



PORTAGE PARK

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Community
News & Views

MARCH 2010



Meetings & Announcements

PORTAGE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION:

Next meeting:

Monday, March 8th
7:30 p.m.

4839 W. Irving Park Rd.

GUEST SPEAKER

Bridget C. Stalla, CDOT

*Six Corner's Streetscape
Update & Schedule*

NOTICE

*The PPNA will hold its annual
elections on Monday, March
8th, 2010. Please attend to help
shape the future of
the Portage Park
neighborhood.*

C.A.P.S. MEETINGS:

All meetings at 7 p.m.

Beat 1624 — March 24

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

Beat 1633 — March 16

*at Merrimac Park,
6343 W. Irving Park Rd.*

Beat 1634 — March 25

*St. Bartholomew Church,
3601 N. Lavergne*

16th District CAPS Office,

312-742-4521 for more information

PPNA ONLINE:

Get current info from our
website or renew online:

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

Lack of Volunteers Threatens Cancellation of 2010 July Fourth Parade—Please Help!

By Gerard Staniszewski, President PPNA

As many of you know, we celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Independence Day Parade last year. As usual, it was a resounding success. Hundreds of children and parents gathered in Dickinson Park, they paraded down Berteau and had a great morning at Portage playing, eating and winning prizes. Well, it is time to get ready for the 11th annual parade.

This year we have a problem. Like many of our sister organizations, volunteerism is down. We are all finding it difficult to get people to help in the community, sometimes even in the smallest way. However, no other organization puts on an event like this. To get hundreds of people together to parade and picnic is one thing. But to get everything for free! Well, I think that is special, and this is what has made the parade great over the years. The Portage Park Neighborhood Association turns no one away. We feel this is a neighborhood event and we should all be generous with what we have.

It is time for you to step up. If you have a child in the parade or if you have a bit of free time, give us a few hours to make this event as good or better than the ones in the past. I am not asking for much, but it is important. I am not sure if you know the amount of work that goes into the parade. Planning starts months in advance. We have to check with the park to make sure the day is open. Our application needs to be submitted at least 30 days before the event. Our target date this year is June 27th, so the application needs to be at the Park District by May 27th.

Before we even apply, we need to raise money. We need the application fee for the parade. We need the application fee for the Park. We need insurance for both the parade and the park and we need the fee for the park. Finally, we need a deposit for the park. Roughly this is all about \$1,900.00. We have not even mentioned games and hot dogs.

In the past, local businesses and government

officials have been very generous with donations. This has never been our problem. The problem has been getting people to help us get the donations and work at the parade. We need bodies. Solicitation letters need to be stuffed and stamped. Follow up calls need to be made to remind the businesses. Vendors need to be called. Raffle gifts need to be picked up. Raffle prizes need to be wrapped. And, much more.

The reason I am mentioning all of this is, last year was our worst for volunteers in the past ten. This cannot happen again, or the parade will not happen. If not for the hard work of a few dedicated people our 10th parade would not have been the success that it was. I am not asking for months of hard work here. I am asking for people to step up and give us what you can.

Can you give us an hour or two to prepare solicitation letters? Can you make a few phone calls? Can you pick up some stuff for us? Can you work the day of the parade setting up tents, selling raffle tickets, serving hot dogs, helping with games? The more people we get, the easier it will be. Parents, do your children enjoy the parade? Then give us a couple of hours, mom or dad. If you do not have children, then help us as a good neighbor.

I am going to conclude this by saying the first meeting of the parade committee will be Monday, March 15, 7:00 pm, 5159 W. Montrose, Phone 773-736-3076. This meeting will be the barometer for the parade. If you cannot make it that night, call and let us know what you can do. If we do not get enough volunteers to make this parade a success, the PPNA will cancel the parade. As many of you noticed we canceled the 2009 holiday party. We cancelled it for the reason that we had no volunteers, no help. I do not want this to happen to the parade. ***So come out and lend a hand to the community.***

Changes in Store for PPNA Newsletter and Communications

Over the years our main source of communication with our members and the neighborhood has been our printed newsletter. In the next few months we will be changing this to an electronic communication system. We will be merging a new, updated web site with a Facebook page. This will allow us to instantly communicate with our members and other organizations in the community.

At this time we are talking with leaders of other neighborhood organizations in our vicinity. We are looking to expand both our reach and theirs. Our hope is to get more local businesses to partner with us by providing a link on our site and more discounts for members. This new form of communication will also allow us to expand our borders. Hopefully, in the near future, we will truly be the Portage Park Neighborhood Association.

As many of you know, we now print 1200 newsletters six times a year to go to our members and local businesses. We also print 4000 newsletters four times a year (quarterly) to distribute within our boundaries. Lately with the economy down, the cost of the newsletter has become a burden. We began exploring alternatives last year and have come up with this exciting new idea.

Currently, almost all of our members receive the newsletter via email a week before it is mailed or delivered to businesses. We hope to expand this service. I know there are still many of you who are not on line or do not receive email. We are not abandoning you. We are working on a good solution.

We are proposing that our June newsletter be our last printed newsletter. We will have everything ready and in place before then.

Show your neighborhood pride!

Member block counts! Renew for 2010 Today!

6 members - 4100 LeClaire

4 members - 4100 Lawler

3 members - 5300 Cullom

3 members - 5400 Cullom

3 members - 4100 Leamington

3 members - 5100 Hutchinson

3 members - 5300 Berenice

3 members - 5000 Berbeau

3 members - 5400 Dakin



**Don't see
your block
listed above?**

*Join or
renew your
membership
today at:*

www.portagepark.org

FRIENDS OF PORTAGE PARK

Upcoming events

► **MARCH 27, 2010** — Indoor Winter Farmers Market

► **APRIL 24, 2010** — Earth Day Event, Kids Resale and Farmers Market

City Shuts Illegal Laundry in Response to Resident Complaints

By John Arena

The City's Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protection has closed a laundromat located at 4300 Block of Milwaukee after the PPNA Economic Development Committee (EDC) was made aware that it had been operating as an industrial laundry operation and reported the situation. The business was ordered closed by the department as of January 12 of this year.

The business was located in a B3-1 zoned strip mall. It had operated under the name of Marie's Laundry but after it changed ownership large bins of sheets became a regular fixture out in full view of the street. In an August 4, 2009 email to the PPNA board a resident of the 4900 block of Cullom Ave. wrote, "My issue is that they obviously are using their open-to-the-public Laundromat to fulfill a contract they have with someone else, possible a hospital or hotel. She continues, "They have expanded to the former adjoining business, and even store laundry in the former location of the Finney Building. You can see clothes stacked from floor to ceiling in these locations."

The committee researched the zoning code, took photos of the violations and forwarded the information to the city. This is a great example of how the PPNA works with its members to resolve issues that affect the character and quality of life in the Portage Park neighborhood.

Legislative Mapping Reform Update

► **The Problem: Illinois' Legislative Mapping Process is Flawed and Political**

- Under existing system, legislators draw district lines behind closed doors.
- Which party gets to draw, Republicans or Democrats, is decided by drawing a name out of a hat.
- Districts are drawn to protect incumbents.
- Districts are drawn to protect friends and punish enemies. Power is entrenched in the hands of a few, and it's almost impossible to vote them out.
- Districts lack true competition.

► **The Solution – A New, Fair Mapping Process**

- Based on a Citizens' Commission Proposal (Illinois Reform Commission).
- Legislators DO NOT draw maps – Independent Commission does.
- Maps drawn in open and transparent process, with public input.
- Specific criteria must be used to draw maps to protect minority voting rights and aim to eliminate partisan advantage
- Map drawers may not unduly favor any political party. Maps are drawn for people, not politicians.

► **The Process – Citizen Initiative**

- Two ways to change the system—through the legislature, or through the citizens.
- Legislature will not change the system—citizens must.
- Need 500,000 signatures of registered voters by end of April.
- Voters must sign a petition specific to their election authority, usually your city or county.
- Signatures get the IL Fair Map Amendment on the November 2010 ballot for voters to decide.
- If the people vote for the new IL Fair Map Amendment, it will become law and we will finally have a redistricting process that is transparent and fair.

For more information about this amendment go to www.ilfairmap.com. The deadline for submitting petitions is April 1. If you are a registered voter and would like to sign the petition please call John Arena at 773-283-9887.



FOOD DRIVE & TAX DISCOUNT!

Liberty Tax Service is sponsoring a food drive to benefit the Our Lady of Victory food pantry.

Liberty Tax Service at 4900 W. Irving Park Road will *discount our tax preparation fees* to whoever makes a donation of a non-perishable food item to the OLV food pantry.

Stop by bring your donations and information with you or make an appointment to prepare your tax return. The *50% off coupon is redeemable only at our office March 1- March 31,2010.*

Contact Liberty Tax Service at 773-286-6900 for additional information.

IN MEMORIAM:

Linda Pudlo 1948-2010

Linda passed from this earth the day before primary elections in February. As was the case before many elections or city budget hearings, the inbox of those she connected with would hold more than a few reminders, advocacies or raise-your-eyebrow anecdotes about our fair city. Her outspoken voice, heard loud and clear "turned up to 11"—with a perspective gleaned from many years as a neighborhood watchdog and champion—will be missed.

Linda served on the Old Irving Park Association board for many years and was the sitting treasurer at the time of her passing. Our condolences go out to her husband, son and entire family.



CAPS REPORT

16th District Community Alert

Below is recap of the recent CAPS meeting.

► TOP TEN CRIMES: (COMPARED TO PREVIOUS MONTH)

1. Battery up 4 but all were domestic abuse
2. Criminal Damage down 1
3. Theft down 6
4. Narcotics arrests were up 8 (that's good, means arrests are being made)
5. Motor vehicle theft unchanged
6. Burglary down 3
7. Deceptive practice down 1
8. Assault down 3
9. Robbery down 1
10. Public Peace Violation Arrests up one

► UPDATES ON PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS:

- Continued improvements to the video enhancement project have lead to arrests.
- The arson offender who burned the church on Devon was a man who looked to be in his 60s and was mentally ill.

16th District Senior Citizens meetings are held in the Community Room of the 16th District on every third Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm.

The next beat community meeting will be on March 24, 2010 at 7:00 pm located at 4242 N. Central, Biagio's Restaurant. Please visit the CPD website at www.chicagopolice.org for sex offenders information, crime statistics, alerts, city programs, city services, etc.



Registration Open For 2010 Senior Discounts At Wright

Senior citizens are entitled to a discount on Wilbur Wright College classes and admittance to social events when they join the Golden Age Club at the college, 4300 N. Narragansett Ave.

Seniors who join the club, which costs \$99, can choose four courses to attend from a menu of dozen courses for the spring 2010 semester, which begins in January. Many of these classes would cost more than \$50 individually. Golden Age Club membership also entitles seniors to a 50% discount on any additional classes.

The list of courses included in the spring 2010 program is long. It includes Senior Morning Workout, Introduction to Brian Gym, Retirement Planning Today, Spanish for Seniors, Film Discussion Series, Floral Design, Care of Houseplants, Body Wisdom, Aqua-Cardio Water Exercise, Muscle Up and Beginning Adult Swim and Intro to Microcomputers.

The social events will be informal gatherings featuring lectures, music and refreshments. Dates are to be announced. Wright launched this special program because research has shown the physical and mental health benefits to senior citizens of staying active.

For a complete continuing education summer schedule or to register for the program, visit the Continuing Education Department in Room A139. A summer schedule can also be found online at wright.ccc.edu. For more information, contact (773) 481-8059.

Please Help Maryville Crisis Nursery with an Easy Donation on Your Income Tax Return

Keep a child safe and warm by supporting the Maryville Crisis Nursery and the Crisis Nursery Coalition of Illinois through a **donation to the Crisis Nursery fund on your Illinois State Income Tax Return (Schedule G, Line J).**

The Maryville Crisis Nursery is the only nursery in the Chicagoland area and is one of six nurseries in Illinois. All nurseries are open 24/7 to support families in crisis. We provide short term care for children birth to six years of age and provide support and education for the parents. Families have used us for a variety of reasons such as medical and mental health issues, domestic violence and homeless issues. We provide a warm nurturing environment for the children while supporting the parents through their crisis which helps create a stronger family.

Our Illinois legislators along with Governor Quinn agreed that the Crisis Nursery Coalition of Illinois can help make a difference for families and passed legislation that allows the Illinois tax payers to donate to the Crisis Nursery Fund on the 2009 Illinois Tax Check-Off Program. Contributions can be as little as \$1.00. The contribution dollars reduce the amount of the refund or increase the taxes due and count toward charitable donation that can be deducted on next year's return. The Crisis Nursery fund can be found on your schedule G form, letter J, which is the tenth on the list. The funds raised will be divided among the six Illinois nurseries.

For more information please go on our website www.maryvilleacademy.org or call Tonyia Flores at (773) 205-3600.

TRAC Reports Progress in Property Tax Reform

TRAC is pleased to announce that it has been working for "Acquisition-Based Assessing" as the means to truly CHANGE the way ALL of our properties are assessed. HB5355—the ABA Law—was filed on February 4th by State Representative John Fritchey and co-sponsored by Representative Joyce. The Acquisition-Based Assessment Law would amend the Property Tax Code for all types of property - single-family, condominiums, apartments, commercial, and industrial and limit the maximum annual increase in assessments to 2% a year (and makes that limit permanent), while also using an actual sale price of a property as the new value going forward.

THE NEXT STEPS?

The bill will be assigned to a Committee Rep Fritchey will have until March 12 to move the bill on to the House floor.

STAY TUNED...

Calls to action about when to apply pressure and who will need an extra push to get the bill passed are coming... Please watch for updates on <http://www.trac-il.org>.



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

PARENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

Lead efforts to provide services targeting parents and children. Contact John Arena at communications@portagepark.org for more information.

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PPNA MARCH MEETING AGENDA

- **President Update**
- **Treasurer Update**
- **Secretary Update**
- **Communications Update**
- **EDC Update**
- **Membership Update**
- **Parents Committee Update**
- **CAPS Update**
- **Business:**
 - 2010 PPNA Elections
 - Six Corner's Streetscape update and Schedule by Guest Speaker, Bridget C. Stalla, CDOT



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. 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 March, 1, 2010

ENDING BALANCE

Previous Ending Balance	\$3,900.72
Current Ending Balance	\$3,651.72

REVENUE

Membership	\$229.00
Total Revenue	\$229.00

EXPENSES

Newsletter Printing	\$478.00
Total Expenses	\$478.00

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

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 Jill and Jan



PPP decided on doing a second helping of the **Veranda Inn**. We really should try this place in better weather because we have yet to be on the "veranda." So, on a cold snowy night, PPP plus three snuggled into a corner table and went to work.

For you who have visited Veranda since our first review the décor is pretty much the same. A large, yet warm, main room with tables and large plants on a couple of different levels. A large inviting bar is located on one side of the room and there is a TV or two scattered around.

From beginning to end our service, provided by Eric, was friendly and attentive. Our meal started with a complimentary generous helping of Taramosalata and a basket of fresh bread. We placed our drink order that consisted of some wine by the glass (\$5.25), Zywiec beer (\$2.00) and a cocktail. The Taramosalata (Greek Caviar on the menu) was good slathered on the bread and as usual, the conversations started.

After a bit of talking, which is one of the mainstays of PPP, we decided on our appetizer selections. We ordered Saganaki (\$6.25), and Loukaniko (\$7.25). Loukaniko is a Greek sausage and is served with sliced cucumbers and tomatoes. The Saganaki came with the obligatory Opa! and flame. The Saganaki was actually quite good, one of the better I have had in a while, crisp and lemony. The Loukaniko was a generous serving and also worth a try. And, we needed more bread.... It is so difficult doing this column.

Most of us ordered from the Specials menu. Athenian Chicken (\$6.99), two lemony skinless breast pieces with a generous helping of fresh mixed vegetables over rice. Pork Chop (\$9.99), one chop with the same vegetables and mashed potato. Half Slab of ribs (\$8.99), with fries. 8 oz Prime Rib Eye (\$9.99), again, vegetables with choice of potato. The Rib Eye cut was more of what I would call a breakfast steak. A large thin cut, rather than the Prime Rib you may be familiar with. This special came with a choice of soup or salad, the salad was ordered and was quite a large dinner salad. Last was the Spicy Mediterranean Chicken (\$12.75). This was ordered off the regular menu, you had your choice of how spicy you wanted it, our companion ordered medium and enjoyed it... All of the specials came with a choice of Navy bean or chicken and pasta soup. For some reason we all got the chicken soup. It was quiet good.

At the end of the meal a complimentary plate of melon with chocolate sauce was placed on the table. This was a nice touch. At this point, most of us were too full for desert but we were able to try the Baklava. Served warm, it was a good finish.

Overall our experience at Veranda was enjoyable. All the food was prepared very well. We found the special menu had a good selection and they gave you generous portions. In many cases we opted for Greek dishes, but, Veranda has a good selection of American dishes. This restaurant really should be more crowded. If you have been to Veranda, go back for your second helping. If you haven't tried it yet, time to check it out.

The Veranda Inn is at 5700 W. Irving Park Road, with a small parking lot in the back. They are open from 11:00am to 2:00am and have live music on the weekends, but as always, call first to make sure. Phone: 773-283-8800.

Once a month we will be eating at a restaurant in the Portage Park area and writing an article that will appear in the newsletter about the visit. Our visits are anonymous to the owners – so we do not receive special treatment. We are also paying for our own meals.

If you are interested in joining us please contact us at communications@portagepark.org. We will notify you of the location of the restaurant. Our requirements are that you do not notify the restaurant; we will divide the check up evenly, share the dishes and offer opinions for the review. An article about the restaurant will appear in the following PPNA newsletter. If you have a favorite restaurant you would like to suggest, please send your suggestions to communications@portagepark.org.

GREEN CORNER

For Our Community, Our Planet



Garden Club Update *By Jan Kupka*

► **It's March – time to start seeds indoors for warm season annuals and vegetables 6 – 8 weeks before the May 15th last frost date.** Also, start summer blooming bulbs and tubers such as Cannas indoors in moist, soil-less mix.

► **Think about container gardening this year.** Tender perennials and tropical plants that won't tolerate cold weather look great in pots and are easy to move indoors over the winter. A colorful window box makes a practical way to keep plants on your patio

Containers let you grow herbs year-round, indoors or outdoors, in combinations as changeable as the seasons or your moods. Herbs display their adaptability in containers. Consider planting any type of mint plant in a container. In a garden they tend to be a bully and take over.

If you have poor soil or don't have the option of planting your tomatoes in a different spot each year, try growing them in containers. Most tomatoes do really well in large pots filled with a potting mix designed for container-grown plants. Just be sure you have a big-enough pot -- at least be 2 feet in diameter to allow space for the roots, soil and water. Many tomato varieties can grow 6 feet tall by the end of the season! The plant will need sturdy support such as a stake, trellis or a cage of stout wire fencing

When you buy container – bigger is better. As a rule of thumb think if 3 gallon milk jugs would fit in the container. Smaller containers do not have enough for soil for plant support and the soil dries out faster in small containers.

The material is also important. For our weather a heavy duty plastic or fiberglass is a good idea. Although they will fade and may eventually crack, they are the most durable. Cement and terra cotta will eventually crack. Ceramic planters are pricey and they too will eventually crack. Metal pots will often rust and stain wood and concrete surfaces.

Drainage is important in containers. Buy a container that has holes on the bottom, standing water will rot the roots of the plants. Wire baskets with moss liners dry out too fast. Put your plant in a plastic container with holes and cover the plastic with moss.

► **Visit the free annual Spring Flower Show at the Lincoln Park Conservatory.** The Spring Flower Show at the Lincoln Park Conservatory, 2391 N. Stockton Drive, runs daily 9a.m. - 5p.m. through May 9. Experience the beauty of spring with a rare opportunity to meet the direct descendents of the great Azaleas that once bloomed at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. In addition, this year's flower show will feature a changing selection of spring blooming plants including Azaleas, spring flowering annuals and spring flowering perennials.

► **The March Portage Park Garden Club meeting will be held Saturday, March 27, at 9:30am in the Community Room on the 2nd floor (there is an elevator) of the Austin Irving Library 6100 W. Irving Park Rd. 312-744-6222.** Refreshments will be served. The meeting topic is Container Gardening. Guests are welcome. For more information call the Portage Park Garden Club at 773-794-1984 or e-mail the PPGC at portageparkgc@comcast.net.

Kilbourn Park Organic Gardening Workshops:

RAIN BARRELS & RAIN GARDENING

Interested in harvesting rainwater for your garden with a rain barrel or cistern? How about installing a basic rain garden in your yard? Cathy Breitenbach from the Chicago Park District and Sarah Abu-Absi from the Chicago Department of Environment will discuss the benefits of using rainwater for your garden. Participants will receive a rebate form from the City of Chicago to receive a \$30 discount on a rain barrel.

Date: 03/13/10

Start Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Cost: \$20

LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Landscaping with native plants is creating a new buzz in the gardening world! Native landscapes create backyard habitat for birds and butterflies while offering gardeners unique, beautiful plant selections. Native habitats require less water, fertilizer, and energy to maintain than their ornamental counterparts and can help increase stormwater infiltration and carbon sequestration.

In this class, Becky Schillo of the Chicago Park District, will discuss practical design and planting techniques for introducing natives into the home landscape. Topics will include site considerations for native landscaping, appropriate plant selection, basics of maintaining native landscapes, and where to find native plants in the Chicago area.

Date: 03/27/10

Start Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Cost: \$20

Register Now for Climate Cycle Solar Schools Ride, May 15th



Climate Cycle's Solar Schools

Ride is a family- friendly

fundraiser whose proceeds help *install solar energy systems in local public schools.*

Cyclists select from a 4, 10, 20 or 62-mile course along picturesque Lake Michigan. All starting and end points are in downtown Chicago, with the exception of the 62-mile "metric century" course, which begins at the Indiana Dunes and ends in downtown Chicago.

A celebration follows the ride, which includes music, free lunches for all riders, sustainability showcases, goody bags, a raffle, as well as kid-friendly activities.

This community event will empower youth to become leaders of the clean energy movement through education and involvement in local public schools.

Climate Cycle, a non-profit organization, focuses on local solutions to global pollution. At the inaugural bike-a-thon in May 2009, 350 participants raised \$67,000 to install solar energy on four schools. Because more money is spent on utilities than textbooks and computers combined, the time to retool our schools is now. Learn more at climatecycle.org.

St. Robert Bellarmine Update

▶ St. Robert Bellarmine School launches "P.E. for Me" - a new athletics program for students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Registration is now open for St. Robert Bellarmine School's new after-school athletics program "P.E. for Me" taught by physical education teacher Mrs. Yankowski ("Ms. Y"). Students in grades 2 and 3 can register now for sessions that take place on Tuesdays from 2:45 to 3:30 P.M., February 9 through March 2. The cost for the four weekly sessions is only \$12. "P.E. for Me" for Kindergarten and 1st grade will begin in March and registration information is to come soon. For more information, contact the school office at 773-725-5133.

▶ Class of 1970 Reunion - April 10, 2010

The class of 1970 is holding a reunion April 10 at the Stonewood Ale House in Schaumburg, Illinois. We have been able to find all but 10 graduates and are still trying to locate some classmates and teachers. Alumni who would like to attend, or who might be able to help us locate more teachers and classmates, can contact Rick Brandstatter at rbrandstatter@yahoo.com. More information will be posted on the Alumni Reunion page of the school website, srb-chicago.org as it is available.

▶ St. Robert Bellarmine V.I.P. Tickets are on sale now.

St. Robert Bellarmine 2010 V.I.P. tickets are now on sale. A \$20 V.I.P. ticket gives you 252 opportunities to be awarded a cash prize in the year ahead. Monthly cash prizes range from \$30 to \$500. Tickets can be purchased at the Rectory, 4646 N. Austin Avenue, or at the V.I.P. Club table in the church vestibule after all weekend masses. Tickets are limited for this popular raffle, so get yours now! For more information, and for a mass schedule, please visit www.srb-chicago.org or call the Rectory at 773-777-2666.

Disney II Magnet School News

Community Member are invited to THE Disney II social event of the season! The Disney II PTA's 2nd annual ABC Auction will be held at Irving Park Garden Terrace at 7 p.m. on March 6th. Tickets are \$50 per person and will not be sold at the door. Contact Stacey Nyman at scstnyman@sbcglobal.net to reserve your spot today! Do you have an item or service to donate? It's not too late—we are still accepting donations so please contact Allison Mutlu, allisonmutlu@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Disney II Educational Foundation - Disney II has a new fundraising organization—the Disney II Educational Foundation. Similar to "friends of" organizations that you may have heard about at other CPS schools, the Disney II Educational Foundation has a single purpose: to raise money to support Disney II and its programs, like the Extended Day which greatly enhances our children's education. Contact Tiffany Owen at tiffany.owen@gmail.com for more information.

Summer Camp Workshop - in conjunction with OIPA Parents Committee - Saturday March 20th from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. at the Disney II Magnet School 3815 N. Kedvale. It's not too early to think about summer camp! Come to our helpful seminar to learn what choices are available locally for this summer. Many great camps will be represented and providing valuable information including deadlines for registrations, program content, etc. Sponsored by OIPA Parents Committee and Disney II Magnet School. For more info, contact oipa-parents@hotmail.com.

Carl Schurz High School Honors the Past, Celebrates the Present, Embraces the Future as It Turns 100

Carl Schurz High School's alumni, faculty and students are preparing to celebrate the school's centennial this May. The two-day event will take place on the school grounds and at the nearby Abbey Pub.

"We are excited to announce the founding of the Carl Schurz High School Alumni Association and its Centennial Celebration 'Honor the Past, Celebrate the Present and Embrace the Future'. All alumni are invited to come and support the Purple and Gold in commemorating 100 years of Schurz pride in this grand old building," said Timothy Anderson, a 1977 graduate who is helping plan the school's two-day centennial celebration.

Anderson, who also helped start Carl Schurz High School's very first Alumni Association this past September, expects over a thousand grads to gather for the weekend events May 1st and May 2nd, 2010, including a Sock Hop, School Tours, Dinner at the Abbey Pub, a Centennial Program in the school's auditorium and Reunions by Decade.

Saturday's events on May 1, 2010 will include a Sock Hop in the Schurz Gymnasium. Alumni can flash back in time with this school dance. They will be able to tour the building with student guides from Schurz to reflect on the school's history and architecture and memorabilia that will be on display. Saturday evening alumni have been invited to spend an unforgettable night at the Abbey Pub at 3420 West Grace Street in Chicago for dinner, dancing and live music.

Sunday's events on May 2, 2010 will commemorate the centennial with a special program in the auditorium. Alumni from across the decades will perform under the direction of former teacher, Jeff Berke. Schurz alum, Bob Dekas, the 9-time Emmy award winning producer of CBS Sports' March Madness tournament will be speaking, along with Chicago newspaperman, radio personality and noted author, Rick Kogan. New alumni will be inducted into the Schurz Alumni Hall of Fame. The day's events will conclude with Reunions organized by Decade held throughout the building.

Current Schurz High School Principal, Mary Ann Folino hopes the centennial festivities will draw more alumni back to Schurz as mentors for current and partners with the alumni who formed the association about three months ago. The Alumni Association is planning to establish a scholarship fund for current Schurz students. Proceeds from the centennial will also be utilized to restore the legendary M.P. Moller (1936) pipe organ in the auditorium, upgrade technology in the school, and produce an alumni newsletter.

The Alumni Association and school officials are also seeking a National Register of Historic Places nomination for Schurz High School. This past December, the Chicago Board of Education approved Schurz to move forward with the nomination process. The Alumni Association hired an architectural historian who will submit the application to the Illinois historic preservation review board. If successful, the nomination will continue to the National Register of Historic Places. Carl Schurz High School was designated a Chicago landmark in 1979. Principal Folino hopes to celebrate the nomination approval during the centennial festivities.

Tickets are available for purchase online at <http://schurz100years.org> or by mail. Please request information by mail at Attn: Schurz High School Centennial, 3601 N. Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60641 or by email at schurz100years@gmail.com.

The Alumni Association is hoping that this historical event will renew a sense of pride with former students, foster a greater appreciation in current students, and inspire the local community for the next 100 years.

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HAVE YOU NOTICED??

By Gerard Staniszewski

'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

Surprising Benefits of New Parking Meters

I am probably one of the few people in the city who think the change in the parking meter system is good. Now, before you start emailing me with nasty things, hear me out.

Are the rates more? Yes they are. Are they worth it, yes! One of the biggest problems we have heard in the Six Corners area for years is, we have no parking. I can't shop because I cannot find a space. So what is your excuse now? We have plenty of parking. All the employees of the local businesses have stopped taking up the spots all day and have freed them up for people who want to shop, what a wonder. Other drivers, for whatever reason would park their cars all day and never move. Not anymore.

Honestly, when was the last time you could drive down Cicero, pull up to City News, park in front and go in? Well, now you can. How about the Chase bank on Irving or the dollar store? Yep, plenty of parking. Spots are open all over and now is the time to use them. And yes it is cheap, let me explain.

Here are the new parking rates as of January 4th.

- Inside the Loop (Area bounded by Lake Michigan to the East, Wacker Drive to the North and West, and Congress Parkway to the South), rates will be \$4.25 per hour.
- In the Central Business District outside the Loop (Area bounded by Lake Michigan to the East, North Avenue to the North, Halsted to the West, and Roosevelt Road to the South, exclusive of the Loop Area) rates will be \$2.50 per hour.
- In all other areas of the city, rates will be \$1.25 per hour

What does this mean? It costs \$1.25 for an hour of parking at Six Corners (a quarter will get you 12 minutes). Granted 12 minutes is not much but for fifty cents you get 24 minutes, now we are talking. And, did you know you can take that parking stub anywhere in the \$1.25 an hour area and use it? Yes! Unlike the old meters, if you got back to your car and you had 30 minutes left, how did you feel? Now you can get in your car, drive around the corner from City News, park in front of Chase and get out and shop more. No more cost to you! What a deal! Try and park in a pay lot for this money.

This scenario only holds true within each of the three above areas. You cannot take your \$1.25 an hour stub and park in the \$4.25 an hour area.

Let me tell you a real story. Last year we had a problem with the Park District application for our Independence Parade. I had to rush downtown to the Park District offices (Columbus and Ohio) to drop something off. I was fully prepared to park in one of the many lots in the area and it would have cost me \$12.00 (the 1st hour at least) and I would have expensed it out to the PPNA (your donated money). But, when I drove up to the building and what do you know, plenty of street parking. I parked in front of the darn building. I got out, put fifty cents in the meter (back then, worth about 20 minutes) went upstairs dropped off what was needed and was out with time to spare, for fifty cents, downtown! And, I considered it a donation to the PPNA, we saved money.

How about this, don't have a quarter? Pull out your debit or credit card, no problem. What about the motorcycles that would piggyback on your quarter with the old meters? Now they have to pay, HA!

All I am saying is you need to step back and look at what you have gained with the new meters and rates. I believe the benefits far outweigh the drawbacks. I still do a lot of walking in the neighborhood. This will not stop. But, on occasion I will run errands in the neighborhood with my car. In the past I could not park or I was parking at a meter blocks away wasting quarters, leaving time on the meter as I left one and went to another one., then running out of quarters... I'll tell you what, you stay home and complain; I'll go to six Corners and shop for an hour for a buck and a quarter.

CLARIFICATION

Last months column contained this paragraph:

Just two weeks later after a different SCA meeting I was given the news that if I remained on the (Master Plan Steering) committee Ald. Patrick Levar would pull his support for funding the planning effort.

In an email response to the column Don Blair, SCA Economic Restructuring Chairman, requested we print this clarification:

"To clarify, at no time did myself or Joe Angelastri tell... you that Alderman Levar threatened to pull his support to fund the project. He just told us flat out that he did not want John Arena to be part of this process."



The Portage Park Neighborhood Association News is a publication of the PPNA. PPNA Board Members are:

Gerard Staniszewski – PPNA President

John Arena – Vice President/Communications

Bob Brobson – Director

Chris Ericksen – Treasurer

Jill Staniszewski – Membership

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For more information about the PPNA and/or the PPNA News, e-mail us at: board@portagepark.org or On-line at www.portagepark.org

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