



PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community
News & Views

MAY 2009

Dickinson Park Playlot Renovation Begins.

by Bob Brobson
President, Dickinson Park
Advisory Council

The Dickinson Playlot Park Advisory Council held an Earth Day event on April 18 partnering with Friends of the Parks organizations throughout the city. Thank you to those 70 plus volunteers who showed up and spread mulch around the trees, raked the playlots and cleaned the park free of trash. A special thank you to the Six Corners Association, PPNA, Dunkin Donuts, the Silent Theatre Company and to the local merchants who generously donated money and items for our fundraising efforts toward the new park.

It was a truly dedicated and refreshing community effort despite the surprise we all realized on Monday, April 20, when construction started on the park improvements without notice.

As for the park improvements, the Advisory Council has yet to receive an update from the Park District relative to the construction. We have invited Alderman Levar to our May 7 Advisory Council Meeting to address the park improvements with the community in hopes he can share an update with us and answer questions.

A Park District official has recently replied to information requests with the following statements: "No tax dollars are being used to fund this park improvement"; Since the community did not provide any additional funding toward the construction, the community "has no personal stake in the project"; "I cannot provide you with a set of plans, you have seen the October concept plan"; and finally "The park is expected to be under construction thru Labor Day."

The Advisory Council would like to address these statements with the community on May 7 and we hope the community will bring a strong show of support with their voices in a community backed effort to Alderman Levar and recall his support for the community based concept plan at our last meeting. The council also urges you to express your thoughts whether or not you feel our community DOES have personal stake in this project since it's in our front yards and in our community.



ABOVE: Removal of the playlot begins.

MIDDLE: Silent Theater Co. entertains the kids (and some parents)

BELOW: Workers of all ages pitch in.



PPNA Board Member to Receive Community Service Award.

Long time PPNA board member Maria Pollock will be awarded the Peddle Power Award from the Active Transportation Alliance.

Falon Mihalic, Social Marketing Director for Active Transportation Alliance, will present the honor at the May 11 PPNA public meeting.

Meetings and Announcements

Portage Park Neighborhood Association:

Next meeting -
May 11, 7:30 p.m.,
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

Guest Speakers:

Dept. of Water Mgmt. Rep.
MeterSave Program

Adam deGroot

AAA Farms on plans to begin a local farmers market.

PLUS: Homemade treats
courtesy of PPNA member
Babette and Dirk.

C.A.P.S. Meetings

All meetings at 7 p.m.

Beat 1624 - May 27
at Biagio's Banquets,
4242 N. Central Ave.

Beat 1633 - May 19
at Wright College (Theater)
4300 N. Naragansett

Beat 1634 - May 28
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

Contacting the PPNA board:
board@portagepark.org

General questions or info:
membership@portagepark.org
communications@portagepark.org
seniors@portagepark.org
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>
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Friends of Portage Park Update

Earth Day was a success! Thanks to volunteers for cleaning the park, SmartCenter of Lincolnwood for test drives of Smart Cars and wonderful music from Steve Hartley's Blue Grass Band. Thanks also to Jewel/Osco for donating 200 reusable bags for Earth Day participants. The kids' sale was well attended and plans are being made for a fall kids' sale. If you are interested in registering as a seller, please send an email to portageparkplayground@gmail.com or call 427-8545 for more information.

Mark your calendar:

- **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.
- **8/27 Outdoor movie - Kung Fu Panda at dusk**
- **Playground renovation update:** *There are no formal plans for the playground renovation. The playground committee is looking for fundraising ideas and volunteers to research and write grants. We are sending another set of letters to our elected officials to support and help fund the playground renovation. Please do your part and contact our elected officials and request that they fund renovating the Portage Park playground.*

Thanks for your continued support! For more information, please visit: www.friendsofportagepark.org

Neighborhood Retailer "PC Here" Helps Portage Park Residents Get Online Affordably

By Abigail Dean

PC Here opened its doors in March at 4055 North Milwaukee Avenue (across the street from Portage Theater). The current location is spacious, well-lit and comfortable, with 15 networked Dell computers and a friendly staff on-hand to offer support when needed.

Owner Michael Inglimo is passionate about providing easy and inexpensive computer access to the Portage Park neighborhood and offers low hourly rates, specials, senior discounts and training sessions.

Inglimo, a devoted computer whiz who's been working with PCs since 1988, is also a member of the Microsoft Partner Program, which helps keep PC Here up-to-speed with new technology.

Convenience, access and serving the community through affordable technology are key components of PC Here's business model. Inglimo has worked closely with the Six Corners Association to ensure that the word gets out about his mission.

In addition to the internet access—which is available 7 days a week from 9am to 1am—patrons may bring in their computers for repairs or virus removal and perform an array of



PC Here's 15 new computers are internet-ready, 7 days a week until 1am, at its 4055 N. Milwaukee location.

office services, such as scanning, copying and faxing. PC Here can also assist customers with small-business marketing initiatives, like printing business cards, flyers or designing websites.

Despite the slow economy, Inglimo sees expansion on the horizon, including the addition of two new stations—and eventually more employees—as well as a remote maintenance plan for customers' home computers. Looking to the future, Inglimo is optimistic about PC Here's role in our community, as its primary affordable technology provider.

News for residents of the 38th Ward

There are two dates I'd like to bring to your attention:

- The Household Hazardous Waste Drop-off will take place on Saturday, May 9th at DeVry University, 3401 N. Rockwell Ave. from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. They are accepting old or unused prescriptions, computers, cell phones, fax machines, scanners, keyboards, hazardous household chemicals, lead or oil based paints, old gas cans and/or gas powered lawn mowers. For more information, visit www.cityofchicago.org/environment
- City sticker and residential parking stickers will be sold at the 38th Ward Service Office on June 9th from 10:00 am -5:30 pm. The office is located at 5817 W. Irving Park Road. If you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact my office at 773-545-3838 or via email at ward38@cityofchicago.org

Tom Allen

38th Ward Alderman

Chicago Neighborhood Festivals Begin

Summer is around the corner and the festivals are beginning! Check out these favorite Chicago events in the month of May.

Chicago Mayfest

www.mayfestchicago.com

May 15-17, 2009

3100 N. Ashland

May 15: 5-10pm; May 16 & 17: 11am-10pm

Featuring live music and entertainment, food, dancing and an open mic in the heart of family-friendly Lincoln Square.

Do-Division Street Fest & Sidewalk Sale

www.do-divisionstreetfest.com

May 30-31, 2009

Division St. @ Damen Ave.

Noon-10pm

Spans 10 city blocks, on Division Street from Ashland to Leavitt, and features a live music stage sponsored by Empty Bottle, a wide variety of high quality food offered by Division Street restaurants, plenty of ice cold beer, unique kid's activities, and an elaborate Sidewalk Sale put on by Division Street Merchants.

Belmont-Sheffield Music Festival

<http://www.chicagoevents.com/event.cfm?eid=140>

May 30-31, 2009

N. Sheffield btwn. Belmont & School

May 30: 12-10pm, May 31: 12-9pm

This 25th annual event boasts some of the hottest national, regional and local musical entertainment around and also features fine arts, crafts and visual displays reflecting the energy of this popular neighborhood.

10th Anniversary Kids Parade Committee Meeting

Help make The tenth annual Parade & Picnic one to remember. Your creativity and energy is needed on Wednesday, May 13, 7 p.m. at the home of Gerard and Jill Staniszewski, 5159 W. Montrose. Do it for the kids!

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MON	\$2 Burgers
TUE	\$5 Pizzas
WED	\$7 Unlimited Pasta
THUR	\$5 Nacho Platters
FRI	Chef's Special
SAT	Kids Eat Free!
SUN	25¢ Wings

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PARENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Lead efforts to provide services targeting parents and children. Contact John Arena at 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 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 for more info.

PPNA Financial Report

Balance sheet as of April 30, 2009

GENERAL ASSETS

Previous Ending Balance \$6,028.74
 Current Ending Balance \$5,895.51

REVENUE

Newsletter Advertising \$350.00
 Membership \$102.00

Total Revenue \$452.00

EXPENSES

Newsletter Printing \$468.00
 Communications Committee..... \$77.23
 Community Development \$40.40

Total Expenses \$585.23

**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



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. 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, May 13, 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
Dept. of Water Management - MeterSave Program
Adam deGroot - AAA Farms
- V. Old/New Business
- VI. Meeting Adjourned

**Portage Park School Sets
Flea Market for May 16th**

The Portage Park School PTA will be sponsoring its 3rd annual outdoor spring flea market on May 16th from 9am-3pm. The rain date is May 30th from 9am-3pm. We have a full house of 40+ vendors. The flea market will be held in the playground of the school located at 5330 W. Berteau kiddie corner from Portage Park. Refreshments/food from Bacci's pizza will be available. Items to be sold include, but are not limited to: antiques, collectibles, jewelry, dolls, toys, children's items, clothing, new kitchenware, books, and much much more.

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

Disney II Magnet School News

FROM THE INTERIM ADVISORY COUNCIL (IAC) Please join us in congratulating Disney II students and teachers on their continuous outstanding academic achievement, as evidenced by the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) assessment data. The Third Quarter results show a steady increase from 68.5% to now 83% of students who are reading at or above grade level! The steady progress is consistent throughout all grades. In addition, the school is also celebrating perfect attendance with a traveling trophy every month. Congratulations to Ms. Rizzo's First Graders for their perfect attendance in March! We know that attendance is tied to student success in school - so thank you families for your continued support to this goal.

ARTS ALIVE At Disney II, Fine and Performing arts play a big part in the curriculum. Emerald City performed "If You Take a Mouse to School" for students in early April. Recently, the children completed their social studies project unit "We The People." Over the last ten weeks, students studied famous people, including presidents, inventors and heroes across all subjects. They learned how anyone can be a hero and to draw their own self-portraits. The culminating activity was a series of songs, speeches and performances to parents, including a special interpretive dance from the school's drama club.

Disney II Kindergartners, First and Second graders took a field trip to the Art Institute of Chicago to complete their study of "We The People." After working on their own self-portraits, scholars traveled to the Institute to study the self-portraits of the world's most famous painters and sculptors. They enjoyed viewing works by Van Gogh, Bazille, Chardin and Motley, as well as the Institute's beautiful Impressionist collection. (Some of the student's self-portraits will be part of the silent auction on May 30th. Buy them now before they become expensive collector's items!)

COMMUNITY INVITED TO AUCTION & FUNDRAISER on Saturday May 30th. Disney II PTA presents the ABCs: A is for Auction, B is for Benefit, C is for Community, on May 30th. It's an evening you won't want to miss! Community members are all invited to join us for the opportunity to mingle with Disney II teachers, staff, and parents. A fun night of dancing, cocktails, and hors d'oeuvres is all included in the \$50 price of admission. It's as easy as 1,2,3...contact Stacey Nyman to buy your tickets today! scstnyman@sbcglobal.net or 773-267-3266.

COMMUNITY BOOK SALE is May 16th from 9am - 2pm. Disney Book Sale has finally arrived! Thank you for all donations (Disney is still collecting through May 8th at the North Entrance)! We have over 2000 books to sell on May 16th from 9am - 2pm. Adult literature, children's books, DVD's, and VHS tapes range from 50 cents to \$3 and everything will be 1/2 price for the last hour of the book sale. All proceeds will go towards buying the students some gym mats! If weather permits, the sale will be outside on school grounds, otherwise it will be in the school gym. If you have any questions, email Ami Martin at amizimka@yahoo.com.

While attending the book fair, please look for large urns of evergreens and seasonal flowers outside the school's main entrances. These plantings are permanent features and will change seasonally. They were installed as part of Disney II Earth Day celebration, in addition to the community picnic hosted on school grounds on last month.

For more information about Disney II and other events, please visit us online at www.disneyiimagnet.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

GREEN CORNER

For Our Community, Our Planet



Take a Free Online Energy Assessment

The Department of Environment's Residential Energy Assessment Program (REAP) has an online questionnaire that takes most people 10-15 minutes to complete. Upon submission, an automated and personalized home energy audit report will be generated for you to download. Also provided are energy saving technologies and tips to help you realize the energy conservation recommendations in your audit report. To begin the assessment, please visit: <https://webapps.cityofchicago.org/ERC>.

GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH: Analog T.V. Recycling

How can you help?

On June 12, 2009, all television stations will broadcast their signal digitally. There's no need to throw out your analog television set, you may simply need a converter box to receive the signal. Instead, obtain a government-issued coupon to offset the cost of the converter box for your analog televisions by: (1) Applying online at www.dtv.gov (2) Calling 1-888-DTV-2009.

If you choose to replace your television set, please do not put your old set

in your trash can or in the alley. They will be sent to a landfill. Likewise, the Household Chemicals and Computer Recycling Facility does not accept television sets. Or take your old television set to a nearby location such as: the Salvation Army at 2941 N. Central Ave.

If you buy a new TV, beware of those with rock-bottom prices, make sure they can receive a digital signal.

Kilbourn Park & Organic Green House Update

Discover the wonderful world of nature! Spark your curiosity and explore the fun & educational offerings at the Chicago Park District's only park with a teaching organic greenhouse.

Kids can get their hands dirty while enjoying the 3-season Harvest Garden youth program, Garden Buddies program for toddlers, environmental-themed projects and crafts, as well as various family workshops.

This year's Family Harvest Festival—a free, annual Celebration of the End of the Growing Season—will take place on Saturday, September 12h from 10am-3pm. Held in a festive autumn setting, this family-friendly event will include tastes from the organic garden, face-painting, and a craft project.

The annual Organic Plant Sale will be held May 16 & 17, 2009.

The Organic Greenhouse is always looking for volunteers—including parents with their children!

Youth recreational activities at this 12-acre park include: basketball, soccer, softball, and tumbling. Other youth programs include: arts & crafts, painting & drawing, as

well as the Park Kids after-school program. Toddler programs include preschool, recreational tumbling, as well as parent-and-tot classes. Adult-oriented programs at the park (seniors welcome!) include aerobics, conditioning, sewing, quilting, watercolor painting, and greenhouse workshops. Most programs charge a nominal fee—and pre-registration is required.

Kilbourn Park & Organic Greenhouse is located in Chicago's Kilbourn Park neighborhood (on the south side of Addison Street, between Cicero and Milwaukee Avenues), at 3501 N. Kilbourn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60641. The greenhouse is open Tuesday through Saturday; their hours of operation vary with the season. The fieldhouse is open 7 days a week, excluding major holidays.

For further information regarding the park or its programs, contact the Kilbourn Park fieldhouse at (773) 685-3351. The telephone number for information about Kilbourn's Organic Greenhouse and its programs is (773) 685-3359. Or visit the Chicago Park District's website at www.chicagoparkdistrict.com.

Water Department to Speak at PPNA Meeting

A representative from the Department of Water Management will speak at our May, 11th Public meeting. The topic will be on the new "MeterSave" program.

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

Water charges in non-metered homes are tied to factors such as building size, lot-size and the number of plumbing fixtures. However, metered homes are billed according to actual water usage. This means that with minimal effort, participating homeowners could save money on their water bills. Because customers with metered homes pay only for the water they use, they can save money while at the same time helping to protect Lake Michigan and save water.

This is a topic that is important to all of us, so make sure you attend and have your questions answered.

Third Annual Chicago Green Festival May 16-17 at Navy Pier

Green Festival is celebrating what is working in our communities—for people, for businesses and for the environment. This joint project of Global Exchange and Green America showcases more than 350 diverse local and national green businesses. More than 150 renowned speakers appear for insightful panel discussions and presentations. You'll also enjoy how-to workshops, green films, a Fair Trade pavilion, yoga classes, kids' activities, delicious organic beer, wine and cuisine, and live music.

Find out how Midwest neighbors, community nonprofits and city departments are working together to make their cities healthier places to live. Learn more about Green Festival at www.greenfestivals.org.

H1N1 Virus Information

What are the signs and symptoms of H1N1 Influenza (swine flu) in people? The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. In the past, severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and deaths have been reported with swine flu infection in people. Like seasonal flu, swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

How do you catch swine flu? Spread of swine flu can occur in two ways: 1. Through contact with infected pigs (although eating pork products is completely safe, so long that it is well-cooked) or environments contaminated with swine flu viruses. 2. Through contact with a person with swine flu. Human-to-human spread of swine flu has been documented also and is thought to occur in the same way as seasonal flu. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

How long can an infected person spread swine flu to others? People with swine influenza virus infection should be considered potentially contagious as long as they are symptomatic and possible for up to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might potentially be contagious for longer periods.

What can I do to protect myself from getting sick? Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. Also, try to avoid close contact with sick people. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as germs spread this way.

What should I do if I get sick? If you are sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others. In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include: Fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, not waking up or not interacting, being so irritable that the child does not want to be held, flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough, fever with a rash. In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting. If you or someone in your immediate family becomes ill and experiences any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

Garden Club Update

By Jan Kupka

Vines are becoming very popular with gardeners because they add a vertical accent to a garden whether large or small. Most annual vines are grown from seed and are seldom sold as plants in garden centers - and because of the economy, seeds are very popular this year.

One of the most rewarding annuals to grow from seed is the Sweet Pea. Although Sweet Peas have a reputation for being difficult to grow in Zone 5, with a little effort 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, which 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.

Starting with planting, timing is the key. Either 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.

One 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 underused 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 seeds are easy to collect and store over winter. The vine can climb to 15 feet or more.

Beginning April 1 through May 31 the Magnificent Mile will host an annual event when it comes 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® presented by Bank of America 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.

The annual plant sale at Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse 3501 N. Kilbourn Ave 773-685-3351, will be held the week-end of May 16 and 17 from 10 -3. The plants are grown in Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse. It is an annual event focusing on open-pollinated tomatoes suitable for Chicago, in addition to seasonal organic vegetables, herbs and flowers. In the late 1930s, the Chicago Park District planted a large perennial garden in Kilbourn Park. Although the original garden was not maintained, a renewed interest in gardening at Kilbourn Park has sparked a volunteer program in the greenhouse and a new perennial garden outside. Last fall Kilbourn Park received a grant from the Fruit Tree Planting Foundation in California and planted an of fruit producing trees grown in Illinois and Wisconsin and will be producing fruit this year.

The May Garden Club meeting will be held Saturday, May 16, 9:30am. This will be our 6th Annual Plant Exchange and will be held at a member's home. Bring a plant(s) from your yard, home or a nearby garden store and go home with something completely different – its fun! Guests are welcome. For more information call the Portage Park Garden Club at 773-794-1984 or e-mail the PPGC at portageparkgc@comcast.net.

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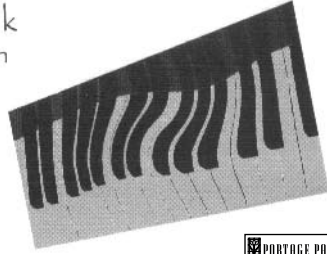



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Have You Noticed?? By John Arena

"The Chicago Park District encourages interested park patrons to participate in or form an advisory council in their local park. The Chicago Park District seeks advisement from councils regarding services provided to parks, needs, problems, accomplishments, and any other matters councils consider important to the operation of their parks." - Chicago Park District web site.

When parents who live near and use Dickinson Park took the advice of the Chicago Park District web site and started the Dickinson Park Advisory Council one goal was to renew the park playlot by "seeking a sustainable, earth friendly and universal design approach that would would focus on natural play opportunities typically found in other parks throughout the city".

Since August 2008, the Dickinson Park Advisory Council has not been shown revised plans that were promised by the CPD Project Manager Bob Foster in an Oct 9, 2009 email "I will keep you updated as we move forward." It was hoped that the final plans would include community requests to incorporate sustainable and natural play elements. That hope came from Ald. Levar when he promised the community plan would be taken seriously at the end of the August meeting.

Since then the Chicago Park District has flatly refused repeated requests for final plans showing what will be built.

The only hint at their intent is a conceptual rendering that the Advisory Council obtained from a Nadig Press reporter provided by Ald. Levars office. His office claims that they have not seen the final plans either.

What is most frustrating is that the community developed plan would cost the same or less than the CPD developed plans presented back in August, 2008. The community's plan, in part, calls for reclaimed earth and natural plantings that would cost no more than the gas to run the bobcat to move dirt and form it into mounds for kids to run and play on.

Next time the CPD asks for a tax hike or a new fee, tell them where they can find the money. Entombed in a cement sidewalk in Dickinson Park.

Who's money is it anyway? Not yours, if you ask the Chicago Park District. In response to an advisory council request for updated park plans and construction schedules, Timothy M. King, Director The Department of Legislative and Community Affairs, reportedly eschewed the request on the grounds that "no taxpayer money is being used in this project." and that "the community has no stake in this project." Requests to confirm this position have gone unanswered.


The Chicago Park District line item on our property tax bills is evidence to the contrary of the former and the man-hours spent collecting and compiling information, meeting and communicating to CPD, etc. speaks to the later in a literal sense.

But when did we depart from the basic premise that any action taken by a governing body in a democracy "of the people, by the people and for the people" is taken on behalf of said people and thus the people hold a stake in that action by default.

Along that line, Ald. Levar beats his chest that he is spending \$800,000 of discretionary funds on parks across the 45th Ward as if he wrote a personal check. Kudos for using *our* money to improve our corner of the city but don't act like it's your personal contribution when your office claims not to have seen the plans showing that money is being spent to replace the playlot at Dickinson Park in a way the honors the community vision.

What is troubling is that the discretionary funds are traditionally used for more mundane pursuits like curbs, lighting and street repaving that don't have a line item on our tax bills. If Levar were smart he would follow Ald. Allen's (38) lead and seek TIF funds to renew our parks. That is money that is being diverted from the CPD budget in the form of a stealth tax anyway, and one reason the CPD has budget issues in the first place.

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