



PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community
News & Views

OCTOBER 2008

Construction slows business along with traffic.

By John Arena

For the last few months a sign on the door of The Original PapaNicholas Coffee Shop on Milwaukee Avenue read "Open During Construction". But according to the owners, Tim Hobart and Cynthia Goldman, that message was optimistic. On October 9, less than a year since they first opened, they served their last cup of joe. Since the beginning of the reconstruction of Milwaukee Ave. north of Montrose sales at coffee house slipped almost fifty percent.

While there is a slim chance the café could reopen, that would only happen if an investor turned up or if a deal is reached with an operator to run the business through this down period. But, it won't be with Tim and Cynthia behind the counter. They have sunk all they could into the business. On top of that, they will have to focus on another big change in their lives. Cynthia is five months pregnant.

The sad part is they were on track to beat the odds that say more than half of new restaurants fail within the first year. This past May was their best sales month. Then in June they got a Friday call from the 45th ward office that construction would begin the following Monday and all street parking would be eliminated in front of their business.

The project to reconstruct the south-bound lane began in June and was intended to be completed by mid-September. But unexpected underground obstacles have delayed the project. With work running long on the south-bound lane completion of this phase of the reconstruction is not expected until November. The north-bound lanes will begin in early 2009.

Even more established businesses are being affected by the construction. Margaret Domanus,



PapaNicholas Cafe closed on Oct 9 due to slow sales during construction on Milwaukee Ave.

owner of XOX Salon & Spa says business is off by half, even though customers can park right in front of her salon. She says most days the lot of the strip mall at the corner of Milwaukee and Sunnyside Ave. is only half full. A new flower shop has closed and other business owners tell her they are seeing sales drop as well. She credits her regular customers as keeping her above water. "Between the slow economy and the construction it a double hit" says Domanus.

She is considering new marketing efforts to draw customers into an area they instinctively avoid when they see construction signs go up. She is considering a frequency program and is going ahead with plans for her yearly holiday party on Nov. 8th. It is an all-day affair with events tailored to children during the day and a cocktail party in the evening. It's her way of saying 'thank you' to the customers who have supported her through the construction and will hopefully bring in a few new clients.

While attention is focused on the current construction and the businesses affected, it bears

reminding that this project will be with us for the next few years. Future phases will proceed south through the Six Corners Shopping District. According to 45th Ward Alderman Pat Lever's office, that phase is funded and set to begin in spring of 2009. In the coming months many other businesses will have to deal with the challenges that have forced PapaNicholas shut its doors. How those businesses will fare may depend on how the community responds. If they eschew the local businesses for convenience sake, more small businesses may not be around when the dust clears.

Beyond the community braving the construction zones, on foot or bike when possible, to spend their dollars locally, business owners say better communication and planning by the city would help alleviate the strain on businesses during construction. Some options include the alderman's office giving the businesses more notice before construction begins, plans could be made to set aside parking spots on side streets near Milwaukee Ave. so

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Meetings and Announcements

Portage Park Neighborhood Association:
Next meeting -
Nov 10, 7:30 p.m.,
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

On the Agenda:
Guest Speaker - 16th District Police Commander Riccio
Annual Meeting & Holiday Party
Dec. 7, Time TBA,
Portage Theater
4050 N. Milwaukee Ave. .

C.A.P.S. Meetings

All meetings at 7 p.m.
Beat 1624 - Oct. 22
at Biagio's Banquets,
4242 N. Central Ave.
Beat 1633 - Oct. 21
at Wright College (Theater)
4300 N. Naragansett
Beat 1634 - Oct. 23
at Portage-Cragin Library,
5108 W. Belmont Ave.
16th District CAPS Office,
312-742-4521 for more info.

PPNA On-Line

Get the most current info from the PPNA on our website: www.portagepark.org
Contacting the PPNA board:
board@portagepark.org
General questions or info:
membership@portagepark.org
communications@portagepark.org
seniors@portagepark.org
[web@portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org)

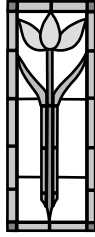
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You can join or renew your PPNA membership online. You can get directly to the form via:
<http://www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html>

Pay with your credit card or your PayPal account.

Show your neighborhood pride!

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



**Don't see your block listed above?
 Join or renew your membership today at:
www.portagepark.org/joinonline.html**

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Construction

customers have a chance of finding a parking space and tax breaks could be offered to businesses to offset the loss in revenue.

Businesses could do their part and band together to send mailings to local residents reminding them that they will be open during construction and put up signs that are visible above the construction to help get them noticed.

As for Tim and Cynthia of PapaNicholas, they are taking some time off to spend with friends, get some perspective on the past year and what lies ahead. "We have a lot to think about," says Cynthia, her hand resting on her stomach.



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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**for the annual Holiday Party,
 December 7, 2008!**

Helping organize and run the annual
 Holiday Party, plan on attending the
 next meeting on Oct. 22.

For details email:
board@portagepark.org.

NOW & THEN: pictures from Portage Park's past and present

The first building to be constructed at Six Corners was the Borovik Drugstore at 3958 North Cicero Avenue, at the southwest corner of Cicero and Irving Prk Road. Part of the building dates from the 1860s; however, the exact date of its construction is unknown. Formerly a tavern and coach stop, the building still stands today without the spire and flagpole above the corner.

Originally immigrants from Russia, the Boroviks relocated their business from farther in the city, operating this neighborhood fixture for 75 years. Eunice Borovik was the longtime president of the Portage Park Chamber of Commerce, and her son George still serves at its executive director. A branch of Washington Mutual currently operates out of this building.

Information and photos courtesy of the Irving Park Historical Society and Images of America: Portage Park (Arcadia Publishing)—a new book by Daniel Pogorzelski and John Maloof that chronicals the rich history of our neighborhood through photography. The book is available for purchase at City Newstand at 4018 North Cicero, (near the Six Corners), and also online and at national retailers.

3958 North Cicero: NOW



3958 North Cicero: THEN (mid - late 1800's)



News for residents of the 38th Ward

- The 38th Ward Service Office will be sponsoring the **Senior Flu Shot program** on October 30th, from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Any senior who is 65 years of age or older during the 2008 calendar year may participate. Please bring your Medicare Card. The program is administered by the Chicago Dept. of Public Health. The 38th Ward office is located at 5817 W. Irving Park Rd.

45th Ward Office, 5205 N. Milwaukee, Wed., Nov. 12th, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

- **Bungalow by Bus Tour: North Route**, Sunday, October 26, 2008 at 9 a.m.-1 p.m. ArchiCenter Shop in the Santa Fe Building, 224 S. Michigan Avenue., \$35. While learning about the evolution of working class housing intertwined with social movements, enjoy the aesthetic evolution of the historic Chicago Bungalow, factories that supported the City Beautiful movement, and parks that were the envy of the world. The North Route features Ravenswood Manor, the Villa, Portage Park, the Schorsch Irving Park Garden Historic District, and Galewood.

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

– **Thomas R. Allen, Alderman, 38th Ward**

Irving Park Fine Arts Committee announces 15th season

The Irving Park Fine Arts Committee is proud to announce its 2008-2009 Performing Arts Series. The first concert of the series will feature The PolyKrome Brass Ensemble on Sunday, October 12, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at the Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding Ave. Admission to the concert is free of charge, though a free will offering may be made to help defray expenses. An informal reception with the performers follows the concert.

The PolyKrome Brass Ensemble, one of Chicago's premiere brass quintets, will perform original arrangements of popular music. From Broadway to pop music, this concert will be entertaining for audiences of all ages.

Other concerts in the series are: A performance by the Lutheran Choir Of Chicago on December 14, 2008 at 4:00 p.m.; Cellist Nicholas Photinos and Pianist Yasuko Oura on February 22, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.; and a return of the Apollo Trio on April 26, 2009 at 2:00 p.m., featuring flutist Scott Metlika, bassoonist Karl Rzasa and Matthew Coley on marimba and percussion. All concerts will take place in the sanctuary of Irving Park Lutheran Church.

The Irving Park Fine Arts Series, now in its 15th season, was begun by Roger L. Bingaman, Director of Music at Irving Park Lutheran Church. The intent of the series is to bring high quality, professional musical and theatrical events to the Irving Park neighborhood. An accomplished musician with numerous professional credits, Mr. Bingaman is a recipient of the Friend of the Arts Award. The award recognized his efforts to establish a performing arts series in a city neighborhood where cultural events were lacking.

The Irving Park Fine Arts Committee receives funding from Irving Park Carlson Ministries, a community service 501c3. The mission of Carlson Ministries is to serve the community with a variety of outreach efforts, including fine arts.

For more information, please contact us at Irving Park Fine Arts Committee at 3939 W. Belle Plaine Ave., Chicago, IL 60618 or at www.irvingparkfinearts.com.



Fashion, food and fun at girlfriends night out at Six Corners

Learn how to maintain healthy skin, recycle your jewelry and dance a few salsa steps while laughing with your girlfriends at Girlfriends Night Out at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 16 at Las Tablas, 4920 W. Irving Park Road.

Six Corners businesses will offer their expertise on a number of topics at this informative and fun event. Appetizers will be served. A \$2 admission will be charged with all proceeds to go to Hands To Help Ministries.

Women can wander from presentation to presentation to learn about fashion, jewelry, home décor and personal finance. The presentations will be followed by salsa dance lessons, and each attendee will leave with a gifts contained in the new Six Corners reusable shopping bag.

Food will be served by Las Tablas, and Artemio's Restaurant, 4918 W. Irving Park Road.

The presentations will include:

- Make your holiday decorations boom by New Six Corners Flowers, 4851 W. Irving Park Road
- Maintaining healthy skin by Today's Avon, 4042 N. Milwaukee Ave.
- Recycling your jewelry by Gato & Sons Jewelry, 4849 W. Irving Park Road
- Getting to the roots of hair care by Villa Roma Hair Designers, 3936 N. Cicero Ave.
- Hair for you: Selecting the right style by Sears Hair Salon, 4730 W. Irving Park Road.
- Beyond "O": 8 great magazines you won't find in the supermarket City Newsstand, 4018 N. Cicero Ave.
- Protecting yourself and your family by American Family Insurance, 3948 N. Cicero Ave.
- Fire Safety: Does your family have a plan by All State Insurance, 4938 W. Irving Park Road
- Tanning and you by L.A. Tan, 3976 N. Milwaukee Ave.
- Boutique myth-busting: Great service without the high prices by Mi Boutique, 4048 N. Milwaukee Ave.

RSVPs required. Call the Six Corners Association at 773-685-8693.



**BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR...
VOLUNTEER!**

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

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

DISTRIBUTION COORDINATOR

Coordinate mailing and delivery of newsletters to members and local businesses. Contact John Arena at communications@portagepark.org for more information.

WEB SITE ADMINISTRATOR

Update and maintain the association web site. Contact Maria Pollack at web@portagepark.org for more information.

CAPS REPORTER

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



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
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
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)
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.

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

AIR CONDITIONER FOR SALE

Whirlpool 24,200 BTU commercial air conditioner 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

PPNA Public Meeting Agenda

Monday, October 13, 2008

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. Parade Review
- V. Old/New Business
- VI. Meeting Adjourned

PPNA Financial Report

Balance sheet as of Sept. 31, 2008

GENERAL ASSETS

Previous Ending Balance \$7,130.68
Current Ending Balance \$6,647.73

REVENUE

Newsletter Advertising \$530.00
Parade \$200.00
Membership \$25.00

Total Revenue \$755.00

EXPENSES

Newsletter Printing \$988.00
Communications Committee \$249.95

Total Expenses \$1237.95

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. 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.

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 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 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"/> 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 in 2008:

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: Chris Ericksen
 5135 W. Montrose Ave.
 Chicago, IL 60641



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Climate Cycle benefit ride will fund installation of solar panels in Chicago schools

This May, Climate Cycle's inaugural benefit ride will provide four Chicago and two suburban public schools with solar energy systems made possible through our fundraising efforts. To learn more about Climate Cycle or to register for this event, please check out our website at www.climatecycle.org or email us at: info@climatecycle.org.

GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH: Safer oil changes



Did you know that the oil from just one oil change can contaminate one million gallons of water—a year's supply for 50 people?!

How you can make a difference:

1. After draining the oil, but before removing the drip pan from under the car, close and secure the drain plug and check for leaks.
2. If you are changing the oil filter, drain it for a minimum of 12 hours into a clean plastic container with a tight-fitting lid (do not use a container that once held chemicals, food, or beverages). Then, carefully pour the oil from the drip pan into the container.
3. Reuse your drip pan; do not rinse residual oil down the drain or into your yard.
4. If you do accidentally spill any oil, use absorbent material like sawdust or cat litter to clean the spill, then dispose of it in the trash.
5. Used motor oil (from cars, trucks, boats, motorcycles, or lawn equipment) can be recycled to make new motor oil—2.5 quarts of new lubricating oil can be made from one gallon of used motor oil—or processed into fuel oils or other materials. After you have changed your oil, take it to a local service station or recycling center that collects used motor oil for recycling (see related links for a recycling directory). Some facilities will collect used filters as well; if not, ask your waste collection service if the filter can be disposed of with your household trash.
6. You may be able to further reduce your oil consumption (regardless of whether or not you do your own oil changes) by changing your oil less often. A 2008 study conducted by the California Integrated Waste Management Board shows that many vehicles can go more than the standard 3,000 miles between oil changes, depending on driving conditions and motor oil type. Before you skip your next oil change, however, be sure to follow your car manufacturer's recommendations listed in the owner's manual.

Explore: LaBaugh Woods bike path

Enjoy fall leaves in all their splendor at LaBaugh woods, located on Foster Avenue, between the Edens expressway and Pulaski Road. The bike train begins at approximately Foster and Kilbourn Avenue. There are many trails that start here and go all the way up to the Botanic gardens in Northbrook.

Garden Club Update by Jan Kupka

There's no denying it, fall is in the air and it's time to not only get your garden ready for winter, but also for next spring.

Peonies – A beautiful spring flower is the Peony. These long-lived perennials are tough too. They are as rabbit-resistant and as long as you stake up their heavy late springtime flowers to keep them from spilling on the ground after a heavy rain, they are beautiful. The fall is the time to plant, divide and transplant peonies. After they have been planted they may take 2 or 3 years to bloom in the late spring. They like full sun and well-drained soil.

Put dahlias, cannas, and glads into winter hibernation - Frost brings an abrupt end to the growing season for tender bulbs -- cannas, callas, caladiums, dahlias, tuberous begonias, gladioluses, and tuberoses, to name some of the most common, in zone 5, will perish if left in the ground.

You might think that the cost of new bulbs is low enough that it's not worth the hassle of digging and storing the bulbs. The thrifty among us dig them, however, and keep the same bulbs from year to year. And here's how:

Wait several days after a killing frost to lift and store the tender bulbs. It's easy to know when - the spectacular leaves and flowers of cannas, dahlias, elephant ears, and glads are beautiful until the temperature drops to 28 degrees F. or so, the show ends and the leaves turn brown look the same, so at that point its time to cut the foliage back to 4 or 5 inches and bring them in

The process is much the same for all tender bulbs. Use a pitchfork to gently lift up the tuber clumps. You need to be careful not to slice into the bulbs as you dig. After a summer in the ground, they may be quite a bit larger than when you planted them in the spring.

To start the job, lift the clump of roots from the ground and knock off as much soil as you can. Put the clumps in a dry, cool spot (but not where they might be exposed to freezing) for a week or so. When digging several varieties of bulbs, be sure to label each clump.

Once the clump has dried for a week, the remaining clods will crumble away easier. Don't worry if some dirt remains wedged among the roots. Place the roots in dry peat moss or vermiculite in a sturdy cardboard box. The peat moss will slow the loss of moisture from the roots and keep them from shriveling.

Store the box at about 45 degrees F. (never below freezing) in a garage, crawl space, or basement. Warmer temperatures allow the roots to sprout in midwinter, and you don't want that to happen. If you intend to divide the clumps, that's best left until you bring the roots out of storage in spring.

Visit the Garfield Park Conservatory celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. The doors opened in April of 1908. It is the largest public greenhouse in the nation. It displays hundreds of exotic species of palms, ferns, cacti and tropical plants in landscaped settings as well as a variety of plants showcased in outdoor gardens.

Notable News:

The October Portage Park Garden Club meeting will be the last meeting of the year. It will be held at the Kilbourn Park District field house (2nd floor) on Saturday, October 25th at 9:30 a.m. The club will have their third potluck brunch, with everyone asked to bring a dish or treat for the meeting. If weather permits; there will be a chance to see the improvements made to the park garden since the club's last visit two years ago. This includes a new fruit tree, rain barrel, and patio area.

HOME CENTER

Your house has a history

The very first place to look for information on your house is in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey. A copy of this book is in every branch of the Chicago Public Library and can also be viewed at the Commission on Chicago Landmarks office. An electronic version of the survey is available on the City of Chicago's website at: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/CHRS.html>. If the survey lists the date and architect for your building, you're in luck. That means a permit was found by Commission researchers and additional information may be on file in the Commission Offices. Next steps include locating building permits, plans, and information on previous owners. For detailed instructions and additional resource links, download this pdf on the city's web site: http://egov.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/pdf/Your_House_Has_A_History.pdf

Transitioning into Fall with small decorating changes

By Laura Heitz, Right Now Redesign, Inc.

Fall is all about texture and color. There are a variety of ways to bring the season into your home quickly and inexpensively.

New pillows (or pillow covers) in warmer tones; napkins and table runners in coordinating colors; and, fluffy textured throws that contrast with your furniture are a few ideas. Another idea is to hang window treatments with a heavier visual weight. For example, chenille or velvet implies warmth and coziness. In the bedroom, a duvet cover can transform your summer comforter.

Many people have switched to cloth napkins in an attempt to live more green. To add a touch of "bling" consider adding napkin rings. During these tough economic times many of us are eating more meals at home. Why not make each occasion feel special?

We're seeing a lot of tones of purple and plum in both fashion and home accessories. If you don't want to make a major color investment, just add an accessory in this season's hottest color. Purple looks fresh and will give your home a pop, without breaking the bank. Pick three pillows in a range of purple tones and patterns -- imagine that against a tan couch.

Look outside to your yard -- do you have plants with interesting branches? Consider using a bright yellow vase and then add Red Twig Dogwood branches to make a striking coffee table display.

Portage Park resident Laura Heitz owns Right Now Redesign, Inc., an interior decorating and redesign company. She can be reached at 282-7702.



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Have You Noticed?? *By Abigail Dean*

My husband and I moved to Portage Park this past Spring. We are thrilled with the friendly neighbors we've met, beautiful homes and the many conveniences the area has to offer: shopping, restaurants and entertainment. Yet one very important element that seems amiss is a thoughtfully-designed traffic control system.

While Portage Park residents keep their houses so well maintained—with lovely gardens and charming architectural details—the city has let the neighborhood roadways creep into a state of disrepair and confusion.

Every day I ride the Metra downtown to work. The west entrance of the Mayfair station is closed at Montrose, shuttered by a flimsy plywood board with a spray-painted notice to "use East entrance" This closed entrance is an embarrassing eyesore—and an emblem of the city's and/or Metra's neglect. Even worse, the sole west entrance at Pensacola and Cicero has no electrically-monitored crosswalk. Each morning, scores of commuters fight southbound and northbound traffic to cross Cicero, often finding themselves stranded in the middle of the road waiting for a break in traffic.

Yes, it's true that the existing crosswalk is ignored by many drivers—which is a problem in itself, as just a few months ago, a school crossing guard was hit at a crosswalk on Milwaukee and Hutchinson. But here, at Cicero and Pensacola, which is a larger, faster-moving roadway and also the gateway to a main commuter artery, we clearly need an electronically-signalized crosswalk—it's imperative for safe crossing. And if a signalized crosswalk here would cause too much traffic backup, why not rebuild the abandoned Montrose entrance?

Also troubling is the two-way traffic at Belle Plaine/Cicero and Lavergne/Irving that changes to one-way after the alley, plausibly to help drivers access the Walgreens and Dunkin' Donuts, respectively. The temporary barricades placed to deter two-way traffic after the alleys are often ignored and knocked over repeatedly. It seems obvious that concrete or more permanent barriers are needed if this traffic change will be implemented long term. The current system is confusing and unsafe.

Furthermore, a proposal to add another such two-way-that-changes-to-one-way-at-the-alley system at Hutchinson/Milwaukee is being considered. But is this wise, given the dangerous traffic patterns already occurring at this intersection where the school crossing guard was injured?

And the list goes on... What about the mis-programmed traffic signal at the intersection of Belle Plaine/Cicero? Pedestrians waiting to cross Cicero en route to Sears or Jewel never receive a walk signal (and this is at a gateway to the second largest retail district in all of Chicago). Or what about the burned out crosswalk at Milwaukee/Berteau, near a child playlot? The good news is that a quick call to the city garnered a surprisingly quick response—both crosswalks were repaired within days. Are there other problems you've noticed? If so, please join me in reaching out to the city and our Alderman to help make Portage Park safer for both pedestrians and drivers

'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

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