

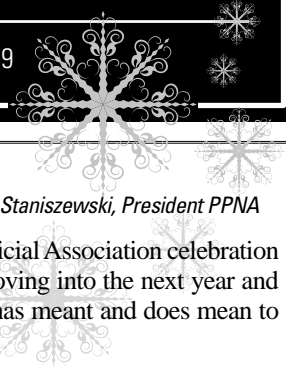


# PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community  
News & Views

DECEMBER 2009



## Meetings & Announcements

### PORTAGE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION:

#### Next meeting:

Monday, December 14th  
7:30 p.m.  
4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

### NOTICE

The PPNA will hold its annual elections on Monday, February 8th 2010. We are now accepting nominations for all posts. If interested, please contact Gerard at [gerardms1@netscape.net](mailto:gerardms1@netscape.net) for further information.

#### C.A.P.S. MEETINGS:

All meetings at 7 p.m.

#### Beat 1624 — Dec 23

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

#### Beat 1633 — Dec 15

at Wright College (Theater) 4300  
N. Naragansett

#### Beat 1634 — Dec 17

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

#### 16th District CAPS Office,

312-742-4521 for more information

#### PPNA ONLINE:

Get current info from our  
website or renew online:

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

#### Contacting the PPNA board:

[board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org)

#### General questions or info:

[membership@portagepark.org](mailto:membership@portagepark.org)  
[communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org)  
[seniors@portagepark.org](mailto:seniors@portagepark.org)  
[web@portagepark.org](mailto:web@portagepark.org)

## Over Ten Years and Still Going Strong *By Gerard Staniszewski, President PPNA*

First and foremost, happy holidays from the PPNA! Although there will be no official Association celebration this year, we wish everyone a safe and festive holiday season. As we look at moving into the next year and beyond, I have thought a bit on the past and present and what the organization has meant and does mean to the community.

I can vaguely remember receiving a flyer on my front porch asking if I was interested in helping form a community group, and if so, what I might be interested in doing, I put down, "Garden Club." I think it was at the first meeting, at a now forgotten local restaurant, Adrienne O'Brian, who started the organization and would become our first president, gave me back the flyer and said something like, here start it. The rest, as they say, is history.

The organization has gone through a lot since then. One of our first efforts was saving the building on Montrose and Milwaukee that now houses Hops and Barley (and other businesses), from the wrecking ball. Along with some victories, we have had some defeats, remember Charybdis? We didn't always do everything right, but we tried. We were and are trying to feel our way as a voice of the community. As our mission statement asserts, our mission is to promote the welfare and spirit of the Portage Park community.

In the six years I have been president, the PPNA has become a 501-c4 not for profit organization. The organization has developed our membership card with discounts given to members by local businesses. Our annual Independence Day Parade has become an institution in the community. We have helped to spin off three other organizations, The Portage Park Garden Club, The Friends of Portage Park and The Friends of Dickinson Park. We also hit a high of 210 members a few years back. For over five years we have sponsored a student from Vaughn high school to go to Washington DC. Not to mention winning some community awards along the way. And, we still try and keep tabs on the community to make sure our elected officials do what is best for the community.

***Our mission is to  
promote the welfare  
and spirit of the Portage  
Park community.***

Just to give you an idea of our current strength. We have over 130 members. We develop and print 1200 monthly newsletters that are delivered not only to our members but over thirty five local businesses. Every quarter we print 4500 newsletters and distribute them to our 50 block captains to be delivered to almost every address within our boundaries. We have access through the other organizations we are partnered with to deliver immediate information to over 1000 email addresses. In October we held a joint community meeting with our friends at the Old Irving Park Association to promote solidarity between our community organizations. All of this is done by volunteers who care about their community. In short, we have an unprecedented ability to get the word out to the community when the need arises.

The PPNA Board does not take this responsibility lightly, nor should we. We have of late gained the respect of our local officials and I commend them for understanding that we try and speak for the community. Both Alderman Levar and Allen have turned to us as a voice of the community and I hope they continue to look to us for opinions. Since its inception, the Six Corners Association has brought us in as a community voice in the streetscape planning and development of Six Corners and continually turns to us for opinions on the community.

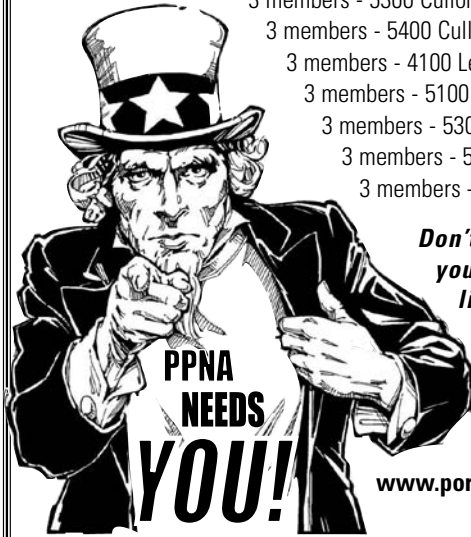
One thing the PPNA has sorely lacked over the years is a good solid volunteer base to be on our Board of Directors. This is where we need help. For all of our strengths, this is our biggest weakness. We have spoken with one voice for the community for over ten years. We need to keep speaking for the community. The PPNA Board has many openings. We need a Parents Committee director to help with the parade, the holiday party and new events. We need an Economic Development Committee director to continue to champion our vision of the neighborhood. We need help in communication, membership and planning. If none of the listed positions speak to you, what does? We are more than open to looking at other committees that would benefit the community and champion our mission.

I feel the future is bright for our community. The economy is down, but our spirits are up and we can see good things on the horizon. Let us all keep the community interest and pride growing for at least the next ten years.

## Show your neighborhood pride!

### Member block counts! Renew for 2010 Today!

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3 members - 5300 Cullom  
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**Don't see  
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**Nick V. Maurer**  
Attorney

[nickmaurer@maurerlawgroup.com](mailto:nickmaurer@maurerlawgroup.com)

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## Be Cautious about Giving Information to Census Workers

By Susan Johnson

With the U.S. Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) advises people to be cooperative, but cautious, so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the 2010 U.S. Census is under way as workers have begun verifying the addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is - how do you tell the difference between a U.S. Census worker and a con artist? BBB offers the following advice:

If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, they will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their identification and their badge before answering their questions. However, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.

Census workers are currently only knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.

**Remember, no matter what they ask, you really only need to tell them how many people live at your address.**

While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, **you don't have to answer anything at all about your financial situation.** The Census Bureau will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers, nor will employees solicit donations. Any one asking for this information is NOT with the Census Bureau.

**And remember, the census bureau has decided not to work with acorn on gathering this information.**

No Acorn worker should approach you saying he/she is with the Census Bureau.

Eventually, Census workers may contact you by tele! phone, mail, or in person at home. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by Email, so be on the lookout for Email scams impersonating the Census.

Never click on a link or open any attachments in an Email that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

**For more advice on avoiding identity theft and fraud, visit [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org).**

## PPNA Members Needed to Fill Seats on Nominations Committee

The PPNA Board is seeking two members to sit on the Nominations Committee. The PPNA Nominating Committee is set each year by the Association president and tasked with slating candidates for voting by members at the **Annual Meeting scheduled for Feb. 8th, 2010.** Per the association by-laws, the committee is comprised of three sitting board members and at least two general members in good standing.

**Jill Staniszewski, Bob Brobson and Maria Pollock will be seeking a full term on the board.**

**Philip Schwartz is seeking a director position and will run for Secretary.**

This leaves eight seats open. **Come to the December 14th meeting and nominate yourself or a friend for a director position. Or email your nomination to [board@portagepark.org](mailto:board@portagepark.org).** All nominations must be in at least 45 days prior to the elections in order to satisfy the notification requirements of the association by-laws. *No nominations are allowed at the Feb. 8th election meeting.*

Adding directors in the coming year is critical for the PPNA to continue to represent the community at the level it has for the past eight years. If you are interested in seeing the PPNA hold more social events, improve neighborhood parks, communicate issues or improve the business district then consider running for a seat on the board of directors. Contact Gerard at 773-736-3076 for more information. Visit [www.portagepark.org](http://www.portagepark.org) for more information on current PPNA activities.



# CAPS REPORT

16th District Community Alert

Below is recap of CAPS meeting held November 25th.

### ► TOP TEN CRIMES: (COMPARED TO PREVIOUS MONTH)

1. Theft = 20 (up 5)
2. Criminal Damage = 16 (down 3)
3. Battery = 14 (down 7)
4. Narcotics = 13 (up 3)
5. Burglary = 5 (down 2)
6. Robbery = 4 (up 4)
7. Motor Vehicle Theft = 4 (down 3)
8. Deceptive Practice = 3 (down 1)
9. Assault = 3 (down 4)
10. Public Peace Violation = 1 (down 1)

### ► PROGRESS ON PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS:

- 5058 W. Hutchinson identified for demolition
- 31 Burglary Missions
- 26 Curfew Violations
- 37 Gang Suppressions
- 19 Outdoor roll calls
- 13 Seatbelt Missions

## Seanachai Theatre Company Coming Soon to Irish American Heritage Center *By Marlena Ascher*

Seanachai Theatre Company is thrilled to announce an exciting collaboration with the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox Avenue, Chicago. Beginning in Spring 2010, Seanachai finds a new home, becoming the resident professional Equity theatre company of the IAHC.

Celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> season, Seanachai's current focus is on establishing a subscription series of plays, growing and strengthening ties with the Chicagoland and Irish-American communities. Adds Robert McNamara, President of the IAHC, "The next year promises to be a year of renewed growth and exciting changes for the Irish American Heritage Center as we work to expand our audiences and to continue to foster Irish culture in Chicago. Seanachai's seasoned talent for Irish storytelling is a perfect fit for our mission."

The inaugural show will be Brian Friel's modern classic, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, directed by Elise Kauzlaric (Non-Equity Jeff Nomination: Best Director), and featuring ensemble members Barbara Figgins, Carolyn Klein, Anne Sunseri, and Sarah Wellington. Its performance run is from Saturday, February 27 through Sunday, April 4.

*Dancing at Lughnasa* is set in Ireland's County Donegal in August 1936 in the fictional town of Ballybeg. It is a memory play told from the point of view of the adult Michael Evans who recounts the summer he spent at his aunts' cottage when he was seven years old. The story is loosely based on the lives of Friel's mother and aunts, and the late summer days when love briefly seems possible for the three Mundy sisters (Chris, Rose, and Kate).

Conor McPherson's haunting play, *The Wier*, is slated for fall of 2010 and the Midwest premiere of Gerard Stembridge's Irish/English cultural war farce, *That Was Then*, is scheduled for spring of 2011.

Seanachai is the Gaelic word for "storyteller". The people's stories were at the very core of ancient Irish culture. It was the duty of the Seanachai to keep these stories alive. The mission of Seanachai Theatre Company is to return theatre to this origin by creating compelling productions and programs that focus the energy of artists towards the common goal of exceptional storytelling. To achieve this end, Seanachai Theatre Company strives to provide an atmosphere where all theatre artists – actors, playwrights, directors, and designers – have the support and assurance to collaborate openly. That is at the heart of all ensemble companies, and Seanachai has proven itself a major player in Chicago's ensemble-driven theatrical community.

For more information, call 773-878-3727 or visit [www.seanachai.org](http://www.seanachai.org).

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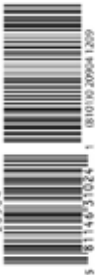
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Portage Park



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**PARENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR**

Lead efforts to provide services targeting parents and children. Contact John Arena at [communications@portagepark.org](mailto:communications@portagepark.org) for more information.

**St. Robert Bellarmine Men's Club  
Presents a Christmas Party with  
Showman Jimmy Damon**

The St. Robert Bellarmine Men's Club will host its annual Christmas celebration on Wednesday, December 9 featuring Vegas style showman Jimmy Damon. Jimmy Damon has played all of the top clubs in Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas. He is the only performer authorized by Frank Sinatra to perform a Tribute Show during his lifetime.

The evening will include Jimmy Damon's show and a buffet dinner. Doors open at 6 P.M. with dinner at 7 P.M. A silent auction and raffle will also be held. Cost is only \$25 per person. Seating is limited, so please purchase tickets soon. Ticket deadline is Monday, December 7th. Tickets will not be sold at the door. Tickets may be purchased by mailing or dropping off a check at St. Robert Bellarmine Rectory, 4646 N. Austin, Chicago, IL 60630. Please make checks payable to "SRB Men's Club."

St. Robert Bellarmine is handicap accessible. Please let us know if you need help by calling the Rectory at 773-777-2666.

**PPNA BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

*November 30, 2009*

- **President Update**
- **Treasurer Update:** *Balance, Lydia Home*
- **Secretary Update**
- **Communications Update:** *Articles for December; Web site and other communication; Newsletter – printing quantity discussion*
- **EDC Update**
- **Membership Update:** *2010 Cards*
- **Parents Committee Update**
- **CAPS Update**
- **Business Update:** *Six Corners Association meetings Camiros Report; By-Laws; Irving Hotel*



**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
Maria Pollock-Piano Tuning	\$10 off (773 286-6368)
New Six Corners Flowers	15% discount
Portage Park Handyman	10% off with proof of membership
Portage Theater	\$2 off ticket price. (except silent films)
Right Now Redesign	\$50 off a Room Redesign
Rudy's Cycles	10% off non-sale parts & access.
Veranda Lighting	10% discount on non-sale merchandise
Wong's Chinese	10% off entire check, every day

*As businesses are added, they will be listed in this newsletter and on our web site. If you are an area business and would like to participate, please contact the PPNA at [membership@portagepark.org](mailto:membership@portagepark.org). If you have not yet joined or renewed your PPNA membership, please do so to take advantage of this benefit. Cards will be mailed to each paid member, and will be valid through Dec. 31, 2010.*

**PPNA Financial Report**

*Balance sheet as of November 30, 2009*

**ENDING BALANCE**

Previous Ending Balance .....	<b>\$4,756.09</b>
Current Ending Balance .....	<b>\$4,993.12</b>

**REVENUE**

Newsletter advertising .....	\$700.00
Membership .....	\$63.00
<b>Total Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$763.00</b>

**EXPENSES**

Membership .....	\$21.00
Newsletter Printing .....	\$468.00
Communications Committee .....	\$36.97
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$525.97</b>

## 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 Gerard Staniszewski at 773-736-3076 or e-mail newsletters@portagepark.org

## PPNA 2010 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

How did you hear about the PPNA? \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type:  Household  Business

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

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

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Membership renewals are due January 1 and expire December 31.

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

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

## Portage Park Palates By Jan and Jill



As all of Portage Park knows, there is a major streetscape in the works, with Milwaukee in the thick of it from Irving to Montrose. It will be great when it's finished. In the mean time, the businesses in the area will take a hit on the construction zone and reduced parking. The economy is already taking its toll, and the construction will create a double whammy. It's hard to keep a business open in the face of such obstacles. Yet, the businesses persevere in these difficult times and we have plenty of good reasons to keep all the restaurants and other food purveyors humming along, not to mention all the businesses that have chosen our corner of the community to put down roots.

Since this is a food article, I'm going to focus on the restaurants and the fast food establishments and the bakeries. I'm starting at Montrose and working my way towards Irving. I frequent many of these establishments, so, let's get started:

**Mrs. O'Leary's Pub & Grill:** This place serves lunch (plus an all you can eat lunch buffet) and dinner and has specials every night of the week, plus a bean bag tournament night. What's not to like?

**Bacci Café:** This is a great place for a huge slice of pizza and a drink for cheap at all hours. It is counter service, and you can order many sandwiches and fries or pizza and make yourself cozy at a little table with a checkered tablecloth or take it home. It's fast and filling with few frills and easy on the wallet.

**Panaderia Guatemalteca Bakery:** a small storefront in between Bacci and Hops and Barley-Excellent pastries and cookies, great with coffee and friendly service. Grab a bagful and find your favorite. It will be hard to choose.

**Hops and Barley:** I get there pretty often. It has a special for cheap every week-night like burgers for \$1 or all you can eat pasta to pizza or nachos. The music tends to be geared to the young people, but there is plenty for the older crowd. Excellent beer and a friendly wait staff. Many flat screen TV's to watch the game.

**Vince's-the Pizza People:** in the strip mall near Randees. I never met a pizza I didn't like and Vince has been around for ages. Take out or delivery.

**Hotdog Express:** a new fast food business in a long shuttered building on the west side of Milwaukee. Great dogs, burgers and fries with all sandwiches. I was so happy to see them open the place. They have a pioneering spirit and good fast food.

**La Palapita:** I love the place. And quite a few other people love it, too. Huge steak and chicken burritos with salsa verde on the side. (Pretty hot-so put it on yourself). Choose your fillings. I like the cheese, onions and cilantro. Good tacos and chips and Mexican soda. You can smell the meat grilling as you pass by. A lot of people from out of the neighborhood make a special trip to this shop. And it's cheap. Good and cheap? Yeah, but don't take my word for it. It took me a few years to try the place and I'm kicking myself.

**Dunkin Donuts:** it's a national chain-Good donuts and do we need to say good coffee. Walk inside and get a dozen to go and watch them disappear.

**La Pena:** Great Ecuadorian food and drinks and live music on the weekends. I love the Churrasco, grilled steak and egg and salad and rice and guacamole. Addictive plantain chips with a dip to start. Great sangria, and other drinks pack a punch. Known for its cerviche, it's fresh and flavorful. I could go on and on. You will love this place. Try it and see we are so happy to have it in our neighborhood.

**Burger King:** just went through a remodeling. Dependable and good, great for a quick bite and easy on the wallet.

**Subway:** in the strip mall. Massive subs on fresh bread with ingredients you choose, nuff said.

**Lomas Verdes:** It's a little place and has been there for years. About seven tables, it's never crowded, but it should be. Very good guacamole, made to order with all sorts of dishes and tacos. I love the al Pastor tacos, but it's all good. It's frequented by the neighborhood, who eat in or get it to go. And it's authentic. You're really missing something if you don't try it. This place is special. I've already been there during the construction. I'm not letting a little inconvenience stand in my way. This place is the real deal.

**Six Corners Bakery:** another really good shop. Great pastries and cookies. Grab a bag and head home with the goodies. Warm, fresh baked treats? Are you kidding me?

Just put your head down and go for it. It's worth a little extra trouble to keep a business from closing. Vote with your dollars and your tenacity. Make a conscious decision to visit the businesses affected most by the streetscape. When it's over in a year, feel proud that you did your part to keep the restaurants and businesses here.

# GREEN CORNER

For Our Community, Our Planet



## CALL TO ACTION: PORTAGE PARK MANAGEMENT



A dripping faucet wastes 140 gallons of water a week. By comparison, having the water fountain by the indoor pool run 24/7 is wasting about 10,000 gallons a week. I was told it was because the water is yellow if it isn't run constantly. That is simply rust from the pipes and is not harmful. Running it for a few minutes in the morning would clear the water and the steady use throughout the day will keep it that way. Please stop this wasteful practice.

### GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH: *What can YOU do to help?*

#### – Save time and energy by using your microwave in surprising ways

- 1. Disinfecting and Deodorizing Sponges:** Don't throw out the kitchen sponge that smells like last night's salmon. Soak it in water spiked with white vinegar or lemon juice, then heat it on high for 1 minute. (Use an oven mitt to remove it.) This will also disinfect any sponges you used to wipe up the juices from a raw chicken.
- 2. Poach, Braise or Steam foods Faster:** Use the microwave for any recipe that calls for braising, poaching, or steaming. Just subtract about three-quarters of the cooking time. Remember to stir liquids often to redistribute the heat, and always take the food out a minute or two before it's completely done, since it will continue to cook.
- 3. Disinfecting Plastic Cutting Boards:** Wash the board well, rub it with the cut side of a lemon, then heat for 1 minute.
- 4. Making Potatoes:** While the microwave won't give you a baked potato with a crisp skin, it will cook the average russet in about 4 minutes. You can simultaneously cook as many as will fit. (The general rule for heating more food is to check for doneness every 30 seconds beyond the regular cooking time.) Prick the potatoes all over with a fork and cook for 2 minutes. Turn them over and cook for 2 to 3 minutes longer. For mashed potatoes, be sure to heat the milk in the microwave before adding it. (Cold milk makes for cold mashed potatoes.)
- 5. Softening Brown Sugar:** Keep the sugar in its plastic packaging, add a few drops of water, and heat on medium for 10 to 20 seconds.
- 6. Decrystallizing Honey:** Honey that has solidified can be brought back to liquid life by uncovering the jar and heating on medium power for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

- 7. Speed Up Yeast Dough Rising:** Yeast doughs that normally take an hour or more to rise at room temperature can be proofed in the microwave in about 15 minutes. Place the dough in a very large bowl and cover with plastic. Place an 8-ounce cup of water in the back of the microwave with the bowl of dough in the center, and set the power as low as possible (10 percent power). Heat for 3 minutes, then let the dough rest in the microwave for 3 minutes. Heat for 3 minutes longer, then let rest for 6 minutes. The dough will double in bulk.
- 8. Roasting Garlic:** It takes 45 minutes to roast garlic in the oven but less than 8 in the microwave. Slice off the top of the head to reveal all the cloves. Place the head in a small, deep dish, season with salt and pepper, and drizzle with 2 tablespoons of good olive oil. Spoon 2 tablespoons of water into the bottom of the dish, cover it with plastic wrap, and cook at medium power for 7 to 7½ minutes. Let stand for a few minutes before unwrapping.
- 9. Getting More Juice From Citrus Fruits:** A lemon or lime taken straight from the refrigerator is harder to juice than one left at room temperature or warmed slightly. To get the most juice, microwave citrus fruits for 20 seconds before squeezing.
- 10. Toasting Nuts, Bread Crumbs, and Coconut:** The microwave toasts them in a quarter of the time it takes in a conventional oven. Spread them out on a plate and heat on high for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Keep in mind that they will continue to toast for about a minute after removal.

## Free Snow Shoeing and Cross Country Skiing Every Weekend in December

Come trek around Northerly Island and see what winter critters lurk (when there is three inches of snow or more). Check out cross country skis and snowshoes FREE with an ID.



- ▶ **WHERE:** Northerly Island, 1400 S. Lynn White Dr.
- ▶ **DETAILS:** All Ages, FREE
- ▶ **INFORMATION:** 312.742.5039

## Kilbourn Park Workshop: Organic Vegetable Gardening Planning

Learn about planning and design for long-term productivity and sustainability, choosing raw material and conserving resources, addressing diverse soil conditions, and building raised beds. For those gardening in cramped lawns or tiny courtyards, get tips on maximizing alternative spaces, including: using containers, good soil management with high yield/intensive planting designs, and choosing varieties well suited to your conditions. Details below:

**DATE:** 12/05/09

**START TIME:** 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

**SCHEDULE NOTES:** For ages 18 & over. Taught by Anna Viertel (of the Chicago Botanic Garden). To register for this class, please call the Greenhouse at 773-685-3359 and leave your name, class name, and your phone number or e-mail for confirmation.

**COST:** \$20

**LOCATION:** Kilbourn Park & Organic Greenhouse, 3501 N. Kilbourn Ave.

By Jan Kupka

► **Christmas Tree Tips:** Have you ever made a holiday tree from one of the potted Norfolk Island pines that appear in supermarkets in December? Treat it gently if you plan to keep it as a house plant. It's native to the moist atmosphere of South Pacific islands and was probably grown in Florida so it needs more humidity than is usually found in a heated Chicago house. Try setting the whole plant on rocks in a large saucer. If you keep the saucer filled with water it will evaporate up around the foliage. Water the tree thoroughly, but then let the water drain and the soil dry out an inch or so deep before watering again. Place the plant within 3-4 feet of a large window so it gets bright, indirect light and keep the thermostat below 65 if you can. With reasonable care you should be able to keep it as a houseplant for several years and move outside during the summer.

If you are planning on purchasing a live tree this year – make sure you know how large your space is. This means the height, the width and the minimum and maximum diameter of the tree stand.

Make sure the stand you choose has a substantial water reservoir, because the tree, at least at the beginning may easily suck up a gallon or more of water a day. If you have a large tree and there are holes in the stand's base, bolt them to a 2- or 3-foot square of 3/4-inch plywood for extra stability. Use WD40 on the screws.

Remember this is a real tree and not perfect – but it should be as straight and as well-balanced as possible, with a single centered trunk the right size for your stand. Make sure the bottom 8 to 10 inches of the trunk is clear of branches so you can set it securely in the stand. Have the lot where you purchased the tree, cut off branches that are very low and cut one inch off the bottom or do it yourself when you bring the tree home. Remember that the cut surface of the trunk must be under water at all times or it will seal up with sap and the tree will dry out and die

When you put the tree in the tree stand make sure the tree is mounted securely and located away from open flames or heat sources. Fill the reservoir and continue to replenish with water every day.

Check the lights to see that they are working properly and the cords are not frayed. If the strand is questionable – throw it away. Always use outdoor lights and start trimming from the top of the tree. Do not use more than seven strands connected strand to strand. Never leave the lights on if you are not home. Put the ornaments on and you're set to go.

When you're ready to take the tree down and if you're feeling ambitious and eco-friendly, instead of leaving your Christmas tree in the alley, cut off the branches and lay them around the bases of roses or over perennials as winter mulch. Less to put in the landfill!

► **Upcoming Flower Show at the Garfield Park Conservatory:** Located at 300 N. Central Park 312-746-5100. Come enjoy a traditional Holiday Flower Show in the Show House, opening the Saturday after Thanksgiving. You'll be amazed at the sheer number of poinsettias on display. The holiday scene is perfect for taking annual family photos or for just getting in the holiday spirit. Tour the rest of the conservatory at your leisure. There are informative signs in many of the gardens. The show ends Sunday, January 10, 2010. The hours are 9 am – 5 pm daily, Wednesdays until 8 pm. The show is through out the Conservatory and the cost including parking is free!

**The Portage Park Garden Club will resume their monthly meetings at the Austin- Irving Library, 6100 W. Irving Park Rd, at 9:30am, Saturday, February 27, 2009. For more information call 773-794-1984 or email portageparkgc@comcast.net.**

## News for residents of the 38th Ward

I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and Happy Holiday Season! A list of holiday celebrations throughout Chicago can be found at [www.cityofchicago.org](http://www.cityofchicago.org) under "Events".

Christmas tree recycling information also will be posted on this website under "Streets and Sanitation".

Don't forget about the overnight parking ban and snow-related parking restrictions that went into effect on December 1st. The winter overnight parking ban (3:00 a.m. – 7:00 a.m.) is posted on one dozen main priority routes. This lasts until April 1st, regardless of snow. Motorists who ignore this ban face a \$150 tow fee in addition to a \$50 ticket. A separate seasonal parking ban exists when there are at least 2 inches of snow on the street. Cars that violate this ban face a ticket and relocation to a space nearby.

Shoveling your sidewalk is the neighborly thing to do, and it's also the law. Chicago Municipal code, sections 4-4-310 and 10-8-180, specifies that both homes and businesses must clear snow from sidewalks next to their property. Please make the 38th Ward safe for everyone by clearing snow and ice from the public sidewalk in front of your property.

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

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

## News for residents of the 45th Ward

► **KIDS HOLIDAY PARTY:** Alderman Patrick Levar and State Representative Joseph Lyons invite all boys and girls ages 5 to 12 to Jefferson Park (4822 N. Long), Saturday, December 12th from 11am to 1pm to join in the fun. Santa Claus, Entertainment, Refreshments and Bike Raffles! Call 773 545-2545 for further information.

► **EARLY VOTING: FEBRUARY 2, 2010 PRIMARY:**

- **Dates**—January 11-28, 2010 (Monday-Saturday) 9am to 5pm
- **Location**—Wright College Science Bldg. 4300 N. Narragansett

*For additional locations please call 45th Ward Public Service Office at 773 545-2545*

## Six Corner's Update

By Bob Brobson

The Six Corner's Streetscape Project will soon pause for the winter season and will start back up in mid-April/May depending on weather conditions.

In anticipation of the new streetscape to be completed in the summer of 2011, The Six Corner's Association with other community representatives are developing a revitalized master plan for the Six Corner's intersection and vicinity that will seek to establish the foundation of a new vibrant shopping district for the Portage Park community.

Stay tuned for public meetings and opportunities for community input through a number of local community groups and organizations.

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# HAVE YOU NOTICED??

By John Arena

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

I want to start this column with an explanation. Recently many have asked me if I have left the association and if so why? While I have pulled back from my role in producing the PPNA News, I have not left the PPNA leadership entirely. The newsletter is in the capable hands of Abigail Dean. I am sure you have noticed the changes she has made to refresh the look and improve the content.

As for myself, I have been meeting with the board to help with the planning that is needed in a group that has a broad mandate and limited resources. Furthermore, I have been meeting with many community leaders in the area to get new ideas and some fresh thinking on old problems.

Most recently, a renewed effort to craft a master plan for the Six Corners shopping district has begun. This plan will update the decade-old Camiros Report and, most importantly, establish a project management structure that has been missing in the effort to guide the district back. Along with myself, two other board members will be part of the steering committee.

But one of the biggest reasons for lightening my load of community service tasks is to help my 8<sup>th</sup> grade son navigate the complex process of applying to High School. I wish I could say that Joey would simply go to our neighborhood school, Schurz H.S. But a school with a graduation rate of less than 50% leaves much to be desired in my mind. So we have been swimming through the process of open houses, applications and tests that are needed to cull the choices down to the schools that are the best fit for him. If you have a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader then you know what I am talking about. If your children are younger, enjoy the peace in your life for now.

The biggest learning my wife, Jill, and I have come away with is that there are many choices and opportunities for students within CPS. For years we only heard talk of the "selective enrollment" schools. Payton. Young. Lane. Northside. All great schools but with thousands of students competing to get the limited seats available.

We were stressing as other parents went on about the selective schools and how hard it is to get into them. About how few seats there were and the importance of grades—with never a mention of the many opportunities available through CPS.

What I have found is there are many opportunities at the 80 charter, magnet, career and military academies. And best of all, there are is no limit to the number of schools that you can apply to. They are great schools with great programs. Von Stubben's computer program is outstanding. Lincoln Park's IB program is one of the best in the state, if not the nation. Prossor has an IB program as well and also the best-equipped engineering program I saw.

That said, the system of schools CPS is charged with running is in crisis. The majority of neighborhood High Schools don't break the 50% graduation rate. This is a social failure on a grand scale. We can—and need—to do better for our children. Parents need to attend LSC meetings at local schools and get involved. Don't have kids? LSCs have seats for non-attending community representatives. Remember the phrase "It takes a village?" It's true.

The drop-outs will statistically be the ones breaking into your garage or being recruited into gangs. We can have an impact. But we need to act.

Joey is a good student and we are optimistic that he will get placed. But if not, the Schurz High LSC better be ready for me.

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**Abigail Dean – Editor in Chief, Newsletter**

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

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

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