if he had not quashed that recall provision a few months back the voters might have saved him from being exposed as a hypocrite. I only hope that the gift of his senate seat to his son is enough to ease his suffering.

As for Citizen Rod, I just hope that he bribed enough potential jurors with healthcare (the state can't afford) and free bus rides (the CTA can't afford) so he can luck out with a hung jury.

Over at the county building everything is running smoothly. After raising taxes by \$400 Million last year, the board voted to approve \$4 Billion bond issue to pay for day-to-day expenses like the cost to keep thousands of friends and relatives of our hard-working elected officials in pension guaranteed government jobs. Nope, no layoffs there. Good to see the economy is working (for some).

Right here in Chicago our diminutive king has declared the solution to our economic woes is to simply sell off the fiefdom one piece at a time. An airport here, a toll road there, this park and that park. Sell it all (nicely rubber stamped by the city council votes). Just make sure it is sold to someone that someone sent. Then our liege can use those tax dollars for the biggest sell job of all. The 2016 Olympic Shenanigans.

Now I don't blame the politicians for *all* our troubles. No, we all have to answer for the sorry state of our state. It is you, dear voter, that must take some of the heat.

My father-in-law had a saying. If you put a man in a vault full of money enough times, sooner or later he'll come out with his pockets full. And that is what we do. We keep sending the same guys and gals back into the vault. Election after election we vote for the guy the unions tell us to vote for. Or the list the precinct captain stuffs in our hand. We vote for the guy whose name sounds familiar because we just didn't take the time to find out about the other candidates. Or just vote for the guy with the most yard signs, cause he will win anyway. Or we vote, and this is the vote those five-term aldermen love the most, by not voting at all. A clear vote for the status quos.

So what now? Well as luck would have it there is a primary election coming up on March 3rd for the 5th District Congressional seat vacated by Rahm Emanuel. Some familiar names are in the mix. Names whose political (and literal in some cases) family trees are so intertwined they map out like a bramble bush.

Here is what I propose. Lets do a little homework and cast our vote for a candidate that is qualified for the job but that believes the job is not a family heirloom to be handed down the line of succession. Someone who isn't someone someone sent.

You have no lack of choices. A labor lawyer/writer (Tom Geoghegan), a union activist (Jan Donatelli), a self-proclaimed peace activist (Matt Reichel), an economist (Charlie Wheelan), and two doctors (Victor Forsys, Paul Bryar). If you don't like the Democrats, you can always vote for one of the Republican or Green candidates.

It's time to stir the pot.

*'Have You Noticed' contains opinions that may not be the opinion of the PPNA board or its members. Have you noticed anything that needs more noticing? Do you have an opinion? Send it to our new address: [haveyounoticed@portagepark.org](mailto:haveyounoticed@portagepark.org)*



The Portage Park Neighborhood Association News is a publication of the PPNA.

PPNA Board Members are:

**Gerard Staniszewski – PPNA President**

**John Arena – Vice President/Communications**

**Bob Brobson – Director**

**Chris Ericksen – Treasurer**

**Jill Staniszewski – Membership**

**Maria Pollock – Director**

For more information about the PPNA and/or the PPNA News, e-mail us at:

[board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org) or On-line at [www.portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org)

The PPNA is a Non for Profit 501c4 Social Welfare Organization.

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