



# PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community  
News & Views

JUNE 2009

## Meetings and Announcements

**Portage Park  
Neighborhood Association:**

Next meeting -  
June 8, 7:30 p.m.,  
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

### Guest Speakers:

*Rich Escallier*

Portage Park Handyman  
will answer your home  
improvement questions.

*PLUS: Homemade treats  
courtesy of PPNA members  
Babette and Dirk.*

## C.A.P.S. Meetings

All meetings at 7 p.m.

**Beat 1624 - June 24**

at Biagio's Banquets,  
4242 N. Central Ave.

**Beat 1633 - June 16**

at Wright College (Theater)  
4300 N. Naragansett

**Beat 1634 - June 25**

at Portage-Cragin Library,  
5108 W. Belmont Ave.

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

## 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](http://www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html)

Pay with PayPal.

PORTAGE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
& CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

TENTH ANNUAL  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY  
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SUNDAY ~ JUNE 28 ~ 8 A.M. - 1 P.M.

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Parade to Portage Park at 9 a.m.



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# May Public Meeting Update

The May meeting was well attended in anticipation of a full agenda that included: 16th District Police Commander Anthony Riccio, CAPS team members Cpt. Lenti and Lt. Joe Schober addressed the recent gang tagging near Dickinson Park; and a representative of the Department of Water Management talking about its new MeterSave program and Adam De Groot from AAA Farms spoke about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and his farm's products.

The meeting kicked off with a status report by Com. Riccio on the police response to a series of gang tagging on Belle Plaine Ave. near Dickinson Park. The actions taken include seat belt missions, sweeps of the apartment buildings across from the park and more active monitoring of the police camera installed at the intersection of Belle Plaine and Leverage. Other measures include a car posted in the area from 3 p.m. to 7 a.m.

According to Lt. Schober, of the 16th District Tactical Unit, arrests have been made for misdemeanor activity in the area but the individuals suspected of executing the tagging could not be positively identified from the images captured on the POD camera. The tagging, which appears to be a tit-for-tat game between rival groups for 'turf', has reoccurred in recent weeks.

In addition to these measures, foot patrols have begun along Milwaukee Ave. from Jefferson Park CTA station to Irving Park Rd. to bolster the

police presence during road construction along that route.

Heightened police presence in the area will continue for the immediate future and Lt. Schober has committed to provide an update at the June 8th PPNA meeting.

A representative from the City of Chicago Department of Water Management (DWM) spoke about MeterSave, a new program offered by to Chicago homeowners to voluntarily install meters to help them save water and money.

PPNA member Jennifer Dianovski has had a meter installed and has seen a 25% reduction in her water bill. Homes with the meters pay only for the water they actually use. Single family homes and two flats pay an assessed amount, currently \$209.50. The city is offering a guarantee that your metered bill will not be higher than the assessed rate for your building type for seven years.

The new meters, in conjunction with a remote transmitter attached, will allow far greater efficiency in the collection of water meter reading data. The Department of Water Management will not need to gain access to your building to read your meter. It will end the problem of "estimated" readings that are often inaccurate and subject to later adjustment and surprises for customers.

Find out more about this program and incentives for this program at <https://www.metersave.org/>.

**Friends of Portage Park Update:**

- 6/11 Indoor pool closes. *Tentative*
- 6/12 Outdoor pool opens. *Tentative*
- 6/20 Noon Uncovered Theatre Company will be at Portage Park, touring Shakespeare's Twelfth Night—an engaging, high energy, five-person adaptation of Shakespeare's popular comedy that brings the sometimes difficult-to-understand language of Shakespeare to life. This production is a joint project with The Drifting Theatre Company. *FREE*, but donations will be accepted.
- 6/21 Farmers' Market at Portage Park 10 am - 2pm  
 Farmers' Market will be located on the north east corner (Berteau & Long) of Portage Park. Market will run on 1st and 3rd Sundays beginning 6/21 and end 10/4 from 10am - 2pm.
- 6/27 FREE rain barrel distribution at Portage Park
- 6/28 10th Annual Independence Day Kids Parade & Picnic

Thanks for your continued support! For more information, please visit: [www.friendsofportagepark.org](http://www.friendsofportagepark.org).

## News for residents of the 38th Ward

"Honoring those who served, fought and died in the defense of America's Freedom" are the sentiments found on the new Veterans Memorial at Merrimac Park. The dedication ceremony took place May 22nd. Many guests attended, including honored veterans of the United States Military, State Representative Joseph Lyons, Thomas J. Gast, President of Gast Monuments, and members of the Chicago Park District and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs.

The **5th Annual Father's Day Bike Ride on June 21st**, begins at Eli's Cheesecake World, 6701 W. Forest Preserve Dr. and explores the Portage Park and Wright College community and northwest side of Chicago. The ride begins at 9:45 am with a continental breakfast at 8:45am. To register, call Sharon at 773-308-7015, email [smrowiec@elicheesecake.com](mailto:smrowiec@elicheesecake.com) or register in person at Eli's by June 16th.

Please do not put your old analog TV set in your garbage cart or in the alley. They will be sent to a landfill. Likewise, the Household Chemicals and Computer Recycling Facility does not accept television sets. ABT TV will accept any TV, free of charge. The Salvation Army will accept any working television. For a complete listing, please visit [www.ward38.com](http://www.ward38.com) > Community Resources > Analog television disposal.

If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact our service office at 773-545-3838 or via email at [ward38@cityofchicago.org](mailto:ward38@cityofchicago.org).

Tom Allen  
38<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman

## News for residents of the 45th Ward

### ► CITY STICKER DAY—45th Ward Public Service Office

Tuesday, June 23rd, 10am-4pm 5205 N. Milwaukee Tuesday

### ► "MOVIES IN THE PARK"—Sponsored by Alderman Patrick Levar

**The Express**

Thursday, June 25th at Dusk, Rosedale Park - 6312 W. Rosedale.

For more information please call 45th Ward Public Service Office at 773 545-2545.

### Support the Portage Park Farmer's Market

The first market of the season will be held from 10am - 2pm on Sunday, June 21, 2009 in the northeast corner of Portage Park, 4100 N. Long Ave (Berteau & Long Ave). Farmers from the region, local bakeries, and other vendors will attend. Remaining dates for the season are the first and third Sundays of each month. (June 21, July 5 & 19, August 2 & 16, September 6 & 20, October 4).



## 40th Annual Neighborhood Garage Sale

**Saturday June 20th  
9am to 4pm**

One day only! Rain or shine.  
Refreshments and addresses  
of sale area available at

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5051 W. Belle Plaine Ave.

Got questions?  
Call Susan Kennelly  
312-925-6661

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**PARENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Lead efforts to provide services targeting parents and children. 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 John Arena at [communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@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 info.

**PPNA Financial Report**

*Balance sheet as of May 25, 2009*

**ENDING BALANCE**

Previous Ending Balance ..... \$5,895.51  
Current Ending Balance ..... \$5,390.98

**REVENUE**

Newsletter Advertising ..... \$880.00  
Membership ..... \$153.00

**Total Revenue ..... \$1,033.00**

**EXPENSES**

Newsletter Printing ..... \$468.00  
Membership Committee ..... \$29.80  
Communications Committee..... \$31.73  
Community Development ..... \$150.40  
Kids' Parade..... \$858.00

**Total Expenses ..... \$1,537.53**

**AIR CONDITIONER FOR SALE**

Whirlpool 24,200 BTU commercial air condition for sale. \$200 or best offer. This cools the whole first floor of a bungalow but is better for a commercial situation.

773-545-0547

**YARD WORK**

18 y/o boy will mow lawns or do odd jobs.

773 282-5857



**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.*

**PPNA Public Meeting Agenda**

**Monday, June 8, 2009**

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

- I. Call to Order:  
Gerard Staniszewski
- II. President's Opening Statement:  
Gerard Staniszewski
- III. Committee Reports
- IV. GUEST SPEAKERS  
*Rich Escallir -*  
Portage Park Handyman
- V. Old/New Business
- VI. Meeting Adjourned

**YARD SALE**

**SATURDAY**

**JULY 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>**

\* \* \*

**9 am - 4 pm**

\* \* \*

**5023 W. Grace Street**

## 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. 1200 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.

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

### **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

## 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

## Portage Park Palates

by Jan and Jill

PPP plus three decided to go to Artemio's Restaurant on Irving Park Rd. We have been hearing for a long time that this place was worth the trip and we finally got around to checking it out. Well, let me tell you, we probably should have gone long ago.

The dining room is pleasant and well lit. All tables and booths have white tablecloths with sheets of white paper on top. I found the room very clean and comfortable.

The salsa and chips were already on the table along with a round of drinks by the time I arrived with my partner. We quickly ordered margaritas and joined the conversation. The chips were a bit hard for my taste, but none of the other four people complained, so I am probably wrong. As for the salsa, it was a good spicy red salsa that went well with the chips and the other food we were about to order. This was a good start for the rest of the meal.

We all found the menu to be very large and packed with traditional Mexican fare. When you go, make sure you check the daily drink and food specials on the menu. As a matter of fact, they have a Cinco de Mayo special going on now for \$1.00 Margaritas. WOW. This is for a limited time only. Hopefully by the time you get this, they will still be doing it, but if not, do not let it keep you away.

Our poor waitress, Blanca had to come back a few times to ask for our order, we kept telling her to come back. The size of the menu and the fact that we cannot stop talking is deadly for a waitress. Blanca took this in stride and kept bringing drinks.

Okay, now, the food. We ordered a large cross section of fare, so get ready. To start, Guacamole for \$5.95, very good, I think we cleaned the plate in seconds. For the main entrées, one of us ordered a #4 combination with a flouta, enchilada and taco. Another ordered the #7 combination with a taco, tostada and quesadilla (all carne asada). Both combinations come with rice and beans and are \$6.95. Single tacos were ordered by another and included, carne asada, chorizo and al pastor, all \$1.95 each and a chile relleno for \$2.29. Chicken soup was the order of the day for another one of us and was priced at \$6.95 for a large bowl with plenty of chicken on the bone. Finally, the last of us ordered, quesadilla \$1.50, carne asada taco, chicken taco, both for \$1.95 (plus cheese and sour cream for \$.35 each) and a chorizo sope for \$2.75. I think that was it. We all cleaned our plates. This should tell you something.

Taking into consideration the \$1.00 margaritas and a 20% off coupon brought by one of our savvy numbers, I must tell you, all of this was about \$48.00! (plus tip) For five people!

I say, take yourself and your family to Artemio's, 4918 W Irving Park Rd, or, call ahead for carry out (773-545-2207). You will not regret it. They open every day at 8:00 AM (yes, they have breakfast, but that will be another review) and close at 2:00 AM on Friday and Saturday midnight the rest of the days.



# GREEN CORNER

For Our Community, Our Planet



## Large Turnout for Climate Cycle Inaugural Ride

Climate Cycle wishes to thank the 350 riders, numerous donors, volunteers, sponsors and supporters who made the May 9th event a huge success, generating more than \$75,000 to combat global warming! This first bike-a-thon is just the beginning of something special that will continue to grow in years to come.

### GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH: Compact Fluorescent Bulb Disposal

### How can you help?

While Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) do contain mercury, it doesn't diminish their effectiveness. However, the importance of proper disposal is essential. If the bulbs end up in landfills the mercury may enter waterways. There, it accumulates through the food chain until it builds up in the tissue of fish. If people eat enough contaminated fish, mercury can cause developmental problems in children and neurological damage in adults.

That's bad, but consider this: 40 percent of mercury emissions in the U.S. comes from coal-fired power plants. So by lowering electrical demand, using CFLs can actually cut mercury emissions, as well as reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change. Again, the key is proper disposal.

The good news is that a large-scale collection system through big-box stores has been established. According to one informative website, <http://earth911.com/>, **these nearby facilities will currently accept used CFLs:**

#### But what do you do if a CFL should break?

Before you begin clean-up, air out the room. Have people and pets leave the room, and don't let anyone walk through the breakage area on

their way out. Open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes or more. Shut off the central forced-air heating/air conditioning system, if you have one.

For hard surfaces, carefully scoop up glass fragments and powder using stiff paper or cardboard and place them in a glass jar with metal lid (such as a canning jar) or in a sealed plastic bag. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass pieces and powder. Wipe the area clean with damp paper towels or disposable wet wipes. Place towels in the glass jar or plastic bag. Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up the broken bulb on hard surfaces.

To clean-up carpeting or rugs, carefully pick up glass fragments and place them in a glass jar with metal lid (such as a canning jar) or in a sealed plastic bag. Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to pick up any remaining small glass fragments and powder.

If vacuuming is needed after all visible materials are removed, remove the vacuum bag (or empty and wipe the canister), and put the bag or vacuum debris in a sealed plastic bag.

If clothing or bedding materials come in direct contact with broken glass or mercury-containing powder from inside the bulb that may stick to the fabric, the clothing or bedding should be thrown away. Do not wash such clothing or bedding because mercury fragments in the clothing may contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage.

For more detailed instructions, visit: [www.energystar.gov/cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/cfls).

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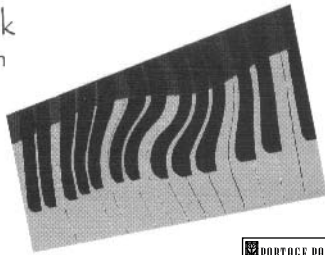
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## Chicago River Family Canoe Trip

This is a great opportunity for your family to learn how to canoe on the river. Equipment and instruction is provided by Friends of the

Chicago River. Event details:

**June 25**  
**River Park, 6 pm**  
**5100 N. Francisco Ave.**  
**312.742.5039**  
**6 & up, \$10 per family**

Mail in registration is required. See form at: [http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/docs/2c19b9e0-925f-4057-9a1c-ddc7d129bc1d\\_document.pdf](http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/docs/2c19b9e0-925f-4057-9a1c-ddc7d129bc1d_document.pdf)

# Portage Park to Host Farmer's Market

You've waited long enough. You've shoveled and salted and shoveled and dodged potholes during one of the coldest winters in recent history. Spring hasn't exactly been kind, bringing cooler than normal temperatures and rainy conditions. But look on the bright side. All that rain has helped farms crops grow, and it is only a matter of time before you will share in their harvest.

Mark your calendars for June 21st when *Friends of Portage Park* bring you the first **Farmer's Market in Portage Park!** The market is the perfect place to celebrate Father's Day or the Summer Solstice. We'll be in the northeast corner of the park near Berteau and Long every other Sunday beginning June 21st and ending October 4th.

This summer's market will feature regional produce, freshly baked goods, natural soy candles, free-range poultry and meat, farm fresh eggs, regionally produced dairy products, freshly

cut flowers, a chance to subscribe to a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and a knife sharpening station. We are still working to bring even more vendors to the market, so stay tuned.

If you are looking for a market the second and fourth Sundays of each month, visit the Independence Park Farmer's Market held from 9am – 1pm at 3945 N Springfield Ave. Both the Portage Park and Independence Park markets are working together to bring weekly produce to our area.

For more information regarding the Portage Park Farmer's Market, go to the FOPP website at <http://www.friendsofportagepark.org> and click on the News page, email [portagemarket@friendsofportagepark.org](mailto:portagemarket@friendsofportagepark.org), or call 773-628-7024.

**Exact dates are June 21, July 5 & 19, August 2 & 16, September 6 & 20, and October 4.**



By Jan Kupka

Vines are becoming very popular with gardeners because they add a vertical accent to any garden. Most annual vines are grown from seed and are seldom sold as plants in garden centers.

One of the most rewarding annuals to grow from seed is the Sweet Pea. Owning a reputation for being difficult to grow in Zone 5 these beauties prized for their pretty, intensely fragrant flowers are worth the challenge. The tall, climbing varieties that reach 5 to 10 feet tall have many stems full of blossoms over a six to eight week period. The container varieties are diminutive plants with 8 to 10 inch stems and spreading habits need no supports. And the non-climbing, dwarf variety are bushy 1 to 3-foot-tall plants. All produce lovely clusters of 1-inch long, pea-type flowers in white, light orange, yellow, lavender, blue, red, purple; some produce bicolor flowers.

Timing is the key. Start the seeds inside or plant outdoors in late April to mid-May. The late mild frosts do not hamper sweet peas. Pick a sunny spot with some afternoon shade. Always keep the plants moist. Plant the seeds 1 inch deep and 2 to 3 inches apart. The seeds germinate in between 10 to 28 days depending on weather and soil conditions. When the seedlings reach several inches tall thin them to stand about 5 to 6 inches apart allowing the plants to grow and mature. When the seedlings have 3 to 4 sets of leaves, pinch off the top set to encourage branching out.

An easy to grow vine is the Purple Hyacinth Bean and it's a gorgeous plant. The Hyacinth bean offers fragrant, lavender-colored pea-type flowers all summer. These blooms become stunning burgundy-purple seedpods. The foliage is great as well. The leaves usually are tinged with a cast to them. This spectacular but under used vine is a snap to start. Grow in full sun and moist soil and be sure to give it a sturdy support on which to climb. The vine can climb to 15 feet or more.

April 1 - May 31 the Magnificent Mile will come alive with color as hundreds of thousands of vibrant tulips bloom on one of the greatest avenues of the world. Tulips on The Magnificent Mile® celebrates spring, architecture and Daniel Burnham's "City Beautiful" vision for Chicago. For more information about this event, contact Melanie Mapes at [mmapes@gnmaa.com](mailto:mmapes@gnmaa.com).

The Portage Park Garden Club will hold a short meeting Saturday, June 27 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., before the Second Annual Garden Walk. A pot luck luncheon at a member's home will follow the garden walk. For more information call the Portage Park Garden Club at 773-794-1984 or e-mail the PPGC at [portageparkgc@comcast.net](mailto:portageparkgc@comcast.net).

## Lincoln and Black Hawk Documentary Showing at Austin-Irving Library

Dr. Jeffrey Chown of Northern Illinois University and the creator of the PBS documentary, "Lincoln and Black Hawk" will be the host for this informative event. The documentary takes an in-depth look at Illinois' painful entry into statehood and Abraham Lincoln as a young man. Dr. Chown will give a short history of the Black Hawk War and field questions from the audience following the film's showing. Event details:

**June 10th, 7:00 PM, Austin-Irving Branch Library  
6100 W. Irving Park Rd. Call 312-744-6222 for more information.**

## St. Robert Bellarmine Catholic School Preschool News

To meet demand for our pre-school program, we are adding another preschool classroom for the 2009-2010 year!

Families who were on the waiting list can now register.

Openings for full and half day are currently available.

Before and after school care is available.

The hot lunch program is also available to preschoolers.

More information, including schedules and tuition rates, is available on the school website, <http://www.srb-chicago.org/index.php> or by calling the school at 773-725-5133.

## Faith Church Food Drive a Continued Success

The Faith Church "God Squad" Sunday School kids went door-to-door and collected 7 wagons filled with food donations for the Irving Park Food Pantry!

A big thank you to the generous neighbors in our area for continuing to support the Pantry in these tough times.

Faith Church will be sponsoring the Irving Park Food Pantry as their Mission of the Month. Throughout the month of June, the church will be collecting donations of non-perishables and toiletries. Please call 773-283-8545 for drop-off hours or to arrange an at-home pickup.

# The Maurer Law Group

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## Have You Noticed??

By John Arena

If you have been reading this column you know I have been against the police camera being installed over Dickinson Park from the beginning. I have been collecting signatures to have it removed for a few weeks and many people say they don't like it but "maybe it is a deterrent."

If the recent string of tagging along Belle Plaine Ave. near Dickinson Park demonstrated anything it is that the Chicago Police Department POD camera is not a deterrent to all crime. I offer the photo at right as Exhibit A.

The 16th District Police maintain it is useful in certain situations and Ald. Levar funded it's installation (to satisfy one resident who has since moved) so he has the final say. Not wanting to look soft on crime, the camera will remain for the time being.

I understand POD cameras have a place in fighting and solving crime. For example, used in series along a high-crime commercial strip cameras can cast a net that often proves to be a valuable resource in solving crime. I have to question the camera's value when we can't solve the crime of who defaced public property right underneath our nose. Wouldn't the camera be better served in a high traffic area, like the Jefferson Park CTA station, versus a neighborhood park which proves to be one of the safest in the city, thanks to active involvement of the community.

Community eyes and ears reporting suspicious activity and police response time and presence do a better job of keeping us safe. This is what resulted in an arrest back in 2007 and what brought such a quick response to the recent tagging.

This brings me to my second point. I think the camera actually works against that notion. Pacifying residents into thinking the camera is on the job and they don't need to report suspicious activities to 911. Most people I spoke with were surprised that the camera is not monitored very often. Per the 16th District, from October 2007 to November 2008 the camera was monitored 200 times. This means an officer cycled through the many cameras in a given area and watch the Dickinson Park feed for less than 20 minutes. That means at most the camera was monitored for 67 hours of the 8,760 hours in a year. This is most likely a high estimate since there is not a persistent crime problem at the park and officers will move on if the park is empty or quite.

So here are my suggestions. If you see something that looks like trouble, call 911. (Calls are anonymous so you are safe from reprisals by the ones causing the trouble.) Don't assume someone else will call. Even if they do call, the response time will be faster if more than one call is received about a single event or issue.

Regardless of what some 'hood' with a spray can or paintbrush writes on a fence, the people who work hard at keeping this neighborhood as great as it is own the parks, the streets, the alleys and the right to feel safe in their front yards.

In the meantime, the signatures supporting removal of the camera will be handed over to Ald. Levar. It will be interesting to see if the many have more influence than the one.

'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

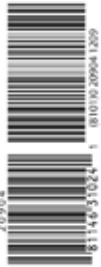


The POD Camera over Dickinson Park has not proved to be a deterrent to crime.

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Portage Park



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

board@portagepark.org or On-line at www.portagepark.org

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