

Holiday Party Jan. 9

Kick off the year with Centennial Sentiments!

Mark Jan. 9 on your calendar as the first event of 1993 to celebrate the actual Rogers Park/West Ridge Centennial year.

The Historical Society will host its annual holiday party — "Centennial Sentiments" — on that Saturday evening from 7 until 11:30 p.m. at the St. Jerome Parish Center at 1709 W. Lunt.

A delicious buffet will be served by Clark Williamson, chef and owner of Food Glorious. Some of you may remember that Clark also catered the tasty food at our summer picnic and the Harmonizer Show. Other friends will also provide scrumptious homemade appetizers and desserts.

Be sure to put on your dancing shoes since a special attraction is the standard, swing and country music of RPHS member Rick Veras

and the Veracity String Band.

There is plenty of free parking in the St. Jerome lot on the south side of Morse at Paulina.



Again this year, you can look forward to door prizes and our holiday raffle with many wonderful items. Raffle tickets are \$1 or seven (7) for \$5 and can be purchased in advance.

Things get hectic during the holidays, so why not complete the application form on page 11 or pick up the phone and reserve your spot? Call 764-4079 or 764-2401 and please make your reservations by Jan. 4.

All proceeds go to our building fund. We hope that many of our members and friends will join us for this festive occasion and support the Society.

Vote for Officers Jan. 16,... Name Change Feb. 6

Members can elect new officers and members of the Board of Directors at the Rogers Park Historical Society annual meeting on Saturday, Jan. 16, at 11:30 a.m. at the Rogers Park Library.

At a special meeting on Feb. 6, same time and place, members will consider the recommendation by the Board of Directors to change the name of the Society to the Rogers

Park/West Ridge Historical Society. The Board feels this new name will more accurately reflect the geographic area covered by our organization. Plus, about half of our members live west of Ridge Ave.

Since our inception, the Society has always considered West Ridge to be a part of the larger area commonly known as Rogers Park. Now as we celebrate the Centennial of Chicago's annexation of the

neighboring communities of Rogers Park and West Ridge, the Board wants to recognize participation of every section of our community on both sides of Ridge Ave.

Also up for consideration are changes in the Constitution/Bylaws that would explain the position of the Executive Director, clarify responsibilities of officers and board members and streamline the document as a whole.

The Way It Was Early Entertainment

In this era of electronic wizardry, which is reaching unbelievable heights, some children have a hard time believing that there actually was a time when there was no television.

It would be even harder to ask them to believe that this had all evolved from the tiny crystal radios. These wonder boxes marked a shift in home entertainment from the phonographs that many homes enjoyed.

Rogers Park played an important role in the early days of radio. The Broadmoor Hotel on Howard Street was home to WBBM in the mid-1920s.

In many instances these radios were made from oatmeal boxes with standard diagrams published in magazines, such as Popular Mechanics and Boy's Life. All the boys in the neighborhood also would exchange ideas.

A lot of families finally got around to buying "store bought" radios that were being constantly improved. Soon the concept of vacuum tubes took over with much improved reception and greater outreach.

I'll never forget our first three-tube "Super Hetrodyne" set with speaker attachments. Man, we were stacking up with everyone, or so it seemed.

The old crystal set had many limitations and required the use of headphones only, so there was an every-evening battle between my brothers and myself for the

"Brandes" headset. This was a much improved model over the standard type that came with the original set, so we were quite pleased with our clear-sounding set. Since I worked in the neighborhood, I came home for lunch six days a week, as late as I could, to hear Ralph Ginsburg and "The Palmer House String Ensemble." The program from 1 till 2 p.m. was an hour of popular and semi-classical music, introduced by "La Golendrina" (The Swan) theme song. Was it enjoyable!

After supper the format of varied entertainment would continue with a series of about five popular dance numbers every 15 minutes or so.

We eagerly awaited Station WEBH (Edgewater Beach Hotel) coming on the air nightly with Ted Fiorito and Dan Russo's Oriole Orchestra. Two of their most memorable numbers, with Nick Lucas on the vocal, were: "Tiptoe Through the Tulips With Me" and "I'll Be a Dreamer of Dreams." These two favorites always brought a round of applause from the dancers.

Nick Lucas went on to record many phonographic hits on Brunswick Records in the early days of vitaphone and had parts in sound pictures, in their incipient stages.

Rogers Park played an important role in the growing years of radio. WBBM radio was just getting started

in the mid 1920s in the studios of the Broadmoor Hotel on Howard Street. WBBM, whose call letters stand for We Broadcast from the Broadmoor, was then owned by the Rubin family.

Another Rogers Park resident who helped define the future of radio was Ross Siragusa, who lived on Newgard. His family moved into the area about 1920. He attended Loyola Academy and graduated about 1926.

Siragusa showed early signs of being an electronics genius as the founder of Admiral Radio. The company prospered in a highly competitive field due to Siragusa's many improvisations.

Another local inventor was Robert F. Halligan of Ashland Avenue. He developed and patented the Hallicrafter, which was a radio receiver. Thousands of his receiving units were used by servicemen in the Army and Navy during World War II.

But it was the music that really left its mark on Rogers Parkers. Two of the better known programs on the radio were "The Firestone Hour" and "The Sinclair Minstrels," each an hour long and on once a week.

In "The Sinclair Minstrels" the highlight came when, after a spirited and rhythmic sound of clog dancing to end the program, the announcer would interpose the sentence: "And now another big audience knows that Big Bill Childs really can dance." A roar would follow, as the simulated sounds were those of Big Bill pounding a pair of huge, worn-out high-topped shoes on a sounding board next to the microphone.

Well, it was a beginning.

Norm Coughlin

CONDOLENCES

Our heartfelt sympathy to Eleanor Breiter Davis, long-time member and supporter, on the death of her husband Ken who died in September. He will be remembered as one of the first Building Fund Founders.

Calendar of Events

Sat. Dec. 12
10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Rogers Park Library Book Sale
"Santa Claus Stocking Stuffer"

Sun. Dec. 20
Happy Hanukkah

Fri. Dec. 25
Merry Christmas

Fri. Jan. 1
Happy New Year - 1993!

Sat. Jan. 9
7:00 to 11:30 pm
RPHS Holiday Party
(See form on page 11.)

Sat. Jan. 16
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
RPHS Annual Meeting and Elections
(See article on page 1.)

Sat. Feb. 6
11:30 am - 1:00 pm
RPHS Special Meeting
Name/Constitution/Bylaws changes
(See article on page 1.)

From the President

It's been yet another successful year for the RPHS. Spring saw the kickoff for the Centennial, to be marked with special events for the actual 100th birthday next April; our summer picnic was a smashing success; and the Fall House Tour netted about \$5,000 for our Building Fund, the most ever. (See article on page 8.)

Our membership is steadily increasing, and many individuals and families are signing up for three years. It saves you a few dollars and helps us with our record keeping at the same time.

Centennial calendars are selling well. But there are more left to help you complete your holiday shopping.

Join us for our annual Holiday Party to celebrate the beginning of our Centennial year. The event will take place on Saturday, Jan. 9, I hope to see you there. Happy Holidays!

Martin J. Schmidt

What We've Been Doing

50 Fest

Sun. & Mon. Sept. 6 & 7: Mary Jo, Marty, Chris Kringle and J. E. Arcand celebrated the Labor Day weekend by displaying our fabulous photo collection at Warren Park. Upcoming events were publicized and Centennial calendars were sold. Special appreciation is extended to State Sen. Howard Carroll for his generous donation.

Mount Prospect Historical Society Museum Dedication

Sat. Sept. 12: Mary Jo represented our Society at the opening of the Dietrich Friedrichs House in the suburb. Coincidentally her sister, member Dorothy Bordon, lives next door to this newly restored lovely farm house.

Indian Boundary Park Prairie Days

Sun. Sept. 13: Many people stopped by our tables to view our photos, purchase calendars and learn more about upcoming Centennial events. Mary Jo, John, Marty and Mervyn Ruskow represented the Society. An added attraction was a memory scrapbook provided by member, Susan Lukatch. Many visitors wrote highlights of their first memories of the park and the surrounding area.

Chicago Fire Dept. Open House

Sun. Oct. 4: Mary Jo, Marty and Mervyn participated in the festivities to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Engine 71 located at California & Rosemont in West Ridge. Congratulations to all!

RP/WR Centennial Barbershop

Harmonizer Show Sat. Oct. 17: Wonderful songs and delicious food were enjoyed at the show and afterglow. Chair J. E. Arcand and co-chair Mary Jo Doyle, RPHS members, thank all those who attended and made this a memorable first-time event. (See article on page 4.)

Oral History Fair Tue. Oct. 20:

West Ridge residents shared wonderful memories and interesting stories of their area. Co-chairs Florence Stepner and Mary Jo Doyle thank the panelists who participated and the audience who contributed additional tidbits. Thanks to the Friends of the Northtown Library for hosting this event. (See article on page 4.)

RPHS Slide Presentation

Sun. Nov. 1: Mary Jo and Marty presented slides of old Rogers Park and West Ridge to members of the St.

Henry Altar & Rosary Society. Several had stories of their own and photos to be loaned. A few Centennial calendars also were purchased.

Archdiocese of Chicago Archives

Thu. Nov. 12: Mary Jo, Marty & John Armendariz made a trip to the archdiocese archives to view old photos of Angel Guardian Orphanage. Hopefully the Society will be able to obtain these wonderful mementos for our own collection.

East Rogers Park Neighborhood

History Project Mon. Nov. 16: Many members of the Society attended a public lecture by Dominic Pacyga entitled "Looking at History From the Neighborhood Up." The lecture, held at Loyola University, was arranged by Pat Mooney-Melvin, RPHS board member and history professor at LU.



ROGERS PARK/WEST RIDGE CENTENNIAL UPDATE

The Centennial Commission continues to spread the news about the 100th Anniversary of Rogers Park and West Ridge. Both villages were annexed to the City of Chicago on April 4, 1893.

CENTENNIAL WEEKEND

More than one hundred years of history will be remembered April 2-4 with a weekend aimed at reaching out to all members of our rich and diverse community.

After two years of planning, the Rogers Park/West Ridge Centennial Commission will celebrate our annexation to Chicago with a series of activities to promote community involvement. The weekend will begin with a Town Meeting on Friday, April 2, to reflect on our past, examine our present and plan for our future.

Then on Saturday, the focus will be community outreach: planting flowers and trees, staffing soup kitchens, providing food baskets for the hungry, painting and repairing homes of the elderly and needy, and other community-oriented projects.

On Sunday, a "Come Home to Rogers Park/West Ridge Day", a big reunion for anyone who ever lived or loved this area, is being planned. In the evening food and entertainment will be available.

To make this a truly historic event, we need the support of the entire community, especially block clubs, schools, parks, religious institutions and civic groups.

To be a part of this Centennial celebration, please call 764-4079 or 764-2401.

BARBERSHOP HARMONIZER SHOW

The Centennial Harmonizer Show was held Oct. 17 at Angel Guardian Auditorium. About 200 members and

Centennial Calendar

The Centennial Commemorative Calendars are selling like the proverbial hotcakes, but there's still more to be had — and still time to enjoy them.

Don't miss this opportunity to get a glimpse of Rogers Park/West Ridge history in words and pictures. This is a special limited edition hand-numbered in gold.

The calendar began in April 1992, but you'll surely want to look back at the wonderful photos for all of 1992, and read many of the fascinating facts about our community. And then there are 12 more months of pictures and dates throughout 1993.

In fact, if you scan the calendar, you'll find out what date in January is the 99th anniversary of the establishment of the Rogers Park branch of the public library.

Plus, read about one of the first saloon protests in Rogers Park way back in February 1896, when citizens protested the building of a saloon at Broadway and Devon because it was within the four-mile limit of Northwestern University.

The calendars make great holiday gifts, birthday presents, or for any occasion. Friends and neighbors are sending them to folks who lived in this area years ago. The calendar costs just \$12 plus \$3 for handling and mailing. Sales benefit Centennial events.

The gold silk screening on the front cover is dedicated to three Rogers Park Historical Society board members, J. E. Arcand, Mary Jo Doyle and Kathy Krokhar, who still feel like this project is their brainchild. Many other RPHS members played a major role in the design, development and production of this calendar.

If you have not yet seen this unique masterpiece, you don't know what you are missing. Each calendar has a raffle form with a chance to win \$100; first drawing Dec. 31, 1992 and second in December of 1993. To reserve your very own copy, stop by our office to pick up one or more or call today at 764-4079 or 764-2401.

Reserve yours today — while they last!

friends attended. The featured harmonizer groups were the Arlingtones, the North Shore Harmonizers and two quartets from the Shoreliners.

Food during the Afterglow was provided by Food Glorious. Clark Williamson served a scrumptious late evening buffet. Wonderful harmonizing was presented by the ladies from the Harmonizers. Special thanks to Catholic Charities for the use of their theatre. Congratulations to the raffle winners (our first \$100 giveaway). The four \$25 winners were Glenna Eaves, Wanda O. Ells, Mary Lappa and Susan Lombardi.

ORAL HISTORY FAIR

The Friends of the Northtown Library along with the Centennial Commission sponsored this event.

The panelists, John "Jim" Kimmes, Audrey Snyder and Florence Stepnar shared memories and tales of life in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. Michael Leonard, the new branch library

head, served as moderator and posed many thought-provoking questions.

Memories included: lots of walking ... three-cent streetcar fares ... hiking barefoot to the beach from west of Western ... leaving home without locking doors ... neighbors taking care of one another (and occasionally swatting a naughty kid!)... horseback riding stables along Kedzie ... prairie grass way over their heads. And hey, whatever happened to the dragonfly and garter snake?

The audience of 40 asked for details about some of the thrilling stories and shared their own memories. One hundred thanks go to June Finfer, who videotaped this special evening. The tape will be shown at a future RPHS meeting.

Thanks also to members of the Friends for hosting this trip down memory lane and for the luscious goodies.

Family Portraits

There's a family photograph on my dresser, taken in 1937. You can see in the background a light fixture on the wall. The photograph was taken in our living room, in our yellow brick bungalow on Fitch Avenue in West Rogers Park. It looks like a professional photo - that was planned weeks ahead.

All dressed up, posing and relaxed for the photographer were my parents — Louis and Evelyn Bild, my brother, Syd at 14, my sister June, 18, and me Nancy at 7. My mother was 39 and Dad 41. Syd's hair is combed and slicked back. He is wearing a suit and tie. June, dressed in an outfit that was probably remodeled for her by mother, made most likely from one of my Aunt Goldie's "hand me downs," looking very sophisticated for her age. I've got a "good Sunday best" dress on, with a ribbon in my hair. Mom and Dad are dressed up too — Dad with a suit and tie, hair slicked back, and Mom sweet and pretty in a spring suit. We are so

formally dressed, sitting and standing —waiting for the photographer's flash, that you know this is not a candid shot.

I had fallen on my face a week before, and you can barely see the scab on the bridge of my nose, but I remember wondering if it will show, as the picture was taken. I remember falling while skating, bruising my face and knees, but the knees are not visible in the picture. On the day the picture was taken a man came to our door with his camera and paraphernalia. He was out of work, hungry, and looking for people who would pay for his photographs. "Would you like to have some family pictures taken? I need the work and it won't cost much," he asked my mother.

"We really don't have money to spend on pictures," she answered. Her soup cooking on the stove was heavy in the air. The young man could smell it at the door and probably hadn't eaten anything that day. "Well if I can have some of whatever is on the stove I'll take

pictures of your family." Mom agreed.

Suddenly our family was called into action. Dad and Syd came in from the back yard. I was called from the prairie next door, where I was collecting wild flowers. I really didn't know what was happening. I was told to wash up and put on my best summer dress. Mom put a ribbon in my hair after combing it. Syd was putting on a suit and tie, while Dad was grumbling in the bathroom because he was

disturbed at whatever he was doing in the back yard. The activity was (furious and fast). June was calling for Dad to get out of the bathroom so she could fix herself up.

All at once, there we were composed, everything falling into place, dressed in our best clothes, posing, smiling, flash pictures were taken. There were pictures of all of us — some taken alone of my sister, another of my Dad, and several of all of us together (in all probably six or 10 different poses).

The photographer sat down to a meal of Mom's homemade soup with meat and vegetables —really a type of stew. He returned the next week with the developed pictures and Mom gave him another meal. (The year was 1937.)

The depression affected all of our lives. When Dad lost his job, Mom went to work. We had many men coming to our door, and many men were fed meals at our kitchen table. This was just one of them.

We touched his life and he left us something forever — a reminder of my childhood and those anxious times.

Nancy Bild Wolf

About the Author

Our family moved to 2941 Fitch in West Rogers Park around June 1930 when I was six months old. There were three children in our family including my older sister June, my brother Syd and myself. I spent my childhood in that house which my parents sold around 1952-53.

I was married in 1949 and my husband, Herb, and I now live in Glencoe. We have four grown children and one grandchild. I went back to school when our youngest son was four and my oldest daughter was entering college. I got my degree in Anthropology from the Univ. of Illinois and then got a degree in Medical Records Administration. I worked in the medical records field at area hospitals and also did consulting through 1991.

Syd now lives in Hyde Park and we are both RPHS members. Together we are writing our memories of our childhood in this area.



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House Tour a Smashing Success

In many ways, this year's house tour reflected the makeup of our community — it was a study in contrasts.

There was an eclectic artist's cottage complete with gallery and studio on Morse. Just down the block was a very traditional Queen Anne. And then there was the consummate Victorian home with turret and bay window on Newgard. And back to Morse for a taste of modern living in an apartment above the old Coed Theater. Then on to a house on Lunt with its double porch and Ionic columns. And finally up Greenview to a distinctive red brick apartment with decorative stone.

These lovely homes and lots of friendly and interested visitors helped make this Eighth Annual House Tour the most successful ever.

At least 30 volunteers, led by Co-chairs Mary Jo Doyle and Barbara Shields and Volunteer Chair, Glenna Eaves, pitched in and pulled together all the tiny details to help make a beautiful day even nicer. Sincere appreciation also goes to John Arcand, funding; June Finfer, video; Kathy Hrabovsky, house sketches; Glenda Hyde, house writeups; Jim Kirkpatrick, booklet graphics and output; Kathy Krokhar, publicity; Pat O'Neal, poster/booklet cover design and artwork; Kevin O'Neil, editing and Marty Schmidt, photography.

Tour patrons enjoyed the free refreshments and participated in the raffle and silent auction.

Special thanks go to all RPHS members who donated time and made donations through the purchase of house tour tickets. Approximately \$5,000 was raised for our Building Fund. ... And Judy Eyring of the East Rogers Park Committee for Arbor Day for her work in compiling lists of beautiful corner plantings ... And to Frank Maguire of Baird & Warner for purchasing a large block of tickets and promoting Rogers Park to recent and prospective home buyers ... And most of all to Larry Calhoun for the starting point and his garden.

Thanks To Our Generous Sponsors:

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Wally & Melanie P. Hopp
Pat Olson
John & Patricia Geroulis
Richard & Jennifer Tracy
St. Ignatius Church

Building Fund Update

A short term goal is to obtain funds for staffing and our long-range goal is for a permanent historical center/museum. At this time grant writing is at a standstill. We are really in need of a person to apply for a few building fund grants within the next several months.

Donations are appreciated for this ongoing project. A pledge can be made and paid in monthly installments. Names of all donors will be on display at the Society's office and permanently displayed in our future home.

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Volunteer Corner

We thank the following dedicated volunteers who have made a significant contribution to our Society office/projects during the past year:

- J. E. Arcand
- Gail Cronin
- Mary Jo Doyle
- Glenna Eaves
- Tony Eberhart
- Ed Ehmann
- June Finfer
- Mitzi Golden
- Jim Kirkpatrick
- Loren 'Chris' Kringle
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- Jeanette Stalland
- Phylliss Van Leer
- Sara Wagner
- Daily office personnel

We can certainly use your help even a few hours a month. You can make a difference. Please call 764-4079.

Muno Family History

For over 20 years Patricia Thayer Muno researched the Muno family, one of the oldest in the West Ridge area. The result is a book that includes 13 generations documented back to the mid 1600s. It contains 570 pages and over 100 rare photographs and lists over 7,000 individuals. The book is now on sale. For information, call Louis Muno (708) 392-6938 or Don Muno (503) 649-0960.

Congratulations

The West Ridge Mather High School Rangers, City Football Champions! They beat Brother Rice 15-6 in the Prep Bowl.

At the starting point of the Fall House Tour, Jim and Sally Kirkpatrick (right) admire a limited edition linoleum block print by Pat O'Neal (seated left). There are a few remaining copies of the handsome print that graced the cover of the tour booklet. Each one-of-a-kind print costs \$15. Call 764-4079.

History Committee

Betty Schonbrun, a member of the oral history committee, will be calling on various people to see if they would consent to be a part of our permanent oral history archives. One of the first interviews will be with Erv Mondl, owner of Ed & Erv's Centrella on Touhy Ave. for many years.

Local Anniversaries

St. Philip Evangelical Lutheran Church - 100th

Chicago Area Anniversaries

Des Plaines Historical Society - 25th
Johnson Publishing Company (Ebony Magazine) - 50th

National Anniversaries

Casablanca - 50th
Phil Donahue Show - 25th
Father Flanagan's Boys Town - 75th
Oldsmobile - 95th
60 Minutes - 25th
Wendy's - 30th
The White House - 200th

International Anniversaries

The Nutcracker Suite - 100th

Recent Donations

John Errera - Rogers Park resident:
Rogers Park Directory dated 1915

James & Sally Kirkpatrick -
RPHS members:
Old photo of the house at 1952
Morse (where Jim's family was
living) after a fire - dated 1949

Frank Maguire -
Rogers Park resident:
A postcard of the apartment building
at 1357-67 Greenleaf dated
approximately late 1920s

Frances Mainiero -
Rogers Park resident:
A letter found in the walls of her
home on Touhy

Charles Schreiber -
member of a prominent area family:
Copies of documents relating to his
family

Audrey Snyder -
former West Ridge resident:
Photos of her family from the teens
and '20s and of the greenhouses in
the West Ridge area hit by the 1927
tornado



John Toncray -
West Ridge resident:
Many photos of a home and the area
on Touhy west of Western and one
of the Northwestern station at Lunt
dated approximately 1920s

Bill Vandercook - RPHS member:
Old survey plat of Newgard Ave. and
the names and old addresses of
former residents in 1901

John Zender - RPHS member:
Documents relating to his family
dated late 1890s and early 1900s

Office Location and Hours

The Rogers Park Historical Society and the Rogers Park/West Ridge Centennial Commission maintain offices at 6424 N Western. We are usually open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Thursday evening from 7 to 9 p.m.

We will try to be there throughout the coming winter months, however please call in advance to make appointments for research, calendar pickups, etc. The RPHS phone number is 764-4078 and the Centennial Commission is 764-4079. You also can reach us at 764-2401.

Membership Memos

The Rogers Park Historical Society is a membership organization — we would be nothing without you! Your interest, support and time help us toward our goal of gathering and preserving the rich history of our area. So please take a few minutes now to review your membership status.

The information on the top line of your mailing label indicates your member number(s), your category (see below), N for New or R for Renewal and the month and year that your membership expires.

Please consider a 3-year membership available in the Family and Individual categories (see rates below). We encourage you to go with this money-saving option to alleviate bookkeeping time. Renew now or join us if you would like to be a member.

If you can donate more, a Life, Donor or Sustaining membership during our Centennial year of 1993 entitles you to receive a special complimentary copy of our Centennial Commemorative Calendar.

Special Thanks To:

Our members who are making a special effort to sell calendars on behalf of our Society: Sue Carlson, Mitzi Golden, Chris Kringle, Mary Meehan, Andy Mondl, Barb Shields, Diane Taylor and Joan Thiry.

All of our sponsors who continue to purchase ads in this Newsletter to bring you this publication.

MEMBER CATEGORY	PERIOD	MEMBERSHIP DUES
Life Member (L)	—	\$ 500.00
Donor (D)	Annual	100.00
Sustaining (Su)	Annual	50.00
Sponsor (Sp)	Annual	30.00
Family (F)	Annual	15.00
Individual (I)	Annual	10.00
Family (F)	Tri-annual	40.00
Individual (I)	Tri-annual	27.00

(See application on page 11.)