

The Historian

Preserving & Promoting Neighborhood History

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Winter 2015

Board of Directors Monthly Meetings

April 27
June 29
August 31
October 26
December 28

All meetings are held bi-monthly on the last Monday of each even-numbered month at 7 p.m. at the Society, 1447 W. Morse Avenue and are open to all members.

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(l-r) Front row: Alderman Debra Silverstein (D) 50; Morrine Sweer, President of NBHOL; Muriel Weinstock, Secretary of NBHOL; Sid Amdur, treasurer of NBHOL. Rear row: George Milkowski, NBHOL board member.

Park 557 Renamed North Boundary Park

By Hank Morris

Running north of Touhy Avenue along the east side of Kedzie Avenue to Jarvis Avenue sat the Chicago Park District's Park #557, a 1.6-acre park. For decades the city had owned the property. In 2011, the Chicago Park District finally took over the land, calling it Park No. 557.

Prior to that time, the strip of land was cared for by the North Boundary Home Owners League (NBHOL), at its own expense. For years, this neighborhood organization paid private landscaping companies for spring clean-ups, fall clean-ups, and mowing the grass.

As the green space serves as the western border of the NBHOL neighborhood (Howard Street, Touhy Avenue, California Avenue, and Kedzie Avenue)

and is the city limits between Chicago and Skokie, the organization of home owners had always upheld that Park #557 served as a gateway to Chicago, while providing visitors with their "first impression" of their neighborhood.

The North Boundary Home Owners League first incorporated in 1945. At the time, the group's biggest challenges related to noise and air pollution caused by the former National Brick Company in Skokie on the strip of land between Kedzie Avenue and the North Shore Channel.

Since that time, the NBHOL has continuously worked and advocated for improvements particularly relating to safety, noise, beautification, public

Rogers Park / West Ridge Historical Society

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**The Cabbagehead
E-Newsletter Editor**
Hank Morris

services, recreational facilities, as well as the appropriate maintenance of the area's landscapes, streets, alleys, and utilities.

The park officially designated at 7211 N. Kedzie Avenue, had garnered attention in 2013 after an Australian diplomat requested the Chicago Park District to name the park after American-Australian architect Marion Mahony Griffin, who lived in Rogers Park from 1939 to 1961.

Chicago Park District spokeswoman Jessica Maxey-Faulkner said the bid to rename Park 557 for Griffin — who, with her husband, received much acclaim down under for

designing the Aussie capital city, Canberra, a century ago — had been abandoned. Later, Jarvis Beach and Park was renamed for Griffin.

Because of the park's location and its importance to the surrounding community, the NBHOL petitioned the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners to rename the site "North Boundary Park." So it was that the Chicago Park District board voted to rename the park on Wednesday, October 8, 2014. Alderman Debra Silverstein officiated at the official dedication ceremony at 1:00 p.m. on December 11, 2014. □

Volunteer Profile

By Kay McSpadden

Ahndrea Sprattling has been our longest-serving and most faithful docent. She was recruited in 2012 by Bob Fuller, who was our Volunteer Coordinator. Since then she has been a regular docent, usually on Saturdays, absent only for personal commitments—such as serving as maid of honor at her mother's wedding—or to meet the needs of her pet care clients. On a cold Saturday in January, I asked her some questions about herself.

What made you want to get involved with the Historical Society?

I wanted to learn more about the neighborhood I grew up in. I was born in Evanston, but I lived in Rogers Park for twenty-seven years. I attended Field Elementary School, "Home of the Bulldogs." In 2012 I moved with my mother to Edgewater Glen. I had also worked on a project for a private company interviewing people who grew up in Rogers Park. That project made me want to know more.



Volunteer docent Ahndrea Sprattling was recruited in 2012 by our Volunteer Coordinator at that time Bob Fuller.

I'm a history buff anyway. I like to watch history mini-series on TV and then read the books; a memorable book was David McCullough's book on John Adams.

What have you enjoyed most about being a docent?

Meeting people. Sometimes people stop by who used to live in Rogers Park, or visitors to Chicago from other countries, or veterans who like to talk about their war experiences.

Continued on page 4.

From the President's Desk



Ken Walchak

Hi to all,

First, let me wish everyone a Happy New Year. I hope your holidays were healthy, and joyous. I for one am now officially done wishing people Happy New Year. You, my readers, were the last beneficiaries of my greeting. It is now time to move on to spring, and new beginnings.

This past year in your Historical Society has been one of change. We began 2014 with a winter board retreat. We outlined some of our goals for both the near and long term. I don't know about you, but for me outlining goals is the easy part. Implementing them not so much. We have spent the past year reorganizing our board and operations, forging new connections with our colleagues at Loyola University, and planning activities that we hope will interest you.

2015 is our 40th anniversary year. Quite an achievement for a community-based organization founded on the vision (and in the basement) of the late Mary Jo Doyle. In many

ways we are still living off of the energy and generosity of those founding members. It is time for those of us who value the efforts of those who came before us to step up and help ensure the future of the Society. We need all of you to join the Society, recruit your friends, relatives and neighbors to do the same. In addition to the important funds that you bring in that way, the more members we have involved, the better we look to funders when we go after grants to pay for the programs we put on.

One last thing before I let you go. Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday afternoon, the 28th of March from 1-3 p.m., at the Rogers Park Branch Library. Our special guest speaker is Bill Savage. A writer, professor, and bartender among other talents, Bill is a great deal more entertaining than yours truly, who promises to keep his remarks brief.

Please make plans to attend our meeting. Bring your membership up to date, or join for the first time, by going to our website. Follow the prompts. You will then be able not only to vote for the new Board of Directors, but you will be able to attend a year's worth of functions. At the same time, if you are able, and feel so inclined, you are welcome to add something extra to your dues, to continue your generous support of our Rogers Park West Ridge Historical Society.

Thank you all,
Ken Walchak

Do you receive our *Cabbagehead*?

Your society sends out an electronic newsletter frequently. It contains news of events that were announced AFTER the previous *Historian* newsletter was mailed and will occur BEFORE the next issue of the *Historian* is published. It's our way of getting the word out to our membership about things they otherwise might not learn about.

Send us your e-mail address to insure that you're on the distribution list. Just send us an e-mail at info@rpwrhs.org with the subject "Cabbagehead".

Membership as of February 1, 2015

Welcome New Members

Individual

Stephanie Barto
Rochelle (Shelley) Gordon
Elaine Kaneshiro
Christopher Michaelson
David Taylor

Senior

Roberta Goehmann
Suzanne Kraus

Thanks for Renewing

Individual

Kevin Connors
Amy Galibois
Arthur Giffand
Christina Guswiler
Barry Katz
Phillip McGovern
Patricia Mooney – Melvin
Susan Olin
Dr. Shirley Roy
Ahndrea Sprattling
Glen Timmerman
Donald Tres
Karen Werner
John Zender

Household

Benedictine Sisters of Chicago
Raymond Degroote Jr.
Fred & Sharon Egloff
Daniel & Carolyn Goffman
John Hoffman & Paul Morris
Jerry St. Clair

Senior

Dorothy Anderson
Darwin Corrin
Patricia Daly
June Finfer
Emily Gross
Clifford Hermanson
Elaine Igelman
Charles Metalitz
Geraldine Moran
Tom Nall
Virginia Palmer
Janet Royce
Suzanne Travers – Byster
Swanette Triem
Carol Veome

**Membership as of
February 1, 2015**

continued from page 3

Senior Household

John & Judy Fitzgerald
Dan & Michelle Miller
John & Pat O'Neal
Joe & Peggy Penkrot
Tom & Ann Serb
Thomas & Karen Smith
Maurice & Donna Steiner
Diane Taylor & Paul Friedman
Frank & Virginia Finis
Susan & Richard Varno

Premium

Ann & Frank Glapa
Steven Simons
Sue Sosin
Bill & Betsy Vandercook

What other Society events have you attended?

I really enjoyed last year's talk on the history of Soldier Field. I've been to many Bears Games, and I participated in the twenty-fifth anniversary of Special Olympics held there. I also went to the Annual Members Meeting at the MorseL Restaurant in 2012 and the Members Holiday Party at Gulliver's. I volunteered at one of the fundraisers at Joe Moore's home.

As we talk, you have a sketch in front of you that you're working on. Tell me about your work as an artist. What kind of art do you do?

I do abstract paintings based on nature or vibrations. I use bright colors. I paint with acrylics on canvas or paper. I took art classes in high school. I was involved in Gallery 37 where I learned various techniques and skills, including mural painting. Then I took art classes at Harold Washington College. I hope to go back there and complete my degree. I would like to eventually study library science.

I saw some of your paintings on sale at the Glenwood Arts Festival last summer, as part of an artists' collective.

The collective is called Economic Daredevil, named after a character in a comic book series. Our purpose is to enable people who live in an environment without art to buy art at a reasonable price. Our guiding principle is that no one should live without art. The collective holds exhibits at businesses in economically depressed neighborhoods in order to bring art to the people there.

You have many interests: history, sports, animals, reading, art!

What I like most is getting to know people—and animals! In my pet walking business, I enjoy meeting the clients, finding out how they got their pets, and I enjoy learning the personalities of the pets. I like taking pets to the beach and playing with them. I give medications, and sometimes I stay overnight if the client is out of town.

I also remember seeing you studying Spanish when you were here. Are you interested in learning languages?

When I went to school in Rogers Park I enjoyed the diversity of the students. My graduation class was very colorful! Most students were Latino, but there were also refugees from Bosnia, Tibet, and other countries. I could relate to their stories of loss because my dad passed away one month before my graduation. This diversity and shared experiences piqued my interest in studying other languages. I took Spanish in college, and now I'm studying Italian. □

R.I.P. Bernie Stone, Former 50th Ward Alderman

By Hank Morris

There are stories, nay legends, about Bernard L. “Bernie” Stone. Whether you liked him or not, there’s no doubt that you’ve either heard them or told a few, yourself. At his best, Bernie was controversial.

Bernie passed away on Monday, December 22, 2014. He was 87 years young. His 38 years as the Alderman of the 50th Ward accounted for over 43% of his entire life. Such dedication to anything is rarely, if ever, encountered today.

Bernard L. Stone was born in the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago on Thursday, November 24, 1927, to Sidney and Rebecca Stone. He was one of two children in the Stone family, the other being his sister Delores.

He was educated in the Chicago Public School System, at Von Humboldt Elementary School, 2620 W. Hirsch Street, and Tuley High School, 1313 N. Claremont Avenue, (replaced by Roberto Clemente Community Academy, 1147 N. Western Avenue), where he was a letterman on the school’s football team and met his future wife, Lois.

College found Bernie attending Wilbur Wright Junior College, 3400 N. Austin Avenue (now Wilbur Wright College, 4300 N. Narragansett Avenue), where he was president of his freshman class. After a hitch in the U.S. Army in 1945, Bernie returned home to Chicago in 1947 and earned the Degree of Juris Doctor from the John Marshall Law School, 315 S. Plymouth Court.

Bernie and his wife, Lois, raised son Jay, and daughters Ilana Feketitsch , Lori Schlossberg , and the late Robin Stone.



Bernard L. Stone, (1927-2014)

Political Life

In 1956 Stone ran in a multi-way race in the Democratic primary for the Illinois state House of Representatives from the 8th district, but was defeated by Esther Saperstein, who went on to serve in the Illinois House for 10 years and became Illinois’ first woman state senator.

In 1963 Stone was one of a then-record 233 persons who filed to run for Chicago Alderman. Stone was one of eleven candidates who filed to run for Alderman of the 50th Ward, ten of which were attempting to unseat incumbent, Republican Alderman Jack I. Sperling, who was seeking a third four-year term. Stone filed without the endorsement of a political party. By February, 1963, partyless Stone wasn’t even on the ballot for the February 26 election.

Ten years later, on Monday, January 29, 1973 the Supreme Court of Illinois appointed Sperling to fill a vacancy as Cook County Circuit Court Judge. The Chicago City Council called a special election for Tuesday, June 5, 1973, to fill vacant City Council seats, including the 50th Ward Alderman seat.

Bernie Stone was, at that time, an employee in the office of Cook County Sheriff Richard Elrod. Stone was vice president of the 50th Ward Regular Democratic Organization, and was endorsed by the 50th Ward Regular Democratic Organization for Alderman.

Stone was one of five candidates who filed to finish Sperling’s term. Another candidate, independent Theodore Berland, was a medical writer and nationally recognized anti-noise activist who was chiefly responsible for Chicago’s anti-noise ordinance. Berland was endorsed by the Independent Voters of Illinois (IVI), and by independent Aldermen including Leon Despres [5th], Seymour Simon [40th], and John Hoellen [47th].

Another independent candidate, attorney Ray Jeffrey Cohen, was endorsed by the Independent Precinct Organization (IPO). Stone organized the “Concerned Citizens of the 50th Ward” to counter neighboring Lincolnwood’s opposition to a bridge over the North Shore Channel at Pratt Avenue, which Stone called a “necessity” for the 50th Ward. No candidate received a majority of the vote, and so a run-off was called for Tuesday, July 3, 1973 between the top two vote-getters, Stone (47%) and Berland (27%).

Berland picked up additional endorsements, including all seven independent Aldermen, including William Cousins [8th], Anna Langford [16th], and Dick Simpson [44th], as well as the endorsements of State Senator Dawn Clark Netsch and State Representative James Houlihan, and the Chicago Tribune. With a turnout of about 53% of registered voters in the 50th Ward, Stone defeated Berland 12,882 to 10,958, recapturing the 50th Ward for the Regular Democratic Organization for the first time since 1955.

The Republican years (1987–1990)

On Thursday, October 29, 1987, Alderman Stone announced he had joined the Republican Party and that he intended to run for Cook County Recorder of Deeds. “I found the party I have supported since 1932 has changed completely,” Stone said in a press conference. “The party I thought stood for all the people stands for special interests.” Former Alderman and former Cook County Democratic Chairman, Edward R. Vrdolyak, a recent convert to the GOP, encouraged Stone to become a Republican and to run for recorder. “I can no longer be part of a party [Democratic Party] that punishes law-abiding, tax-paying citizens and communities,” Stone said. Stone said another factor in his switch was that “the Democratic Party is drifting away from America’s historically strong commitment to Israel.”

By threatening to run for Chairman of the Republican Party of Cook County, and for Cook County State’s Attorney, Vrdolyak brokered a deal to slate himself for Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, and Stone for Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

Less than a month later, Wednesday, November 25, 1987, Harold Washington, Chicago’s first African-American Mayor, died suddenly in office. Under Illinois State Law it fell to the Council to name a successor. The Aldermen caucused along racial lines, and, although one of just two Republican Aldermen, Stone caucused with the white Aldermen. Stone announced his candidacy for Mayor to his caucus on Sunday, November 29, 1987, and to the public at a City Hall press conference at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 1, 1987. Few took Stone’s candidacy seriously; many saw it as a publicity ploy for his Recorder race. Two days later the City Council selected Alderman Eugene Sawyer to succeed Washington.

Another loss for Bernie

In 1988 Stone ran as a Republican against Democratic Illinois State Representative Carol Moseley Braun, who was black, for Cook County Recorder of Deeds. Stone told reporters he did not expect their newspapers to endorse him. “Just run a



Bernie campaigning in July 1973.

picture of Braun,” Stone said. “That’s all I ask.” Disappointed that few people were focusing on the racial factor in the recorder’s election, Stone went for the backlash vote by taking the politically unusual step of featuring Braun’s photograph in his own campaign literature. Stone was soundly defeated by Braun and contributed to a sweep of Cook County offices by Democrats.

Second failed attempt at Mayor sends Bernie back to the Democrats

In 1989, Bernie Stone unsuccessfully sought the Republican slating for Mayor of Chicago, to run against Democrat Richard M. Daley. Daley succeeded Eugene Sawyer as Mayor, and in 1990 Stone came back to the Democratic Party.

Bernie’s “Spite Wall”

Although resident and corporate relations between Chicago and neighboring suburb Evanston are generally cordial and co-operative, Stone was the antagonist in perhaps the most significant altercation in recent decades. The Evanston City Council adopted the Southwest II Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District, also called the Howard-Hartrey TIF, on Monday, April 27, 1992, in order to incentivize the development of a disused 23-acre former Bell and Howell distribution center.

At the behest of Stone, on Wednesday, May 26, 1993, a contractor hired by the City of Chicago erected a three-block long, continuous steel guardrail down the middle of Howard Street, effectively preventing vehicles on the Chicago side of Howard from crossing over to Evanston and vice versa. The 2-1/2-foot-high median was aimed at protecting residents of the Ward from the hundreds of cars expected to converge daily on a proposed shopping center on the Evanston side of Howard Street, projected to open in 1995. A spokesman for the Chicago Department of Transportation said construction of the wall cost about \$150,000. A Cook County Circuit Court judge denied a

request by Evanston for a restraining order to stop construction of the wall. The *Chicago Tribune* called Stone “silly,” editorializing that the wall was a “*senseless idea...just an insipid ploy by a useless Alderman who has too much time on his hands and too much of the taxpayers’ money at his disposal.*”

On Friday, May 28, 1993 Evanston Mayor Lorraine H. Morton met with Mayor Richard M. Daley, Stone, and top city officials at Chicago’s City Hall. Stone demanded that Evanston pay for the construction and dismantling of the wall. Hours later, Morton announced that Evanston would drop legal action against Chicago. The next day, Saturday, May 29, 1993, after discussions with Evanston’s corporation counsel and others, Morton announced through a spokesperson that Evanston would continue a two-pronged approach, in court and at the negotiating table. On Tuesday, June 1, 1993, the Evanston City Council voted to continue legal action, to refuse to contribute any funds regarding the wall and to decline to consider making any changes in the shopping center site plan until the wall was removed.

Testimony in the trial began Monday, July 25, 1994. City of Chicago Transportation Commissioner Joseph Boyle Jr. and City of Chicago Planning Commissioner Valerie Jarrett both testified the guardrail was erected on Stone’s request without any previous traffic or planning studies. A partner with the firm overseeing the shopping center construction testified that in 1992, Stone contacted him about doing the project on vacated property in the Lincoln Village Shopping Center in Chicago on the far North Side, a site due to be re-districted into the 50th Ward in 1995. Evanston officials said Stone was just jealous about a new shopping center being built in Evanston instead of Chicago.

On Wednesday, September 21, 1994, the judge ordered Chicago officials to promptly remove the border barrier, pay all the accompanying costs (estimated at \$35,000), and to pay Evanston’s legal bills (about \$40,000). The judge declared Chicago’s Department of Transportation had no authority to unilaterally order its installation, ruling that the passage of a resolution on the issue Stone pushed through the Chicago City Council on Thursday, March 25, 1993, only authorized the department’s commissioner to “give consideration” to a barrier, and not permission to install it. The decision also dismissed a countersuit filed by Chicago that sought to halt construction of the shopping center. The *Chicago Tribune* editorialized calling the wall “*a petty, indulgent waste of money at the people’s expense.*” Chicago officials requested a stay of the judge’s orders pending appeal, but the judge denied the stay. Bell and Howell

agreed to pay the estimated \$35,000 to remove the barrier, and removal started on Tuesday, October 4, 1994. “*The party isn’t over until the fat man sings, and I’m the fat man,*” said Stone.

Fearing that traffic from the new Evanston Center shopping plaza would overwhelm 50th Ward neighborhood streets, Stone persuaded the Chicago City Council to make Kedzie Avenue one way, northbound only from Touhy Avenue to Howard Street and to make a smaller portion of Sacramento Avenue one way, northbound only. But after the changes were implemented on Thursday, November 10, 1994, Stone’s office was deluged with calls. On Wednesday, November 16, 1994, Kedzie Avenue was once again a two-way street.

On Wednesday, November 3, 1999, the City of Chicago established the Lincoln Avenue TIF district, including the Lincoln Village Shopping Center area.

Sleeping in Council Chambers

A photograph of Stone asleep in Chicago’s City Council Chambers during a hearing on limiting cell phone use while driving ran on the front page of the *Chicago Sun-Times* on January 14, 2004. “*Some Aldermen have a tendency while they’re thinking to close their eyes and that may register with their constituency as not paying attention or, perhaps, even sleeping during the session,*” Stone later explained. Stone fell asleep at his desk in Council Chambers in City Hall during the City Council’s Finance Committee debate on the controversial parking meter lease on Wednesday, December 3, 2008, in full view of the press, and was dutifully again photographed by the press. Stone was also videotaped sleeping during a Finance Committee hearing on transparency of the City’s tax increment financing program on Monday, March 16, 2009.

Campaign employees convicted of vote fraud

On Tuesday, September 4, 2007, speaking from the floor of City Council Chambers during a meeting of the Buildings Committee, Stone warned fellow Aldermen of an ongoing investigation into absentee balloting.

On Monday, January 28, 2008, two paid workers for Stone’s 2007 re-election campaign were arrested and charged with improperly steering primarily Indian and Pakistani voters toward absentee ballots for Stone. Anish Eapen, a 37-year-old employee of the city’s Streets and Sanitation Department, and a Stone precinct captain, was charged with two counts of official misconduct, three counts of absentee ballot fraud, and one count of mutilation of election materials. Eapen worked in tandem with Armando Ramos, 34, an unemployed student. Ramos



Bernie could get really agitated, as seen in the 'Council Wars' in November 1987.

was charged with two counts of absentee ballot fraud and two counts of mutilation of election materials. Stone accused the State's Attorney's office of engaging in a political witch-hunt at the behest of U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky. *"We know where this all started. We know it's politically based. ... Her [Schakowsky's] aide was soliciting the state's attorney to investigate. It's absolutely a devious political trick,"* Stone said. Schakowsky denied she had instituted the investigation. Bond was set at \$50,000 for Eapen and \$40,000 for Ramos.

City Inspector General David H. Hoffman recommended that Eapen be fired. Eapen was placed on paid administrative leave from his \$83,940-a-year job with the city's Streets and Sanitation Department for nearly 2 years. On Thursday, October 8, 2009, Streets and Sanitation Department Commissioner Tom Byrne found a job for Eapen helping with the tracking of equipment. Stone blamed Byrne's demoted predecessor for allowing Eapen to sit idle, saying *"Mike Picardi has no cojones."*

On Friday, October 24, 2008, Inspector General Hoffman appeared before the Committee on the Budget of the Chicago City Council, of which Stone was a member, during the annual budget hearing process. *"It is my intent, Mr. Inspector General, to wipe your entire office out of the budget,"* Stone told Hoffman. *"It is my intent to submit a budget amendment which will destroy your department."* Stone's amendment came before the Budget Committee on Monday, November 17, 2008. *"He's come after me and my staff, and I'm going after him, and the only way I have to go after him is to cut his funds,"* Stone said. Stone's amendment was tabled in committee 14-2.

Eapen and Ramos waived their right to trial by jury. In a bench trial, four members of a West Ridge family testified that Eapen

coaxed them to vote absentee, collected their ballots and then mailed them. The family members said Eapen came to their townhomes and watched them as they filled out the absentee ballot applications and forms for both the 2007 February general election and the run-offs in April 2007. One family member, who wasn't registered to vote, said Eapen filled out her ballot. She signed the ballot, as did all her relatives, but said, *"I didn't mark anything."* Another witness testified that when she told Stone that Ramos filled out her ballot in the 2007 Aldermanic run-off, the Alderman brushed her off, saying *"This meeting is over."* Stone commented on the testimony, *"I have no recollection of what she is talking about."*

Cook County Judge Marcus Salone found Eapen and Ramos guilty on Thursday, June 24, 2010. Eapen was found guilty on nine different counts, including one count of attempted mutilation of voting materials and eight counts of attempted absentee ballot violations. Ramos was found guilty on 20 different counts, including one count of attempted mutilation of voting materials and 19 counts of attempted absentee ballot violations. On Wednesday, August 4, 2010, Salone sentenced Eapen to 364 days in jail and Ramos to 270 days in jail. Salone said the sentences were like a *"kiss,"* essentially a slap on the wrist. *"This is a kiss,"* Salone said. *"I think the evidence is overwhelming. The reality is that Mr. Eapen and Mr. Ramos attempted to steal democracy and they did it in a vicious way."* Stone called the case *"a witch hunt,"* called Ramos and Eapen *"political prisoners"* and compared their crimes to *"spitting on the sidewalk."* Stone said former city Inspector General Hoffman singled him out in the ballot fraud investigation while failing to probe other Aldermen. *"They are not the ones who attempted to steal democracy. The one who attempted to steal democracy was David Hoffman,"* Stone said. *"This is a miscarriage of justice."*

Committees

Stone served on 7 different committees in city council. He was the Chairman of the City Council Committee on Buildings.

Stone also served on the following committees:
Committees of Budget and Government Operations,
Finance Committee,
Historical Landmark Preservation Committee,
Housing and Landmark Preservation Committee,
Traffic Control and Safety Committee,
Committee on Committees

Loss in 2011 run-off

In 2008, Illinois State Senator Ira Silverstein ousted Stone as the 50th Ward Committeeman. In a five-way race for Alderman in February, 2011, no candidate garnered 50% plus one of the votes, forcing a run-off in April, 2011. Silverstein's wife, Certified Public Accountant, Debra Silverstein, defeated Stone in a run-off with 62% of the vote to 38% for Stone. On election night Stone said Silverstein will be *"a disaster for this Ward. There's no way I'll help her. She knows nothing."*

Political philosophy

"You take care of the people who take care of you – you know, the people who voted for you," Stone said. *"That's not Chicago politics, that's Politics 101."*

Personal life

Stone worshiped at Congregation Ezras Israel, 7001 N. California Avenue, and served on their Board of Directors. Stone also served on the Board of Directors for the Bernard Horwich Jewish Community Center, 3003 W. Touhy Avenue, the Associated Talmud Torahs, 2828 W. Pratt Boulevard, and the Jewish National Fund, Northbrook.

In 2003, Stone's son, Jay, launched an unsuccessful attempt to unseat 32nd Ward Alderman Theodore Matlak. Stone publicly supported Matlak, calling his son *"an embarrassment"* who *"doesn't know what he's doing."* Despite Jay Stone's overwhelming defeat at the polls, father and son reportedly were still on good terms.

Bernard L. "Bernie" Stone died from complications after a fall.

For more photos click [here](#). ☐

Rogers Park Launched Chicago's First Bus Line 98 Years Ago

By Hank Morris

On Thursday, August 11, 1917, the new Chicago Motor Bus Company ran its first bus, a double-decker, on the inaugural trip of bus service in Chicago. It left Sheridan Road and Devon Avenue and reached the southern terminal at Adams Street and State Street. And, buses have run on Chicago streets ever since.

In the beginning, pedestrians in Chicago faced traversing quagmires walking from Point A to Point B. There were no paved streets and what was there was just compacted dirt. Throughout the winter months and during rainy times, mud replaced dirt. The mud was so sticky that people frequently got stuck just trying to walk around. Women had to hold their dresses up, often in vain trying to avoid getting all muddy crossing the street. Shoes from both sexes got stuck leaving lots of bare feet.

In 1854, Franklin Parmelee arrived from Wisconsin. Struggling in the muck and mire to safely get his wife and family to their hotel from the train, Parmelee recognized that he could make money by ferrying people visiting the hotels and large retail stores, such as Marshall Field's, in some sort of wheeled vehicle. So he organized F. Parmelee & Company, a partnership formed along with David A. Gage, Liberty Bigelow, and Martin S. Johnson, for the expressed purpose of carrying on a stage and omnibus business in the city of Chicago.

To carry passengers, carriages were just too small and couldn't hold enough passengers to make such a service profitable. His company initially had six Concord stage coaches and thirty horses. He used some of the coaches to test out his idea. The next step was to get some omnibuses which could handle larger numbers of passengers. By 1910, Parmelee's inventory included some 80 omnibuses.

The omnibuses and wagons operated by Parmelee were all built in the Chicago carriage factory of John Frederick Mendsen. The Danish-born coach builder was the city's foremost builder of horse-drawn vehicles, having provided carriages for many early notable citizens including Chicagoan and Presidential candidate, Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

Beginning on Monday, April 25, 1859, public transit in Chicago expanded to, and was dominated by, street railways. The first railcars, pulled by teams of horses, were 12 feet long, held 18 passengers, and operated at an astounding 3 mph. Then came along cable cars, which were much faster than the horse cars; being capable of speeds of up to 14 mph.

Finally, electric streetcars were introduced. For moving large numbers of people, streetcars, at first, seemed to be the ultimate form of surface transportation. The first overhead wire trolley

car went into service in 1890 on 93rd Street between Stony Island and South Chicago Avenue. Electrification of the old horse car and cable car routes was completed in 1906. Meanwhile, the gasoline-powered automobile had been invented, and was evolving. Though early gasoline engines were small, they soon became bigger and more powerful. By 1910, full-size gasoline-powered buses were a reality. Because buses weren't tied to rails, they had far more flexibility than streetcars. If a streetcar broke down, the line was blocked. If a bus broke down, the bus could be passed by other buses and cars because they weren't tied to rails and could be pushed to the curb.

The City of Chicago had granted a transit franchise to the Chicago Surface Lines company (CSL). Chicago Surface Lines operated only streetcars at this point in time. Motor bus service by CSL wouldn't begin in Chicago until Thursday, August 11, 1917 when the first gasoline buses were finally placed into service on Diversey Avenue.

However, the boulevards and parks were controlled by three separate park district boards. It should be noted here that the current Chicago Park District wasn't created until seventeen years later, 1934, by the Illinois Legislature under the Park Consolidation Act. By provisions of that act, the Chicago Park District consolidated and superseded the then-existing 22 separate park districts in Chicago, the largest three of which were the Lincoln Park, West Park, and South Park Districts; all of which had been established in 1869.

So, it wasn't until Thursday, August 11, 1917, that the first motor bus service began in Chicago. In 1916 the new Chicago Motor Bus Company was awarded a franchise by the Lincoln Park District.

Mayor William Hale Thompson, his wife, former Governor Edward F. Dunne, Jr. and his wife, Chicago Health Commissioner, Dr. John Dill Robertson, Roland B. Conklin president of the Chicago Motor Bus Company, City Prosecutor Harry B. Miller, and a collection of dignitaries boarded the first bus, a double-decker, with a capacity of 22 passengers on the lower level and 29 on the top level, at Sheridan Road and Devon Avenue. The ceremonial trip moved off over the regular route, from Devon Avenue, down Sheridan Road through Lincoln Park, and over Lake Shore Drive, Lincoln Parkway to Ontario Street to Rush Street to Michigan Avenue, to Randolph Street to LaSalle Street until reaching its southern terminal at Adams Street and State Street. Then, while the invited guests were brought back to the Edgewater Beach Hotel for a luncheon, revenue service began.



The mayor and other dignitaries take off on the first bus to run in revenue service in Chicago.

The buses operated from 6 in the morning until 1:30 a.m. Each double-deck vehicle had a capacity of 22 passengers on the lower level and 29 on the top level, a two-man crew; with a conductor to collect fares and a "chauffeur" to drive. Passengers could board at any intersection. Though only 11 buses ran the first day, another 39 were on order and due to arrive within the next 30 days.

The buses were popular from the start. True, the 10-cent fare was higher than the 7 cents paid on the streetcars. But the ride was usually faster—and prettier, too.

During the next few years, the three largest park districts gave franchises to other companies. As the advantages of buses became more apparent, even Chicago Surface Lines began replacing their streetcars with the rubber-tire vehicles, but this wouldn't even start until Thursday, August 11, 1927, over 10 years later, when the first CSL gasoline buses were placed into service on Diversey Avenue.

All the different park district bus operators were later combined into the Chicago Motor Coach Company. That company continued in business until 1952, when it was bought out by the CTA. □

Why Is There No Bridge at Pratt?

By Hank Morris



The North Shore Channel without a bridge at Pratt Avenue.

Traffic on Devon Avenue and Touhy Avenue crossing the North Shore Channel is, at best, horrendous. It's obvious that a street bridge at Pratt (Boulevard in Chicago, Avenue in Lincolnwood) would help alleviate some of this congestion. So, why is there no bridge?

The North Shore Channel was built by and is still owned by the Chicago Sanitary District (now known as the **Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago**) and runs south from Wilmette Harbor, slightly north of the **Bahá'í House of Worship**, (100 Linden Avenue) in **Wilmette** to a point just south of Foster Avenue in **River Park** at approximately Carmen Avenue (named for the opera) where it joins the Chicago River at the *only* waterfall within Chicago's City Limits.

If you look at a street map, you'll find a street bridging the canal every half-mile, or closer, throughout its entire length, EXCEPT at Pratt. Twenty bridges in all: (south to north) Foster Avenue, Bryn Mawr Avenue, Peterson Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Devon Avenue, Touhy Avenue, Howard Street, Oakton Street, Main Street, Dempster Street, Church Street, Golf Road, Bridge Street, Green Bay Road, Lincoln Street, Central Street, Isabella Street, Maple Avenue, Linden Avenue, and Sheridan Road. Each, except between Devon Avenue and Touhy Avenue, are spaced at ½ mile, or closer increments. Traffic flows better at all of these points, except between Devon and Touhy Avenues. See a pattern here?

Looking into this topic provided little information.

As far back as Sunday, May 12, 1940, (page N2), the *Chicago Tribune* wrote about Pratt Boulevard being widened from Western Avenue west to McCormick Boulevard. The article stated that a 2-lane bridge would be built over the North Shore Channel at that point. The widening was demanded by the home-property owners along Pratt Boulevard because they felt that Pratt Boulevard was the "forgotten subdivision tract." Even then, one of the reasons put forth was to loosen the traffic load on Touhy and Devon Avenues. This was announced by Cook County Commissioner Frank Bobrytzke a week earlier.

A committee of home/land owners was formed to actively secure the improvements to Pratt Boulevard. It requested that Pratt Boulevard be made a thoroughfare from Lake Michigan as far west as Carpenter Road. Henry A. Proesel, president of Lincolnwood was a member of the committee.

H.D. Pierson was the president of the West Ridge Improvement Association and stated that the land values in the area would increase once the street had been properly widened.

With such support, you would have thought that all that was needed was for the city and/or county to widen Pratt and construct the bridge over the Canal and that would be that. Thirty-one years later, in 1971, construction of the infamous bridge was approved by the Cook County Board of Commissioners.

Two years later, the *Chicago Tribune*, May 24, 1973, page N_A11 carried a story that said “A proposal to construct a bridge over the North Shore Channel to make Pratt Avenue in Lincolnwood connect with Pratt in Chicago has churned up controversy between suburbanites and city dwellers. ... ” Instead of building the bridge, Lincolnwood residents wanted Devon and Touhy Avenues widened to handle the extra traffic.

Apparently, residents of Lincolnwood were against the bridge at Pratt. 50th Ward Alderman, Bernard L. Stone organized the “Concerned Citizens of the 50th Ward” to counter neighboring Lincolnwood’s opposition to a bridge over the North Shore Channel at Pratt Avenue, which Stone called a “necessity” for the 50th ward. Lincolnwood residents replied that the bridge would bring additional traffic into a residential area, thus endangering the lives of children, and possibly lowering the property values. These differences in opinion clashed at a public meeting held by the Cook County Board’s Roads and Bridges Committee. The meeting was repeatedly interrupted by shouting and jeers from the standing-room-only crowd. Now Mayor of Lincolnwood, Henry A. Prossel, (who, you will recall, was originally for the bridge back in 1940) stated before the committee that the bridge would turn Pratt into a speedway; and, that this was unacceptable. Lincolnwood’s Village Attorney, Louis Ancel, added “We will meet you in court to fight this out, if necessary.” Bernie Stone, at that time running for alderman, characterized Lincolnwood’s attitude as “provincial.”

It finally came out that Lincolnwood was really concerned that the bridge would bring “undesirable elements from Chicago into their village.” The fact that Carpenter Road (Central Avenue), Cicero Avenue, Crawford Avenue (Pulaski Road), Lincoln Avenue, McCormick Boulevard, Touhy Avenue, and Devon Avenue already did this seemed to escape the Lincolnwoodians’ grasp.

In anticipation of the bridge being finally built, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago had ceded the land around Pratt and the canal for the construction of footings for the bridge to Cook County. On Thursday, June 17, 2004, Cook County Commissioner Larry Suffredin (13th District) announced that the County had returned control of the land at the corner of Pratt Avenue and the canal back to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

“The land was originally to be used for bridge footings for a proposed Pratt Avenue Bridge. The bridge plan has long ago been abandoned by the County, the City of Chicago, and the Village of Lincolnwood. The land can now be managed by the MWRD in the same manner as other land holdings in the area,” Suffredin said.

While the bridge is still unbuilt, hope springs eternal. The need is even greater today. □

The Rogers Park / West Ridge Historical Society Store

Your purchases help to support the Society's mission. We have a wide selection of books and other merchandise available for sale at the museum. Below are four of our items.

You may order by phone, mail, in our store, or from our website. **Please note, for orders in Illinois, we must charge 9.75% sales tax.** For orders to be shipped, please include \$6 shipping and handling per delivery address.



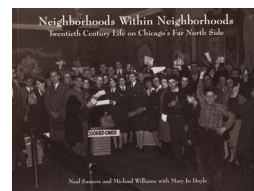
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Been in the "hood" a while? Know somebody who has?

The Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society is conducting an ongoing oral history project. We are collecting the memories of those individuals who remember what life was like in Rogers Park and West Ridge "way back when."

Oral histories are a wonderful way to learn more about our neighborhoods before all the complexities of "modern life" settled in.

Memories are precious, whether they're yours, a friend's or a relative's. Help preserve our community's past through oral history today.

You can reach the **Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society** to arrange an interview at **773-764-4078** or e-mail us at **info@rpwrhs.org**.

Do you have photos of Rogers Park or West Ridge?

Our Photo Archives and Cataloging Project is charged with the preservation of our photo collection. In it, we have literally thousands of photographs that have been donated to the Society to be preserved for future generations and today's researchers.

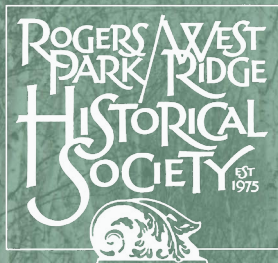
It's one of our most valuable resources. Why not add your old photos to our collection? We will scan them and put them in the Photo Archives. Future generations and today's researchers will thank you for your efforts.

We can scan slides, negatives, prints, whatever. While we would prefer to preserve the originals, we're not greedy. If you want them back, we will honor your request.

It would be most helpful if you could provide notes as to what is being shown in the photographs. We've never met Aunt Martha. Please tell us who is who. Neighborhoods change. Please tell us where the photo was taken and when. **Your photos can be from any time period, that means even the 2000s.**

For more information, contact the Society's offices.

Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society
1447 West Morse Avenue, Chicago IL 60626-3481
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