

**From the President**

Now that spring is here, this would be a great time to join your friends and neighbors and support the Historical Society at the same time. We are sponsoring our first annual "Spring House Tour" in the West Ridge area and we would appreciate it if you would help to make it a big success. People have been asking us from time to time when we were going to have a tour on the west side, so this is it — your chance to see some wonderful homes in West Ridge. (See other columns for additional information.)

This is the two-year anniversary of our Newsletter and we have received many favorable comments about it during this period. We hope to continue bringing you articles that are interesting and informative. If you have any requests or suggestions for future stories please let us know.

Mary Jo Behrendt Doyle

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- Tue. May 3**                      Howard Paulina Commercial District Planning Meeting  
7:30 p.m.                      Pivot Point (Howard & Clark)
- Wed. May 4**                      Free Gardening Workshop  
7:00 p.m.                      Univ. Illinois Cooperative Extension Service - RP Library
- Sat. May 7 & 21**                  RP Historical Society Meeting  
11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m.      Rogers Park Branch Library
- Sat. May 14**                      N.E.I.L. Meeting - Wilmette  
9:00-11:00 a.m.              Historical Society
- Sat. May 14**                      Edgewater Historical Society -  
10:00 a.m.                      brief meeting Edgewater Library & "An Architectural Walking Tour"
- Sat. May 14 & Sun. May 15**              East Rogers Park Committee  
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.      For Arbor Day - Plant Sale (at Pratt & Bosworth)
- Wed. May 18**                      Free Gardening Workshop  
7:00 p.m.                      Chicago Botanic Garden Plantmobile  
Rogers Park Library
- Wed. May 18**                      "Rogers Park Beautiful"  
7:30 p.m.                      presented by RP Community Council  
Loyola Park Fieldhouse
- Wed. May 18**                      Skokie's 100th Anniversary  
4:00-8:00 p.m.              Old Orchard Shopping Center

- Sun. May 22**                      RP Historical Society -  
12:00 nn-5:00 p.m.      First Spring House Tour in West Ridge  
(see separate article)
- Sat. June 4 & 18**              RP Historical Society Meeting  
11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m.      Rogers Park Branch Library
- Sun. June 5**                      "Pennies from Heaven" -  
8:00 a.m.                      Sponsored by Indiana Boundary Park Playground Fund  
(see separate article)
- Sat. June 11**                      N.E.I.L. Board Meeting -  
9:00-11:00 a.m.              Historical Society
- Sat. June 25**                      St. Ignatius School -  
7:00 p.m.                      75th Anniversary Reunion  
6525 N. Sheridan  
(for info, call 743-8371)
- Sun. June 26**                      St. Ignatius Picnic - 75th  
12:00 nn -                      on School/Church grounds
- Sun. June 26**                      Skokie's 100th anniversary  
12:00 nn-5:00 p.m.      Open House - Village Hall  
5127 W. Oakton
- Sat. July 2 & 16**              RP Historical Society Meeting  
11:15 a.m.-1:00 p.m.      Rogers Park Branch Library
- Mon. July 4**                      Fourth Annual Run For Fun  
9:00 a.m.                      presented by RP Community Council  
Loyola Park Fieldhouse
- Sat. July 9**                      N.E.I.L. Meeting - Deerfield  
9:00-11:00 a.m.              Historical Society
- Sun. July 24**                      RP Historical Society -  
3:00-8:00 p.m.              Annual Summer Party

**What We've Been Doing**

**RP Community Council President's Breakfast** — Fri. Feb. 26 — Several of our members attended as guests or as representatives from other organizations and were able to share Mary Jo's honor. See article on page 3.

**Edgewater Historical Society** — Sat. Feb. 27 — Some of our members continue to attend the initial planning meetings. We hope to work closely on future projects.

**Artists of Chicago** — Fri. Mar. 4 — Marty and Mary Jo attended a reception honoring the artists who

## The Way It Was

### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS GONE FOREVER FROM ROGERS PARK

The Hurdy-Gurdy, often operated by an ageless woman, sending its plaintive music bouncing off the walls of the large apartment buildings, from the alleys.

The organ grinder and his monkey, who would tip his cap in acknowledgement of a proffered coin. This action would send most of the quickly assembled audience of small children running home to badger mom for all available spare change. Meanwhile, the organ grinder with uncanny know-how, would bide his time, playing percentages as to how many would return with money. Then it was forward, ever forward, up the block.

In Depression times, these established entertainers were augmented by concertina-playing singers, many of whom had excellent voices, seeking a way to garner a few coins for mere existence.

The horse-drawn milk wagons, as well as those of the ice companies, laundries and merchants, were generally attractively painted and kept very clean as they made their appointed rounds. At the other end of the spectrum were the so called "junk men," with their rickety, beat-up wagons, who were identified by their repeated cries of, "Ragsaliron, Ragsaliron."

Often their vocal efforts were supplanted by an ambulatory purchaser of used clothing and old shoes as evidenced by their prolonged chants, "Uld clodding and shustazell."

Now, if the proffered suit was a custom tailored Marshall Field product in excellent shape, you might be offered a dollar for it. Were the shoes Bostonians, in mint condition, a shiny quarter, possibly, but talk was kept open for negotiating.

The produce peddlers, also horse-powered, were in a class by themselves. Their cries, completely untranslatable, but serving the purpose of getting Mrs. Smith to go out on the back porch to view the stock, and often go out to the alley to augment her larder.

Later, these endeavors were all motorized, but slowly fell victim to progress, as the supermarts gained footholds, the second-hand stores died out, and laundromats overwhelmed the laundries.

Another old standby was the "scissors grinder." He would negotiate the dusty alleys on foot, with a ladder-like wooden frame, topped with an emery wheel on his back. Unfolded, it provided a seat for himself as he plied his craft. Housewives relied on him to keep their kitchen cutlery at top efficiency. His attention-getter was a clapper type brass bell that he exploited relentlessly, "Ding Dong Dell," ad infinitum.

Most business streets had two or three retail grocery and meat markets to the block. Constantly vying with each other for business, they used their flashy wagons for speedy deliveries to augment their phone-in-order convenience factor, offering charge accounts, if desired.

These store's suppliers always had smart delivery rigs delivering items to them — Grennan's Cakes, Ward's Tip Top Bread, Red Star Yeast, Swift, Armour, and Wilson meat wagons, to mention a few.

Quite prevalent were the so called "Valet Shops."

Actually they did more steam "spotting" of clothes, often on an emergency basis. Unlike today's clientele, who take their garments to the cleaners on a regular basis, people then did not indulge nearly as often. A startled housewife would discover that dad's Sunday suit had a large glob of catsup on one knee of the pants, and it was firmly encrusted and now an integral part of the fabric, and tomorrow was Sunday, church day! Up to the valet shop for quick "spotting" and pressing, all for twenty-five cents.

These shops had several round metal heads on which hats were fitted for "blocking" and cleaning. In those days of long tenure for clothing items, every two or three years a new band was put in place. Why get a new hat when Nick could make it look like new?

Also, a ritual reserved for the affluent and young bachelors, "shines" were available on the four high seats along the back wall, complete with rag snapping and cream daubing to bring a brilliant shine to the "Walkovers." For the rank and file, it was the back porch and a can of Shinola, on a Saturday afternoon.

Of equal importance, especially to the bachelors, was the area Chinese Hand Laundry, which did very neat work. Never did they make a mistake, or lose a single sock.

Each neighborhood had its haberdashery, which filled a pressing need for men's furnishings, often on an emergency basis or as a place to get a hurried gift for a special occasion. Most of them carried good lines of name-brands, but lost out to changing merchandising methods and shopping malls.

What became of the man who would periodically show up with a neatly saddled pony or a miniature express wagon pulled by a fully harnessed goat, as backdrops for taking photos of excited children? Poor mom was the ultimate victim of the transaction, as the photographer would revisit the scene to exhibit his artistry. Often the prints were quite good and urged on by the tearful pleadings of the subjects, a sale was consummated, though the transaction often depleted the cookie jar reserve funds.

And, who can forget the "balloon man" with his multi-hued merchandise and his miniature round coaching horn with its mournful tone, alerting prospective customers to the availability of such?

I guess these men just became a part of history, along with the ones who shouted, "Extra, Extra! Read all about it!" on many evenings to enhance sales of late edition papers, with seldom any startling news. Of course this was before radio and television newscasts had people hep to everything, even the upcoming weather for the week.

Hope you enjoyed this! We are going to have a good one in the Summer issue.

Norm Coughlin

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#### ATTENTION MEMBERS —

If you would like to attend the RPHS summer party, please include a check for \$6.00 per person. It will be held on Sunday, July 24 at 1629 W. Morse.

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participated in the Chicago Park District 1987-1988 Calendar. Marty was one of the artists and his photographs were on display at the Administration Building on McFetridge Drive. The entertainment was wonderful, the food delicious and congratulations go to RPHS member Sharon Lubin, who was the driving force behind the event.

**Greenview Neighbors Meeting** — Thur. Mar. 10 — Mary Jo presented a slide show of many of the Society's oldest photos and the people who attended learned a little more about our colorful history.

**N.E.I.L Meeting** — Sat. Mar. 12 — Mary Jo and Marty attended the bi-monthly meeting at the Arlington Heights Historical Society. In addition to two beautiful homes, they have a log cabin, a building for their collections and a country store with many items for sale, both old and new.

**Howard Paulina Commercial District Meeting** — Wed. Mar. 22 — Mary Jo and Marty attended as representatives of the Society. A steering committee was selected to set the agenda and meeting dates. Our basic concern is historic preservation. Jackie McNicol will represent us at future meetings.

**Arts in Action in Edgewater** — Sat. Apr. 9 — Mary Jo and Marty attended the festival and had a chance to see local artists, a comic opera, tumblers, etc. The

Edgewater Historical Society had a booth and we donated several photos of their area to them. It was also the first time either of us had been to the Broadway Armory and we agreed that it is an impressive building.



### Our President Honored

On Friday, February 26, the Rogers Park Community Council held its annual President's Breakfast at the Mandarin Garden Restaurant. The recipient of the 1987 Citizen of the Year award was our own president, Mary Jo Doyle.

She was saluted for her long involvement in civic affairs in Rogers Park and her personal commitment to preserving the rich heritage of the area as a basic foundation in building a solid future for the development of a stronger Rogers Park.

Those of us in the Society who know and work with Mary Jo, join the Community Council in saluting her. Through her leadership, the Rogers Park Historical Society has grown from a handful of people in 1975 to a current membership of close to 300. Our hats are off to you, Mary Jo.



Norm Coughlin and brother in a goat cart

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Bosworth Avenue

## FAMOUS ROGERS PARK LOCATIONS

### Beachtown Court Apartments

Every adult at some time or another has to go home hunting. Just think what a joy it would be to have come across an ad such as this in the newspaper:

"The Beachton Court apartments are conveniently situated at the southwest end of Pratt Boulevard and Ashland Avenue in the finest section of Rogers Park, a desirable North Side residential district. Tree-lined avenues of pleasant homes and new apartment buildings make this an attractive place in which to live."

"Loyola University and Senn High School can be reached within a short ride. Northwestern University, Evanston Campus, is also accessible, as well as various churches, schools, shops and theatres."

"At the foot of Pratt Boulevard is Lake Michigan and several bathing beaches, a very welcome advantage in the summer months. Sheridan Road — the main automobile boulevard between Chicago and North Shore suburbs, is only three and a half blocks east."

"Express trains of the Elevated Railway provide transportation to the Loop in twenty-two minutes — less than it takes to travel from points near the Loop in actual mileage. The Morse Avenue station is only a few minutes walk from this building."

"Motor buses are available on Sheridan Road between downtown Chicago and Howard Street, and a special bus passes Pratt Boulevard and Ashland Avenue running east and west. Because of excellent transportation facilities and nearness to the Lake and North Shore, this district is becoming increasingly popular."

"There is a demand for high grade apartments at reasonable rentals such as the Beachton Court Apartments is providing." Today's ad would be a little different, but the effect would be the same.

This building was started on December 1, 1928 and was completed in 1930. It was designed by Leon F. Urbain and built at a cost of \$350,000.00. Its characteristics that qualify it as a high-grade apartment building are fire-proofing and reinforced concrete construction. It is a court type structure standing six stories high with an English basement designed in a Modern Tudor Gothic style of architecture. The exterior is entirely of stone up to the third floor, faced with light buff brick and trimmed with ornamental stone above. The rear and side walls are of superior Silica brick so as to afford maximum light to all the apartments.

The ground floor, at one time, contained an exceptionally spacious lobby, party and buggy rooms. The vestibule and lobby has multicolored tile floors. Entering the vestibule, the door is beautifully carved and arched. This same effect is true for the door leading down to the ground floor which houses the lobby and basement. These are on the same level. They are separated by a gorgeous whirling looking wall. The mail boxes are inconspicuously placed just off to the left of the lobby in the basement section. The corridors and stairways are finished in the California Stucco effect.

The building originally had seventy-six apartments, but in the late 1940s or 1950s, the party and buggy rooms were changed to basement apartments making

a total of seventy-eight apartments. Due to deterioration, the outer entrance facade was also changed in 1965 from the original English Style to the present canopy entrance. Some adjustments were also made to the studio apartments. The in-wall beds were removed and replaced by one large closet. The section in the kitchen, where the ironing board was, now has a closet for very small items, mainly seasonings for cooking. The milk windows for all apartments were deliberately incapacitated.

The 6748-50 lot, on which the Beachton Court stands, had several owners before the building was built. The original owner was Mathias Mann who then sold lot 1 to Fredrick W. Speer on May 8, 1916. This trend of rapid sale continued for a while and then ceased for 40 years in 1942 when Mr. Irving Brandt purchased the building from Metro Trust Company. He died on October 12, 1977. The building was then passed on to his son, Lawrence Brandt, who kept it until 1982 when he sold it to Sheldon Paul. The new owners are the Beachton Court Investors who purchased the building from Sheldon Paul in December 1986.

Irving Brandt was one of the first tenants of the Merchandise Mart of Chicago. He specialized in first-class leather goods. His interest in keeping the Court as a high class apartment building led to the hiring of Mr. John Thillman, the janitor for twenty-five years, whose direct work brought the achievement of winning, for three consecutive years, "The Chicago Beautiful" award given by Mrs. Richard Daley, and in 1971, "The Tender Loving Care" given by the Rogers Park Community Council. Irving B. Brandt was a tenant whose office was located at the extreme southwestern corner of the lobby.

Tenants of the building's early life stayed and raised their children as the atmosphere and stature of the building had that compelling force on its occupants. Two current tenants are Mary and Margaret Aherns who have been there for over 32 years. It is a pleasure and a great sense of pride that keep those ladies so closely attached to the only building they call home. During the Brandt dynasty, there was never an ad placed in the papers for tenants. New tenants were enlisted by placing their names on list of prospective renters after they had visited relatives or friends who lived in the building and were moving due to job transfers or purchasing their own homes.

Bechtown Court Investors: "You have inherited a legacy in the Rogers Park community. Please keep that legacy with all the determination and courage it takes to be Number One!"

Glenda Hyde, A.C.P.

## Building Fund Needs Builders

Wednesday, May 25th, 1988

7:30 p.m. — 1629 W. Morse

The Society's Building Fund Committee needs additional "builders" if it is going to achieve its goal of "kicking off" the campaign to raise \$150,000 for the Society's new home beginning in the fall of 1988.

We need members who will "build up" the three working committees — Corporate Sponsors — Grants/Foundations — General Solicitation — and help them reach their goals.

A willingness to help is all that is required. The committees meet one evening a month.

The May meeting is of particular importance since we will develop the theme for the fundraising effort.

We look forward to seeing new members on May 25th.

Larry Calhoun, Chairman  
Building Fund Committee  
Phone 274-0798



### Recent Donations:

Larry Calhoun — RPHS Treasurer

Angle copper tube with shut-off valve for a gas light fixture (found in yard of Pollard House on Lunt Ave.)

Bud Connors — RPHS member

Old family photos to copy — dated 1920s

Norm Coughlin — RPHS member

Old cork screw and various books, magazines, papers and several color post cards of old automobiles

Eleanor Davis — RPHS member

Key chain and holder from West Ridge Lanes (later Markay Bowling Alley; now Michael Reese Medical Center) on Western north of Touhy dated 1930s

Bob Goldsmith — Pharmacist at Ridge-Howard Pharmacy

Old-fashioned type roll deck containing a record of prescriptions from 1930-31 — slips show many interesting advertisements for doctors and pharmacies in Rogers Park and other areas

Lorraine Hamann — former RP resident

Old photos of the Hamann Funeral Home on Clark St. (present site of the Ace Hardware) which operated from 1921 until 1968

Leslie Keeling — former RP resident

Old photos, papers and an American flag belonging to her grandfather, John W. Pollard of Lunt Avenue dated early 1900s

Donald Klein — former RP resident

Old photos/post cards of scenes in Rogers Park

Larry Kreuser — long-time RP resident

Seven years of Chicago Historical Society magazines dated 1979-1987

Henry Miller — RPHS member

Old family photos to copy dated 1930s and 1940s

Nortown Library

Many old booklets, newspapers, etc. related to Rogers Park dated 1920s - 1940s

Ruth Shatzel — RPHS member

Apartment lease — dated 1968

Betty Sherman — RPHS member

First and last watch repair books belonging to her father, Rasmus Larsen — dated 1915 and 1980; Miscellaneous paper items pertaining to our area; Short articles regarding neighborhood people and businesses for future newsletters; Copy of a video of RP during the 1967 snowstorm; Video of "Hollywood on the Lake" showing early movie making, including some scenes in Rogers Park and some made by Luther Pollard, a RP resident

Philip Steffen — RPHS member

Program booklet from a comedy-drama produced by the St. Henry's Dramatic Club dated November 1919 (Phil attended this performance)

Note: The booklet contains many interesting advertisements from Rogers Park businesses

Karen Tipp — RPHS member

Displays of businesses in our neighborhood created for a special project by the Uptown "Can Do"

Albert & Herbert Victor — owners of the building at 1528 W. Pratt

old coal shovel with a 12 foot long handle dated 1920s (per Lisa Porter, tenant and RPHS member)

Mrs. H. Duane Woodruff (Ethel Peterson) — former resident

Souvenir booklets from the American Bible Society from the "Century of Progress" dated 1933

John Zender — RPHS member

Photos and information pertaining to the Zender family dated 1880s — early 1900s



### Recent Acquisitions:

Several post cards of early Rogers Park

Phone answering machine



### Wish List:

New or used copy machine — can you help?

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—A slight oversight from last Newsletter—  
The Old Newgard Home is located at  
6718 N. Newgard

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## Historic Memorabilia

Any visitor to the Rogers Park Library-main meeting room generally comments on the Society's permanent display.

It offers a varied collection of memorabilia from the past. We periodically update the exhibit, so we are always looking for new additions.

Take a look around your home or attic for any old photos or small items that may be of interest to the Society. We will gladly copy any photos and return them to you, if you do not wish to donate them.

## FIRST ANNUAL SPRING HOUSE TOUR

The Rogers Park Historical Society will present its first annual Spring West Ridge House Tour on May 22nd from 12 noon until 5 p.m. the tour will begin at 2555 West Farwell and will include five homes of special historical interest, along with a few gardens, lush with the flowers of spring. There will also be an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia, demonstrating the rich heritage of West Ridge.

One of the houses on the tour is the home of Ashish and Colleen Sen which was built in 1928 and has the qualities of an old Spanish castle. The Sen home is under consideration for landmark status by the Chicago Landmark Commission.

Admission to the tour is five dollars. Raffle prizes donated by local merchants will be awarded to lucky ticket holders. Tickets may be ordered in advance by calling 764-2401. A limited number of tickets will be sold.

The Society has reserved two tickets for each paid member in the Chicagoland area and they are enclosed in this Newsletter.

## Special Thanks to:

Glenda Hyde for all the information she is finding while doing research for her Newsletter articles.

Loren (Chris) Kringle for all of the artifacts he is finding and donating to the Society as he searches the yards in our area with his metal detector.

Lynne Malone for her design of the West Ridge House Tour materials.

Pat O'Neal for her delightful display on "Winter in Rogers Park" in our display case at the RP Library. (Watch for a new one coming soon)

The Rogers Park Woman's Club for their generous donation.

Marty Schmidt for all the photos he has been taking at various events and of neighborhood buildings and for the beautiful sign for our "Meeting in Progress."

Chris Sumption of Wisdom Bridge for tickets to a play.

All of the people who made contributions to the Newsletter and the Building Fund.

## The End of a Celebration

We did not win the City of Chicago's 150th Birthday Contest, but we did receive a lovely certificate for participating. This is now in our permanent file.

## LETTERS.....COMMENTS

Enclosed is our membership fee. I enjoyed very much Mary Jo's interesting lecture at Greenview Neighbors and appreciate her devoting the time to share her information about our community's fascinating history. ....would enjoy assisting in some special projects

Sincerely,  
Elaine Siegel

....I quickly went thru the Luxembourg book, but have not yet had time to sit down and really digest it. I can understand why they charged \$20.00 for the book — it is beautifully put together and represents a lot of work. I'm so glad for the opportunity to read it and it's my next "reading" on my agenda.

Regards,  
Eleanor Davis

I'm new to the neighborhood. ....At the most recent meeting of Greenview Neighbors I saw a wonderful slide presentation given by Mary Jo Doyle. It has aroused my interest and curiosity in Rogers Park history. I've enclosed a check for membership, the building fund and newsletter. I'm very impressed with the professionalism and contents of your Newsletter.

Sincerely,  
Dexanne Card

....Also remember the St. Henry's Baseball Team that won the Northern Division, National Catholic League Championship in 1919. Some of the players on the team were: Phil Geimer, Frank Geimer, Eddie Zender, George Welter, Ted Cronk, Walter Herr, Bob Bradshaw, Ray Eischstadt, Sheehan, Hillard Von Tesmer. Will try to be at next future meeting.

Phil Steffen

## Editor's Note:

Are you still in touch with an old neighbor or relative whose roots are in Rogers Park? How about sending in a membership to the RPHS Newsletter in their name to keep them posted on current happenings or jogging their memories on old events, via the Newsletter? It will be mailed to anyone anywhere in the Continental limits of the U.S.

Address comments to:  
Norm Coughlin, Editor  
RPHS NEWSLETTER  
6555 N. Bosworth Ave.  
Chicago, Illinois 60626

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### "Pennies from Heaven"

The Indian Boundary Park Playground Fund is sponsoring "Pennies from Heaven." Pennies are being collected and donations accepted (and converted to pennies).

On Sunday June 5, volunteers will "lay pennies" across the Park tennis courts in order to break the Guinness Book for World Records for "Largest Coin Display."

Events will begin at 8:00 a.m. and there will be a Kid's Penny Parade starting at 10:00 a.m.

All proceeds from "Pennies" will go toward creating an appropriate, safe and unique play facility. The playground will be designed by children in the neighborhood (with professional assistance), and built by community residents over a single, four day weekend in the Spring of 1989.

Bring your friends and bring your pennies!!



### 1987 Financial Statement

The majority of our members present at the January business meeting voted to publish our annual financial statement in this Newsletter.

Opening Balance — January 1, 1987			
Checking Account.....	\$	2,245.92	
Income			
Membership dues.....	1,170.00		
Donations.....	1,272.65		
Socials.....	488.00		
House Tour.....	1,033.00	3,963.65	
Expenses			
Membership/donations.....	85.00		
Socials.....	384.30		
Newsletter.....	1,548.27		
House Tour.....	535.20		
Requisitions/Misc.....	417.49	2,970.26	
Net Income			
Closing Balance — December 31, 1987			
Checking Account.....	\$	1,239.01	
Savings Account.....		2,000.00	
Total.....		3,239.01	

Larry Calhoun, Treasurer



### ANIMAL INFORMATION

- Operation P.U.P. (Pick Up Please)

Please accept the responsibility of pet ownership and pick up after your dog.

- Are you really a responsible pet owner?

Humane societies cannot "create" homes — they can only place animals in existing, available ones. Nationally over 14 million dogs and cats are destroyed each year because persons do not spay or neuter their pets. Please help stop this tragedy.

- Prevent your pet from getting lost ....

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Do not let a dog roam alone. Keep your cat inside at all times. Keep a current photo of your pet to help identify it, just in case.

- Danger! A few minutes in a hot car could kill your pet!

Even when the temperature is in the low 80s, a parked car can reach 102 degrees in just 10 minutes and 120 in just 30 minutes.

- If for any reason you cannot keep a pet (whether your own or one you found), your best alternative is an animal shelter.

Tax-funded/public — Animal Care & Control, 2731 S. Western, noon to 7:30 p.m., 7 days a week.

Non-profit/private — The Anti-Cruelty Society, 157 W. Grand, noon to 5 p.m., 7 days a week.



### A BIT OF HISTORY

#### CABBAGE HEADS ON PARADE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE PARK LAW ELECTION OF 1896

In April of 1896, a bizarre event took place — the Cabbage Head Parade. Headed by a brass band, the parade started in West Ridge. Dominick A. Schreiber followed the band in a pony cart with a sign that read "Here go the Cabbage Heads." Each of the four posts of the cart was decorated with the head of a cabbage. And West Ridge residents carrying cabbages on poles marched after Schreiber. The vegetables and their human companions proceeded east to Rogers Park and descended upon the yard of Lloyd G. Kirkland where a disturbance occurred. James J. Barbour, leading other angry Rogers Park residents, met the paraders with brickbats.

The sordid affair involved eminently respectable people. Dominick Schreiber came from a prominent West Ridge family. Although he was in the floral business, he was also a former member of the old West Ridge Board. In a few days he would become a member of the Ridge Avenue Park District Commission. James Barbour, a 26 year old lawyer, was working for Commercial National Bank downtown. In the future he would become a well known practitioner and expert in criminal law and a major Republican politician on the North Shore. Lloyd Kirkland, a prominent lawyer, was a community leader in Rogers Park.

What generated such strong emotions and unusual behavior which led to a brawl involving three such important gentlemen? The cause was the controversy surrounding the Park Law election of 1896.

It was not until the 1930's that Chicago's local park districts were consolidated into one park district encompassing the entire city. Before consolidation there were many park districts in different areas of the city. Two of these park districts were the North Shore Park District and the Ridge Avenue Park District.

In 1895, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Park Law which enabled the formation of a park district or districts in the Rogers Park/West Ridge area. The Park Law empowered the commissioners of park districts to levy taxes and assessments on the real estate within their districts.

Later that year Lloyd Kirkland and other backers of a park district, with the support of prominent citizens such as James Barbour, filed a petition calling for an election to approve the formation of a park district. To be called the North Shore Park District it would cover roughly those parts of Chicago comprising the old villages of Rogers Park and West Ridge. Both villages joined Chicago in 1893.

Promoters of the North Shore Park District found an influential spokesman in J. Harrison White, the editor and publisher of the *North Shore Suburban*, a local newspaper. In the pages of the *Suburban*, White claimed that a park district would increase real estate values and generally promote development of the area.

Although real estate developers and owners would obviously benefit from the creation of parks, parks were not the only benefit, or perhaps even the most important benefit, coming from the formation of a park district. The backers of the park district promised that it would pave Ridge Avenue and Sheridan Road thus making travel to and from downtown easier.

Opposition to the park district plan quickly developed in Rogers Park. Then, as now, the possibility of increased taxes was hardly welcome. S.K. Sanda of Southport Avenue in Rogers Park expressed a typical anti-park district view in his letter to the *North Shore Suburban* published December 6, 1895. Sanda complained that the new park district would benefit owners of large real estate tracts and that humbler people should not have to subsidize the rich.

Sophisticated and powerful opposition to the park district plan also developed in West Ridge. The gardeners, florists and truck farmers of West Ridge also feared being taxed for the benefit of the urban middle class along the lake shore. Although they were more rural than their neighbors in Rogers Park, politically they were hardly bumpkins.

Under the leadership of H.D. Capitain, a West Ridge Republican politician, the residents petitioned for an election for a separate park district. To be called the Ridge Avenue Park District, it would include the area of the old Village of West Ridge. But it would also include that part of the old Village of Rogers Park extending from Ridge Avenue to the Chicago and Northwestern tracks, an area known at that time as the West Side of Rogers Park. Dominick Schreiber, W.H. Schmedtgen and Adam Zender would represent West Ridge on the Ridge Avenue Park District Commission. J.H. Hewitt and John D. Cleveland would represent the West Side of Rogers Park.

The Capitain group promised that the Ridge Avenue Park District would pave Ridge Avenue.

As a result of the Capitain petition, Cook County Judge Orrin W. Carter ordered an election for April 14, 1896. The voters in Rogers Park in the area east of the Chicago and Northwestern tracks would vote on whether to establish the North Shore Park District or not to establish it. The voters in the old Village of

West Ridge would vote on whether to establish the Ridge Avenue Park District or not to establish it.

For the voters of the West Side of Rogers Park the decision would be more complicated. They would vote on whether to join either the North Shore Park District or the Ridge Avenue Park District. Also they could choose to join no park district at all.

As the supporters of the North Shore Park District quickly recognized, Judge Carter's election order put their success in serious jeopardy. Although the loss of rural West Ridge to the North Shore Park District was not a major concern to them, the loss of the more developed West Side of Rogers Park was. If the West Side voted to join Ridge Avenue Park District, the North Shore Park District would lose significant tax revenue. Yet two of the three choices available to West Side voters would damage the prospects of the North Shore Park District.

The reader may wonder why the proposed Ridge Avenue Park District included the West Side of Rogers Park. Lloyd Kirkland probably was correct in claiming that the Capitain group needed 100 signatures for their petition, and there were only 89 registered voters in West Ridge. To obtain enough signatures they had to include the West Side of Rogers Park in their proposed district.

During the winter and early spring of 1896, backers of both park districts held several public meetings to debate the issues and obtain support. The most important one for our story was held by the Kirkland group on April 10th at Sheridan Hall (located at Lunt and Clark). James Barbour spoke in support of the North Shore Park District. In an anecdote, intended to be amusing, he referred to West Ridge residents as "cabbage heads."

Any resident of the vicinity would have known that "cabbage head" was a deameaning term for a farmer or gardener in West Ridge and neighboring areas. In an interview many years later, James H. Fitch, the attorney for the Capitain group, said that Barbour's speech angered West Ridge residents who organized the Cabbage Head Parade in protest. The parade and resulting brawl in turn focused attention on the election.

On election day, the voters defeated the establishment of the North Shore Park District. But they did establish the Ridge Avenue Park District. And the West Side of Rogers Park voted to join the Ridge Avenue Park District.

The Commissioners of the Ridge Avenue Park District fulfilled the promise to pave Ridge Avenue. The beautiful Indian Boundary Park, which we still enjoy today, is a legacy of theirs.

But the Kirkland group had only lost a battle, not the war. Several years later they petitioned for a park district covering the East Side of Rogers Park. Finally on May 15, 1900 the North Shore Park District was organized. Lloyd Kirkland was the first President of the North Shore Park District Commission, and James Barbour became attorney for the Commission.

Mark Zaltman

88-04

**Rogers Park Historical Society**  
**FIRST ANNUAL SPRING HOUSE TOUR**  
**IN WEST RIDGE**

Sunday, May 22, 1988  
from 12:00 nn - 5:00 pm

There will be five houses for you to wander through and learn some interesting history of the West Ridge area.

Tickets can be purchased in advance or on the day of the tour at the starting point

which is:

2555 W. Farwell

A limited number of tickets will be sold.

A booklet containing information on each of the houses will be distributed on the day of the tour.

Watch the Lerner Paper and other sources for more information during the few weeks prior to the house tour.

For additional information, call one of the following people:

Mary Jo Doyle	764-2401	Larry Calhoun	274-0798
Ruth Shatzel	761-6076	Jeanette Statland	869-9317

Thanks for helping to preserve the rich heritage of our wonderful neighborhood

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**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND/OR HOUSE TOUR**

Annual dues are \$6.00 per person and the membership period is from January 1st thru December 31st.

Membership  House Tour  No.-Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter  Building Fund

House Tour tickets are \$5.00 per person and include five houses.

Enclosed is a check for \$\_\_\_\_\_ made payable to Rogers Park Historical Society.

Membership includes mini house tours during the year.

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Name

Telephone

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Address

City

State

Zip

Mail to: Rogers Park Historical Society  
2555 W. Farwell  
Rogers Park, IL 60645

I would like to help the Society when I am available.

88-04

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Eleanor Bell  
(Forest Glen)  
Ann Bornhofen  
(Pompano Beach, FL)  
Dexanne Card  
Ann Chambers  
(West Ridge)  
Gerald Connors  
(Forest Glen)  
Emily Detmer  
Tony Eberhart  
(West Ridge)  
Anne Erickson  
(West Ridge)  
John Etzkorn  
Sherrie Etzkorn  
Linda Grengg  
Fritz Huchting  
(Edgewater)  
Jacob A. Kellen Sr.  
(Prospect Heights)  
Nancy Kelly  
John Krager  
(Edgewater)  
Jeff Miller

Gwen Nordgren  
Phil Nordgren  
Elinor Reed  
(West Ridge)  
Mel Rohrer  
(Evanston)  
Bruno & Marie Roti  
Elsie Schroeder  
(Vista, CA)  
Ada Schupp  
(North Center)  
Peggy Sebert &  
Ron Sebert  
(West Ridge)  
John Sheridan  
(West Ridge)  
Elaine Siegel  
Philip Steffen  
(Lincoln Square)  
Robert Vehe  
(Mt. Prospect)  
John Wanaurny &  
Loretta Wanaurny  
(Mt. Prospect)  
Louise Weiner  
(Skokie)  
Ted Yasuda



## NOTICE

This newsletter is published by the Rogers Park Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1975 to preserve the roots of our community. Correspondence may be directed to the editor: Norman Coughlin, 6555 N. Bosworth, Chicago, IL 60626. Phone 262-3190. Managing Editor: Mary Jo Doyle.

Contributors: Norman Coughlin, Mary Jo Doyle, Glenda Hyde and Mark Zaltman.

Thanks also to Emily Lopez, Bernadette Nagler, Delores Patton and Marty Schmidt for their services.

This newsletter is designed, typeset and printed by Denis and Kathie Paluch, Graphic House Inc., Skokie, IL, Charter Members of the Rogers Park Historical Society and long-time residents of Rogers Park.

## Thanks for Renewing:

Dorothy Adams  
(Arlington Heights)  
Mary Bagnolia  
Dorothy Bordon  
(Mt. Prospect)  
Winnie Griffen Brost  
(Forest Glen)  
Eleanor Davis &  
Ken Davis  
(Schaumburg)  
Nicole Davoust  
Anne Dering  
Eva & Michael Egan  
(West Ridge)  
John Fitzgerald  
Jane Goldsmith  
(Elk Grove Village)  
Bill Haig &  
Josette Haig  
(West Ridge)  
Virginia Hock  
Wally Hopp  
Vera & Bill Imberger  
(Jefferson Park)  
Marge Johnson  
(Des Plaines)  
Frank Malone  
Sharon Malone

Bud Mandelbaum  
(New Town)  
J. Curtis Mitchell  
Lou & Michele Muno  
(Arlington Heights)  
Marietta Neil  
Norman Olsen  
(Evanston)  
Bill Ostrow  
(Edgewater)  
Melanie Parrish  
Marv Rochetti  
RP Woman's Club  
Kevin Sampson  
(Denver, CO)  
Florence Selko  
Colleen Sen  
(West Ridge)  
Joan Thiry  
(West Ridge)  
Karen Vanourek  
(West Ridge)  
Vera G. Wollwage  
June Wollwage &  
Walter Wollwage  
(West Ridge)

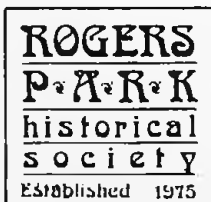


## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

A few of you members out there still have not sent in your 1988 dues. When you get a chance to do so, please do not forget us. The response to the appeal in the Winter issue was most gratifying and encouraging. We picked up quite a few new members and many renewals with a lot of them adding in the two optional \$2.00 items for a total of \$10.00. Remember these fees are tax deductible.

The next Newsletter issue is due out the fourth week of July 1988. If you have anything to suggest or contribute, the deadline is July 12.

**WE WELCOME GUEST COLUMNISTS  
AT ANY TIME.**



Rogers Park Historical Society  
2555 W. Farwell  
Chicago, IL 60645

## MEETINGS

1st and 3rd Saturdays  
11:15am-1:00pm



Rogers Park Library  
6911 North Clark St.  
Chicago, IL 60626  
764-0156