

Portage Park Center for the Arts seeks better funding

A Message from the Board of Directors and Teachers at the Portage Park Center for the Arts

What does the Portage Park Center for the Arts mean to you and to your community? Our center, officially called the West Portage Park Neighborhood Improvement Association/Portage Park Center for the Arts is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit organization that has operated in this former Nebo Lutheran Church building, in the 38th Ward, since 1999. We service over 500 chil-

dren, adults, and senior citizens per week!

Since this building is owned by the City of Chicago, and the center operates on a grant from the City of Chicago, we are requesting your help. In an effort to increase the amount of financial support we receive, we hope that your voice will make a difference in the future of this community art and wellness center. We ask that you kindly write to Mayor Daley and the Alderman of the 38th Ward to let them know what the center means to

this community. We hope that by letting your voice be heard, more funds will be allocated for the building infrastructure (new roof, the replacement of damaged screens and windows, tuck pointing, landscaping of the courtyard, plumbing repairs, walls re-plastered) as well as increased and consistent funding sources to cover operating costs. Kindly send your letters to the following addresses. Please send a copy of your letter(s) to the PPCA. Thanks so much for your continued concern and support!

Alderman Thomas Allen,
38th Ward
5817 W. Irving Park Road
Chicago, IL 60634

**Honorable Mayor
Richard Daley**
City Hall,
121 N. LaSalle,
Room 507
Chicago, IL 60602

CC: copies to:
**Portage Park
Center for the Arts**
3914 N. Menard
Chicago, IL 60634

15 Reasons Why Downtowns Don't Need More Parking

by Donovan Rypkema

In nearly two decades as a Main Street consultant, Don Rypkema has traveled to thousands of communities and seen just about every challenge a city has had to face. Over the years, Don has jotted down his observations and insights in a series of lists. From "most expensive rehabilitation mistakes" to the "characteristics of successful business districts," Don's lists range far and wide, focusing on the obvious and the obscure, the major issues and minor stumbling blocks of community revitalization with equal skill.

Tips for success, pitfalls to avoid, and common sense observations about the world of main street revitalization all are encompassed in Donovan's Lists. And what better issue to start with than the one that pops out of almost everyone's mouth when they're asked to name the biggest problem in their downtown PARKING! Here are Don Rypkema's observations on downtown parking.

1. Except in the economically strongest downtowns, rarely is the quantity of available spaces the issue. There are plenty of spaces. The issue is nearly always management of the parking that already exists.

2. Never in the history of the universe did an automobile ever buy anything. People buy goods and services; cars don't. A surface parking lot precludes the sale of goods and services in that location.

3. Almost no use provides less property tax revenue than a surface parking lot.

4. Healthy downtowns require people on the street and people on the street require circular pedestrian movement. Circular pedestrian movement is halted by pedestrian barriers, of which surface parking lots are the prime example.

5. Nobody ever goes anywhere

just so they can park their car. People go downtown to buy goods and services, to be entertained, to meet other people. If the goods, services, entertainment, and events are there, people will find a place to park. Visit a successful downtown and try to find a surface parking lot. They either will not exist or they'll be found behind buildings or on the fringes of the district.

6. If a downtown is going to improve, additions and subtractions to the district must be of greater quality than the current average. When quality historic buildings are removed, especially

Continued on pg 3

New restaurant opens at Six Corners

A new sit-down restaurant called Playa Escondida opened at Six Corners this month, specializing in Mexican seafood dishes.

The restaurant, 3938 N. Cicero, recently held a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony. Playa Escondida is run by two sisters, Marilu Bruno and Elvia Bustamante and is open daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Playa Escondida translates to "hidden beach" to reflect the restaurant's seafood specialties such as breaded fish fillet and fried tilapia. Phone (773) 427-0048. Look at the attached menu for Playa Escondida's delicious offerings.



Marilu Bruno, left, and Elvia Bustamante, are the co-owners of Playa Escondida, 3938 N. Cicero Ave.

Add a splash of color and soften hard edges with area rugs

By Laura Heitz,

With so many homeowners selecting hardwood floors in their homes, an area rug can soften hard edges and cushion sound so that the room doesn't echo.

The most popular material continues to be wool, which is stain resistant, durable, and better for people with allergies as its tight loom is harder for dust mites to penetrate.

An area rug pulls the room together because it's the anchor for all the main pieces. In a large room use two rugs to create separate areas. They don't have to match. In fact, it will be more interesting if they don't. However, they should be in the same tonal family. You don't want a black and white rug near a rug filled with nature colors – green, gold and brown.

Some people don't like rugs under a dining room table because of the crumbs issue. If you decide to use a rug under the table, make sure that it's large enough. You want the chair legs to rest on the rug when you push the chair away from the table.

If you're stumped for ideas on how to decorate a room, consider buying the rug first. The pattern or colors in the rug will help determine what other choices need to be made in the room. For example, if you have a rug in blue, green, tan, and red, you could paint the walls green, with tan trim, and purchase accessories, such as pillows, in all four colors.

Portage Park resident Laura Heitz is a Decorator and Organizer who specializes in working with what you own. Call her at laura@rightnowredesign.com, 773-282-7702, or visit her website www.rightnowredesign.com.

Paving the Way Continued from pg. 1

From the Mayor's Institute On City Design, Excellence in City Design publication, this particular voiding of a commercial fabric is discouraged.

Provide fewer, not more parking spaces than logic dictates. The availability of parking is largely a psychological matter. There never seems to be enough parking no matter how much is provided, and there can't possibly ever be enough parking, because the space 20 feet closer to your destination is always preferable. [Source: www.micd.org, Excellence In City Design publication]

A recent survey by the PPNA of parking spaces within a two block walk of six corners revealed at least 13 surface lots containing 1,921 spaces and 262 metered spaces along our 3 avenues. Yes, these are considered private lots but I would argue that the Portage Park community does not have a parking shortage if you consider these lots as potential resources.

Make places worthy of walking, and pedestrians will remember that they have enjoyed the experience. (We) are known for (our) dislike of walk-

ing, because (we) are daily asked to walk hundreds of forgettable yards through desert-like parking lots, characterless shopping malls, and identically beige corridors of large buildings. It is ironic how much of this walking is made necessary by the car. If you make places worthy of walking, you will find walkers there enjoying themselves and each other. [www.micd.org, Excellence In City Design publication]

What needs to happen right now is a partnership between the businesses and the owners of these surface lots to share their use through leasing arrangements and handshakes. By using good old table talk and citizenship, businesses should relish the opportunity to bring more customers to their stores, banks and restaurants. The mutual effort of business leaders, politicians and the community will be required to continue our revitalization efforts of the Six Corners business district. We cannot be so naive as to think that more parking lots are a solution. History says not!

Bob Brobson is an architect with a practice in Chicago.

(Cont from 2.) Parking is not the problem, bad planning is

to make room for a parking lot, the average quality of the downtown worsens.

7. Imagining that parking is the major issue downtown indicates a misplaced understanding of the ingredients of economic success in a traditional commercial district.

8. Addition of a surface parking lot downtown should be based on a comprehensive analysis of the needs and options of the entire district, not the decisions of a single property owner.

9. Parking lots require 275 to 325 square feet for every parking space once circulation and distance between cars have been accommodated. The worker who drove the car will need, on average, 180 to 250 square feet in an office building. Is it really the appropriate priority to assign more space to the car than to the worker?

10. When a historic building is standing, there are four options: do nothing; stabilize the building and wait; rehabilitate the building; or tear it down. Tearing a building down for surface parking is always an option, but once that option is exercised, all other options are eliminated. More than any other variable, the key component in rehabbing downtown buildings is flexibility. Eliminating three of the four alternatives eliminates all flexibility.

11. The most glaring examples of failed downtown revitalization efforts are

those that: (a) relied on the 'big fix' to solve their problems; and (b) razed historic buildings to make room for surface parking.

12. More parking is the 'solution' for those who don't understand how successful downtowns work, have never bothered to look at the ingredients of successful examples, refuse to address downtown issues on a comprehensive basis, or lack the imagination to craft creative development strategies.

13. The exchange of historic buildings for surface parking lots reduces rather than enhances the opportunities for economic success.

14. In a downtown that offers appropriate goods and services, a worker will add \$2,000 to \$2,500 a year to the downtown economy. A downtown resident will add \$8,000 to \$10,000. A surface parking lot will add nothing.

15. In the end, the purpose of downtown revitalization is to add value to the city through tax revenues, value to the buildings, value to the businesses, value to the customer, value to the community. New businesses, better businesses, more residents, new and better activities, better appearance, better management, entertainment all add value. Replacing historic buildings with parking lots reduces value.

Donovan Rypkema is a very well-respected economist and preservationist.

Portage Park Palates with Jan & Jill

For our second dinner of 2008 the Portage Park Palates plus three decided to visit The Original Papa Nicholas Cafe. It was a very cold Monday night in February and thank goodness for street parking right outside the restaurant. Once we were inside we went immediately up to the counter to order coffee. Our choices were four 12 ounce cups of the House Blend – three regular, one decaf and one special of the day Cinnamon Hazelnut (\$1.40 each).

Once we had our coffee and perused the menu we opted for a variety of things. The soup of the day was a Broccoli Cheese and only one person elected not to try it and was sorry afterward. The large bowl is \$3.90 or you can order it with any half sandwich for \$5.99.

After the soup we all ordered Paninis. The big favorite, which came highly recommended, was the Grilled Chicken and Apple, chicken salad made with celery, carrots and apples and served with melted cheddar cheese on multigrain Panini bread (\$5.25). Another choice was the Grilled Chicken Parmesan served with Parmesan and Provolone cheese, marinara sauce, basil and oregano on white Panini bread (\$5.75). The third choice was the Classic Ruben – lean corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese and Thousand Island dressing on marble rye (\$5.25). Every night has a special. Because it was Monday night, we had free potato chips with our Paninis.

There are also regular cold deli sandwiches (\$3.95) on their menu as well as a grilled cheese Panini (\$2.95), with plans for breakfast sandwiches in the near future.. Choice of sweets include bagels, muffins, scones, cookies as well as pastries and brownies.

Papa Nicholas has a wide variety of choices of coffee – size as well as specialties. Coffee and espresso drinks come in 12, 16 and 20 ounce cups. Iced and frozen blends come in 16 and 20 ounce cups. There is also a 96 ounce to go for \$8.50 and for an additional \$2.50, 12 cups. The prices for Coffee are \$1.40, \$1.60 and \$1.90. A choice of at least ten flavored shots – such as English Toffee, is \$4.00 each and whipped cream is \$.30. The prices for a choice of hot or iced espressos vary depending on size and type beginning at \$1.75 up to \$3.85. Add an espresso single shot for \$1.35 and a double for \$1.65. There are also choices of iced coffee (\$2.00 - \$2.35) as well frozen blended drinks in any flavor (\$3.90 - \$4.35).

A place like this was long overdue in our area. It is a cozy cafe with a relaxed pace, people talking or taking advantage of the free WiFi.

The Original Papa Nicholas Cafe is located at 4413 N. Milwaukee (just north of Montrose), phone: 773-282-9682. Hours are Monday – Thursday 5:30am – 9:00pm, Friday 5:30am – 10:00pm, Saturday 7:00am – 10:00pm and Sunday 7:00am – 9:00pm.

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 2008 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 or communications@portagepark.org.

Portage Park Neighborhood Association Financial Report

Balance sheet as of February 20, 2008

GENERAL

ASSETS

Previous Ending Balance \$6,423.73
Current Ending Balance \$6,595.43

REVENUE

Membership \$252.00
Holiday party \$750.00
Total Revenue \$1002.00

EXPENSES

Newsletter Printing. \$74.34
Membership Committee. \$58.56
Community Development \$100.00
(Friends of Portage Park)
Web Site \$47.40
Vaughn H.S. Sponsorship. \$550.00
Total Expenses \$830.30

Advertise your business in the PPNA News

The PPNA News 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. Past issues are available for download from our web site, 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.

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR NEEDED

The PPNA is in need of a Membership coordinator. Responsibilities include updating the membership list and sending out new membership cards and renewal letters. Contact Chris Ericksen at board@portagepark.org for more information.

CLASSIFIEDS

Members who have something to announce, sell, rent, or need a service can post your note for free! Call 283-9887 or send it to us at communications@portagepark.org

HOUSE FOR SALE

Beautiful house for sale in portage park
5145 W. Byron Street.
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PPNA Members

Post your ad for FREE!
Send it to communications@portagepark.org

Membership Leaders!

Top blocks as of 3/7/08:

8 - 4100 N. LeClaire

7 - 4100 N. Leamington,
5300 W. Cullom

6 - 4100 Lavergne, 4100 Lawler,
5100 Hutchinson

5 - 5300 Berenice

PPNA already has 140 paid members for 2008. If your not one of them renew your membership today at www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html

Public Meeting Agenda Monday, March 10, 2008

7:30 p.m.

4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

- I. Call to Order: Gerard Staniszewski
- II. President's Opening Statement:
Gerard Staniszewski
- III. Economic Development Committee
Nick Sarillo of Nick's Pizza & Pub will respond to community concerns about the facade and parking lot plans at Six Corners.
- IV. Committee Reports
- V. Old/New Business
- VI. Meeting Adjourned

Got Membership? Join Today Online!

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



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Chicago, Illinois 60641

St. Patrick's Day at the Irish American Heritage Center.

Tickets are now on sale for the Irish American Heritage's Center's St. Patrick's Day events! These celebrations are among some of Chicago's largest and run for 3 days!

On Friday, March 14, 2008, the IAHC kicks off the holiday with Irish Dance Chicago, a large-scale Irish dance concert at 7pm. Tickets are \$10 for adults and children under 12 are free with a paying adult. Irish Dance Chicago showcases the talents of some of Chicago's finest Irish children and teenaged dancers, all on one stage.

On Saturday, March 15, 2008, the IAHC holds its St. Patrick's Festival following the downtown Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade. This large-scale, family-oriented annual event has as many as 3,000 attendees throughout the day. The festivities begin at 1pm and end at midnight and include traditional and contemporary Irish music, dance, food and children's activities. Live entertainment includes Chicago Irish music groups as well as performers on tour from Ireland. Tickets are \$15 for adults, or \$12 for advance purchase if purchased before the end of the day on March 14. Children 12 and under are free with a paying adult.

On Monday, March 17, 2008 the IAHC will hold its annual St. Patrick's Day party in the Center's Fifth Province Lounge. The day-long event runs from 11am until 1 am. Events include Irish dancing, traditional and modern Irish music and food. The cost is \$10 and tickets can be purchased at the door. For information on all upcoming St. Patrick's Day events or to purchase tickets, call 773-282-7035, ext 10 or log on to <http://www.irishamhc.com>

PPNA 2008 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"/> Website Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

* 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 in 2007:

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.

Please 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: Jan Kupka
5343 W. Berenice
Chicago, IL 60641

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St. John's Episcopal Church

Sunday Worship

Holy Communion

8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School

9:30 a.m.



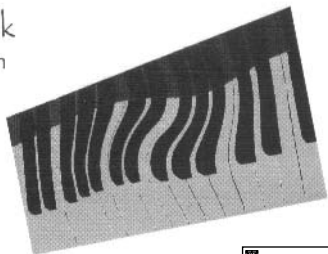
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Friends of Portage Park (Continued from cover)

Join Friends of Portage Park and other community volunteers to clean and green our neighborhood park from 10:00AM - 2PM this Saturday. Explore planned stations such as nature exploration, fitness, environmentalism, mulching and bring your children to the kids' activity table. Our site will have extra work gloves - but you may want to bring your own to insure you have a pair.

The Playlot Committee will host its first annual kids clothing, toy and equipment resale. **SELLERS** are needed! Clean out the clothes, toys and equipment your children have outgrown, help keep it out of landfills and make some money. Tables are \$25 and can be purchased by sending an email to portageparkplayground@gmail.com or calling 773-415-0918. **SHOPPERS** - Shop for spring/summer clothing, toys or equipment at reasonable prices. \$1 suggested donation at the door. All proceeds will go towards the playlot renovation project.

WANT TO HELP? Download a copy of the flyer from www.portagepark.org and post around the neighborhood (school, church, restaurant, library, cafe). Sign up to volunteer for our Earth Day event by attending our "Friends" monthly meeting, Tuesday, April 1st, 7:30 PM at the Portage Senior Center, 4100 N. Long (next to pool), calling 773-415-0918 or sending an email to portagepark-playground@gmail.com.

Easter Egg Hunts at Local Parks

On Sunday, March 23, from 10:30 am - 11:00 am **Chopin Park** will host an Easter Egg hunt for kids 6-10 years old. The park is located at 3420 N. Long Ave. This is a free event. Call 773.685.3247 for more information.

Gladstone Park will host two hunts, both on Saturday, March 22. From 10:00 am - 11:30 am kids age 2-5 years can fill their baskets. Then from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm kids age 6-11 years will get their chance. There is a \$3.00 fee per child for this event.

Gladstone Park is located at 5421 N. Menard Ave. Call 773.631.7859 for more information.

PPNA Membership Card 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
D'Absolute Cafe & Bar	10% off entire check, every day
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
Eclips Unisex Hair Design:	20% off haircuts Tue, Wed, & Thurs
NEW! 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
Meisa Cafe	10% off entire check, every day
Maria Pollock-Piano Tuning	\$10 off (773 286-6368)
Miss Kitty's Pet Service	10% discount for vacation care
New Six Corners Flowers	15% discount
Portage Park Center for the Arts	10% off your first class
Portage Park Handyman	10% off with proof of membership
Portage Theater	\$2 off ticket price. (except silent films)
NEW! 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, 2007.

PPNA Community Fair planned for April

Schools, day care provides, art and music schools, fitness centers and other service providers in the neighborhood are invited for a community fair. It takes place on Monday, April 14, 7:30 pm at the former Stomping Ground Cafe 4839 W. Irving Park Road.

Each organization is invited to give a small presentation and is available for information, enrollment and questions. If you represent an organization that offers a service to the Portage Park neighborhood and would like to participate, please contact Maria Pollock at 773 286 6368 or mariapollock@yahoo.com

St. John's Lutheran Church and School

Need Affordable Quality Education for your child? We have the Quality Christian Education your student needs! Affordable - plus generous discount for multiple students (siblings).

Open House Schedule

Pre-School through 8th grade

Tuesday, April 8 - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Tuesday, May 6 - 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Friday, May 9, 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm, Open House & Special events: Come early and join us for our PTL Ice Cream Social & Library Book Fair - 6:00 pm

Call 773 / 736-1196 to arrange a tour or get more information.

Class sizes are limited, so reserve a spot for the 2008-09 school year early. Ask us about: Our small class sizes, our dedicated certified teachers, excellence in all core subjects (reading, writing, math, science, social studies, religion, research skills), diversity, special education, and more...

Learn about the extras: Flexible before and after school care (6:45am - 6:00pm), Foreign languages (2), Music (band, choir, musicals, & more);

Phys-ed (sports programs, health, & recess); unique chapel programs and service activities; extracurricular activities (youth group, scouting, talent shows, etc); hot lunches; free Vacation Bible School, and more...

See our: Historic Church* and beautiful school which include: labs (computer, reading, science, and music); 2 playgrounds & gymnasium; 10k volume library; bowling alley; versatile class, meeting, and fellowship rooms; plus more...talk to us today to see if St John's is a good fit for your child.

St. Johns Lutheran School A great way to raise your child - since 1876! To learn more about St John's History - The First 130 Years; see page pg. 9 in the July 2006 issue of the Jefferson Park Historical Society Newsletter at http://www.jeffersonparkhistory.org/july_2006.pdf

St. John's Lutheran Church and Schooll is located at 4939 W. Montrose Ave. Call for more information or to see up a meeting and tour 773-736-1112

News for Residents of the 38th Ward

The Senior Free Ride Program will begin on March 17, 2008. Senior citizens aged 65 or over living in the RTA service region are eligible for free transit on fixed routes operated by the CTA, Metra and Pace. To take advantage of the free transit, seniors must have the senior reduced fare card to get a free ride.

Senior citizens without the reduced fare card can sign up for the RTA's senior reduced fare program. For the location of the closest registration sites, call 836-7000 from any area code, and provide your zip code or go to www.rtachicago.com.

Wilbur Wright College is offering a free Tax Assistance Program Saturday mornings from 8:30-11:30 am through April 12, 2008 (closed 3/22). Any family with an income of \$40,000 or less is eligible for free tax-filing help. Wright College is located at 4300 N. Narragansett, Room L127.

If you should have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to contact my office at 773-545-3838 or via e-mail at ward38@cityofchicago.org

Thomas R. Allen, Alderman, 38th Ward



Garden Club Update

by Jan Kupka

When to Prune Trees Start major pruning after "maple sugar time", about mid March. Trees that have just leafed out in spring could be weakened by pruning too early. Beetles that infect oak trees are active from late spring through midsummer. Do not prune your oaks during this period. Remove dead wood in the summer when leafless branches are easily spotted. Pruning in late summer will prevent weakening. Pruning for structure and form is best left until the leaves fall and the branches can be seen clearly. Pruning for clearance should be done when branches are sagging to their lowest point.

Where to Make the Cut. Make the cut just outside the branch collar (the slightly swollen area where the branch and trunk are joined together). The branch collar contains chemicals that speed the formation of callus tissue that seals the wound. Larger branches are best removed in three steps. Make a shallow cut on the underside of the branch, about 4 or 5 inches from the trunk. Cut the branch off about 2-3 inches from the initial cut. When the weight of the unsupported branch causes it to fall, the initial cut keeps the bark from peeling down the side of the trunk. Make the final cut, removing the remaining stub.

How to Prune Trees When done right pruning can improve the health and appearance of your trees. Diseased branches can be removed before they infect the rest of the tree. (Be sure to dip the pruning blade in a 10 percent bleach solution between each cut made to avoid spreading disease.) Dead or broken branches can be removed before insects make a home.

Pruning alleviates potentially hazardous situations. Trimming branches that threaten power lines avoids serious problems, but leave this task to the pros. Branches that contact the house on windy days should be cut before they cause damage.

Some trees naturally tend to form narrow, V-shape crotches, but not all require corrective pruning. Native elms and hickories are generally strong or small enough that little corrective pruning is needed for structural purposes, except to remove crossing branches that might rub. Others, particularly maples, flowering pears, ashes, and light-wooded willows should be watched closely and given early training so they avoid structural problems as they grow larger. If these limbs are thinned early, when the trees are small they can be saved from storm damage. To prevent this problem, remove one of the arms of the 'V' stems while the tree is young. Make your first cut 4-5 inches above the union of branches, then make the finished cut about 1/4-inch above the union. On larger limbs that were pruned too late, cut one side back to a lateral branch so that the other side begins to dominate

The March Garden Club meeting will be held Tuesday, March 25 at 7:00pm 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. Robert Neri owner of Robert's Floral Design and teacher at Wright CC, will demonstrate 2 or 3 floral arrangements. 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

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Have You Noticed?? *By John Arena*

If you live in or around Chicago and your not angry by now you are either dead or you hold a patronage job with the city or the county. Why do I say this? On Friday, Feb. 29, the Cook County Board was locked in a showdown between Todd Stroger's block of cronies and the Reform block of commissioners. This last group includes Forest Claypool, Mike Quigley, and (until recently) Larry Sufferdin. With no budget agreement in place and just hours before a shut down of the Cook County government would have occurred Sifferdin agreed to vote for a budget that includes a 1% sales tax hike. Here is my letter to Commissioner Sufferin thanking him for feeding \$400 million dollars to a bloated government that is in desperate need of reform.

Commissioner Sufferdin,

As I read about the budget compromise your vote allowed to pass I was appalled. And then I read this in a Chicago Tribune editorial:

In return for flipping sides, Suffredin got a concession that sounds good but isn't worth his deal's huge tax bite: Stroger supposedly will relinquish control of the county's patronage-fat Bureau of Health Services to outside directors. Civic, health and labor groups will nominate 20 candidates; Stroger will select nine as directors. Translation: To have a majority—and to keep full control of the health system—Stroger will only need to find five patsies on the list of 20. (Your new Stroger Tax, Chicago Tribune editorial, Sat. March 1, 2008)

I have to ask you what were you thinking?

I live in Chicago and am being hit from all sides. Taxes are killing the average home owner and I can only imagine what they are doing to those in the lower income brackets. The government you are part of should have shut down until a realistic budget with REAL CUTS to patronage jobs was hammered out. You say in your statement posted on your website:

President Stroger would have totally shut down all services of the County government – including hospitals, courts and the County Jail – which would have adversely affected all citizens, especially the most vulnerable. It would also have opened the County to huge financial liability for damages to those who would have been injured by such a dangerous move. (<http://www.suffredin.org>)

Do you really believe that us poor citizens of Cook County can't get along without the Cook County government for a few days without dying in the streets? What is killing us is the waste and corruption of the Cook County government. None of Stroger's cronies care about us one way or the other. They are happy to bleed us dry, year after year, and your blinking at their threat of closing down the government will facilitate their bad behavior for years to come.

By not calling their bluff you have feed \$400 Million to a system that is corrupt, bloated and unwilling to reform itself. By not standing strong with the reformers on the board you have wasted this rare opportunity to actually make change when the tax payers need it most.

Sincerely, John Arena

I acknowledge that shutting down any government is an extreme measure. But if there was ever a time when it was warranted I can't find a better example.

Ironically, the same day the budget that allows for over 1000 new hires this year was passed, a report issued by a federal court monitor indicated that patronage is alive and well in county government. Nice going Commissioner Sufferdin.

'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. PPNA Board Members are:

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