



Volume 24, No. 3
November 2009

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting
Wednesday, February 10,
2010, 7:00 p.m at
Devon Bank
6445 N. Western

Board of Directors Monthly Meetings

All meetings are at 7 p.m.
Monday, November 23
Monday, December 14
Monday, January 25
Monday, February 22
Monday, March 22

Board Meetings are open
to all members and are
held at the Society
offices, 7344 N. Western
Ave. (additional meetings
may be called as needed).

In This Issue . . .

Highlights of Our 2009
Founders' Day Tour
(page 1)

From the President's
Desk (page 3)

IBP Gets New
Weathervane (page 5)

The 2009 Rogers Park
Mural Project (page 8)

An Affair with History
(page 10)

Society Receives Bust of
Sam Leone (page 13)

Third Society-Produced
Book Committee Being
Formed (page 15)

The Historian

Preserving And Promoting Neighborhood History

A Good Time Was Had at Founders' Day Tour

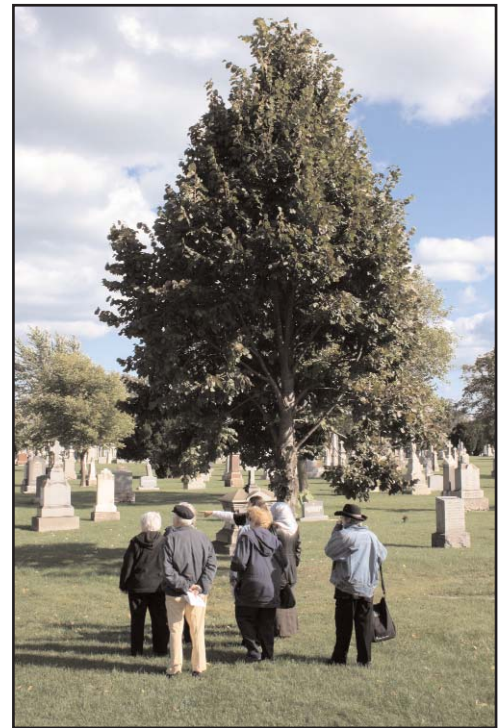
by Colleen Sen

On Sunday, October 4, the Society celebrated its annual Founders' Day by visiting the final resting place of many of our community's founders and Chicago's most famous citizens: Calvary Cemetery. Located on the border between Chicago and Evanston, it is the oldest cemetery established by the Archdiocese of Chicago, having been consecrated in 1859.

The weather favored us with a lovely crisp autumn day. The participants toured the cemetery in a trolley, which stopped at several points en route for guided tours. They received an illustrated brochure with articles on the cemetery's history and short biographies of the deceased.

Calvary Cemetery's residents are predominantly Irish Catholic, and many were born in the "Old Sod." Unlike some other Chicago cemeteries, where religious motifs are relatively rare, in Calvary there is an abundance of crosses, statues of saints, and stained glass windows in the mausoleums.

Calvary is the final resting place for five Chicago mayors -- Dunne, Hopkins, Dever, Kelly, and Kennelly (but not Mayor Richard J. Daley who is buried in the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Alsip, Illinois); leading sports figures (White Sox owner Charles Comiskey and Black Hawks owner Frederic



Guests enjoyed beautiful weather for an afternoon stroll, learning about historic area residents . (Photo by Oscar Arriola.)

McLaughlin); captains of industry (lumber magnate Edward Hines, publishers John and Frank Cuneo, Hannah and Hogg of distillery fame, meat packer Patrick Cudahy); artists James Egan and George Healey; broadcaster Len O'Connor; and the great Irish American writer James T. Farrell.

continued on page 4

Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society

**Board of Directors
2009-2010**

President
Jonathan Dixon

Vice President
Glenna Eaves

Treasurer
Carl Lingenfelter

Secretary
Sr. Sue Kidulski, O.S.B.

Diversity Development
Marcia Hermansen

Events
Colleen Taylor Sen

Membership
Karen Tipp

Museum
Maribeth Brewer

Publications
Hank Morris

Resource Development
Nancy Jane Lauren

Volunteer Services
(vacant)

Ad Hoc Directors
Jo Stavig
Paul Bluestone

The Historian
*is published three times
a year by the
Rogers Park / West Ridge
Historical Society*

Newsletter Staff

EDITOR
Hank Morris

MANAGING EDITOR
Nick Dorochoff

DESIGN CONSULTANT
Kathleen Paluch

PRODUCTION
Nancy Jane Lauren
Sue Sosin

E-NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Maribeth Brewer

Printed by Weber Press
Subscriptions are a benefit of
membership
Circulation: 1,000

Reports of its Demise News to *News-Star*

by Hank Morris

Ron Roenigk, who's also the publisher of the *News-Star*, was rather surprised to learn, in our last issue of *The Historian* (July 2009) that he was no longer in business. Funny, he just was there earlier that day.

Seems I was a victim of poor communication. Many of you know that I run a website for the West Ridge community, (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wrogerspk/>) Some of you are even members. It seems that last year, when Lorraine Swanson left the *News-Star* many people in the neighborhood lamented that "now we don't have a neighborhood newspaper any more." That stuck in my mind.

What actually happened, according to Roenigk, was that the *News-Star* was about to undergo a radical change in its distribution. Instead of being mailed out to its subscribers, it was going to be made available, gratis, at many drop-off locations, such as the Indian Boundary Fieldhouse.

So, I wrote the piece informing everyone that former *News-Star* editor, Lorraine Swanson was now at the Lake Effect News (<http://www.lakeeffectnews.com>) and I expressed sadness that we had no local printed paper, any more. I'm happy to report that the *News-Star* is alive and well and reports of its demise were erroneous.


Ron Roenigk suggests that you call 773-465-9700 to learn of a distribution location near your home so you can start enjoying the paper again.



Electronic Newsletter Editor Wanted

We've been sending an electronic newsletter to those members who have provided their e-mail addresses to us. However, due to no fault of the present editor, the newsletter has come out rather sporadically. We need someone to take over this task and bring this welcomed benefit of membership back onto some sort of regular schedule.

If you would like to volunteer to become the editor of the electronic newsletter, please leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society's office, 773-764-4078 or by e-mail at rpwrhs@aol.com. No programming language knowledge is needed. Just a desire to put out an interesting newsletter to the membership.



COMPLETE GRAPHIC SERVICE
QUALITY OFFSET PRINTING
LETTERPRESS
BINDERY & FINISHING

"Printers of The Historian"

TEL: (773) 561-9815

5746 N. WESTERN AVE.

FAX: (773) 561-0714

CHICAGO, IL 60659

From the President's Desk

By Jonathan Dixon

I happen to be writing my column for this issue from Springfield, where I am attending the Conference on Illinois History sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. I have been hearing some great presentations on fascinating chapters in our state's history, spanning from 17th Century French explorers up through the political careers of Everett Dirksen and Paul Simon.

In listening to the presentations, I am reminded of the history of our own communities, their immigration histories, their existence as independent municipalities, and their development as neighborhoods of Chicago.

By the time that this issue goes to press, our Founders' Day Tour of Calvary Cemetery will have occurred. The research and preparation that went into this event has been remarkable. First of all, isn't it ironic that Charles Comiskey would end up being a North Sider? But, more seriously, so much of Chicago's history is wrapped up in the stories of the people buried in Calvary Cemetery and who were featured on the tour. The booklet for the tour is a first-rate product that is a unique contribution to the written history of our communities, since no other organization has produced as detailed a study of the history of the people buried in Calvary Cemetery. Through this event, we have made a lasting contribution to history.

Another project of the Society that comes to mind, as I reflect on chronicling our



history, is the work of our publications committee as they launch our new website (<http://www.rpwrhs.org/>) with the plans for substantial new content, as well as the plans for publishing a third historical book. Few other neighborhoods in Chicago have benefitted from such attention to their histories as ours has.

Being in Springfield, I am reminded of a famous line from Abraham Lincoln, "Fellow Citizens, we cannot escape history." He was referring to the judgment of history, but the sentiment can just as equally apply to the lessons history teaches us. In our work at the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society, we are contributing to the scholarship and research of our history, and then communicating and sharing that history with everyone in our community.

Gone, but Not Forgotten

We are saddened by the loss of long-time Society supporter and volunteer, **Lee Fred Schroeder**, who passed away on August 17, 2009, at age 70. He will be missed.

Memberships as of October 1, 2009

Welcome New Members!

Individual
Thomas Sackley

Senior
Helen Carlock
Bonnie Delahanty

Thanks for Renewing!

Individual
Jeanne Bloom
Cheryl Cott
Lauren Crawford
Judith Flapan
David Gerber
Sharon Kozak
Vicki Kruzel
Donald Nyderek
Thomas Woodworth

Thanks for Renewing!

Senior
Ed Bush
Mary Davlantes
Betty Hill Hopkins
Barbara Isaacson
James Kepler
Rita McClure Koehler
Katherine McSpadden
Nancy Nixon Plumb
Bette Raef
William Steinfeld
Lily Venson
Gary Widen

Continued on page 4

**Membership Renewals
Continued from page 3**

Family

Wahaj Ahmed &
Marcia Hermansen

Nick Dorochoff &
Joe Beason

Jeffrey & Molly and
Helen & Bridget Hapner

Jim Brusek,
June Macchiaverna
and Jana Brusek

Ed & Pamela Rappaport



Senior Family

Franklin & Catherine King

Roy & Norma Luce

Marvin & Phyllis Siegel

Herb Zeigeldorf & Carol
Westerlund



Sponsor

Bill & Tiana Benway

Claire Hirsch

Margo Viscusi



**Memberships as of October
1, 2009**

Visit us
at our new website:

<http://www.rpwrhs.org>



Discuss neighborhood
history:

[http://groups.yahoo.com/
group/rpwrhs](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpwrhs)



Join Today!

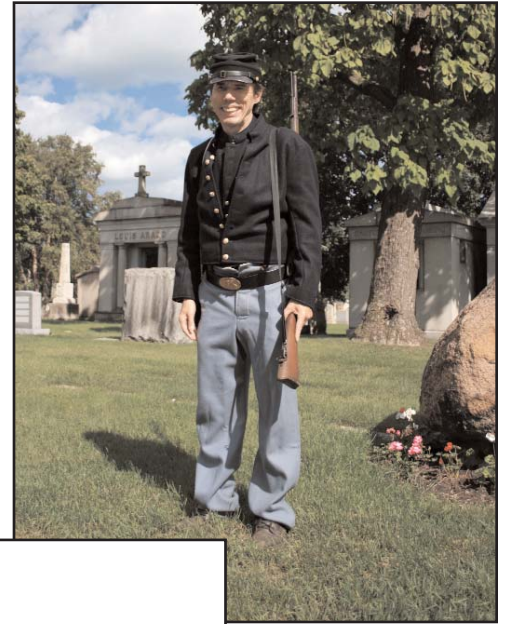
Founders Day, continued from page 1

Founders who are buried there include Philip McGregor Rogers (1812-1856), after whom Rogers Park is named; Patrick Leonard Touhy (1839-1911); his wife Catherine Rogers Touhy (1843-1916), the daughter of Philip Rogers; and Edward A. Sharp, Sr. (1860-1952), the first clerk of the Village of Rogers Park, which was incorporated in April, 1878.

Of special interest were the graves of members of the religious orders who played an important part in the community's educational and charitable institutions. The Sisters of Mercy Order, who came to Chicago in 1846, founded Mercy Hospital and the institution that eventually evolved into Misericordia Home. The Benedictine Sisters, who came to Chicago in 1861, established Saints Benedict and Scholastica Academy. The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary began teaching in Chicago in 1867, and in 1931, opened Mundelein College, the world's first skyscraper college for women.

We wish to thank the volunteers for giving of their time and energy to make this event a fun time.

A limited number of copies of the guide book are still available and can be purchased from the Society office for \$8.00 for non-members and \$6.40 for members. Get your copy while they last.



Dave Marshall, in full uniform (above), informed guests about James A. Mulligan, a Union Colonel whose monument greets visitors entering at the west gate. Society Vice President Glenna Eaves (left) lead a tour of the north-western section of the cemetery. Tour guests (below) enjoying a break from the guided tours. (Photos by Oscar Arriola.)

IBP Gets New Weathervane, RP/WRHS Gets the Old One

By Hank Morris

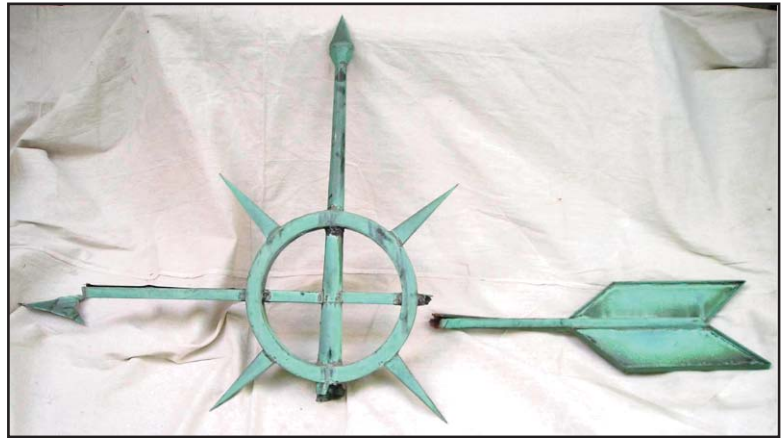
The fieldhouse at Indian Boundary Park (IBP) is listed on the Register of National Historic Places. The National Register is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties have significance to the history of their community, state, or the nation. Generally, properties eligible for listing in the National Register are at least 50 years old. Properties less than 50 years of age must be exceptionally important to be considered eligible for listing. The National Park Service administers the National Register of Historic Places. So, this is quite an honor for the fieldhouse. It's also listed as a Chicago Landmark.

Back when the fieldhouse was built, the trees that now surround and obscure it hadn't yet been planted. Enough time has passed that they make it literally impossible to take in the entire fieldhouse in one view. You get glimpses and glimmerings as you walk around it.

So, it was no wonder that the magnificent, huge weathervane (several feet in length), installed in 1929, that was located just above the Lunt Avenue entrance was virtually invisible. Many of the visitors to IBP have probably never noticed the vane and, ignored, it fell into disrepair.

Over a year ago, Society member Frank Glapa noticed the weathervane and how badly it had deteriorated. It's one thing for someone to notice that something was awry. It's a whole other thing when that person is also a Master Roycroft Renaissance Artisan.

A what? Roycroft was a reformist community of craft workers and artists which formed part of the Arts and Crafts movement in the USA. Elbert Hubbard founded the community in 1895 in the village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York, near Buffalo. Participants were known as Roycrofters. The work and philosophy of the group, often referred to as the Roycroft movement, had a strong influence on the development of American architecture



The old weathervane that stood on the roof of Indian Boundary Park fieldhouse since it was installed in 1929. This will soon have a new home at the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society. (Photo courtesy of Frank Glapa.)

and design in the early 20th century. The Roycroft "creed" is as follows:

"A belief in working with the head, heart, and hand and mixing enough play with the work so that every task is pleasurable and makes for health and happiness."

Membership is juried, and it takes many years to become a Master Roycroft Renaissance Artisan. Frank said that when he joined, there were fewer than 50 nationwide.

When Frank noticed the deteriorated condition, he became interested in replacing or rebuilding the old IBP weathervane. And he had the artistry and skills to craft a new one. He approached Phil Martini, the person in charge of IBP, inquiring whether the weathervane was going to be replaced. Phil replied that a work order had been submitted for repairs. Later, Frank asked Phil if he could examine the pieces that had fallen off. He realized, upon detailed examination, that the old copper weathervane was beyond simple repairing. It needed a total rebuild, from scratch. He offered to do the job and discussed his proposition with Chicago Park District North Region Manager Matt Marino. Marino asked about the cost, and Frank said if there was no immediacy, and he could work at his own pace, he'd do it as a gift to the park. And so it was agreed.

continued on page 11

The Great Rogers Park Fire, Wednesday, August 8, 1894

Adapted, in part, from The Chicago Tribune, Thursday, August 9, 1894, page 3.

We're all familiar with the Great Fire of 1871 that burned from Sunday, October 8, to early Tuesday, October 10, 1871, killing hundreds and destroying about four square miles of Chicago. But, how many of us remember the Great Rogers Park Fire which destroyed 14 buildings in one square block?

On Monday, April 29, 1878, Rogers Park was incorporated as a village in Illinois. Fifteen years later, on Tuesday, April 4, 1893, this vibrant community had been annexed by Chicago. A year later, a square block of Rogers Park bounded by Clark Street, Market Street [now Ravenswood Avenue], Greenleaf Avenue, and Jackson Avenue [now Estes Avenue] went up in flames. Clean up and rebuilding took several years.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported, in part:

“By a fire which broke out in that part of the city known as Rogers Park at 9:30 a.m. yesterday [Wednesday, August 8] an entire block was wiped out, including stores, factories, and dwellings, fourteen in all, while ten families were driven out homeless. The loss of property was \$34,550, but during the excitement many persons narrowly escaped injury, while five were hurt.

“... The scene of the fire was but a few hundred feet northeast of the Chicago & North Western Rwy. depot [now METRA] and in the principal business portion of the former village. The burned territory is bounded by Clark Street, Greenleaf Avenue, Jackson Avenue and Market Street, along which the Chicago & North Western Rwy. has its right-of-way. At the southwest corner of the block at Greenleaf Avenue and Market Street was the planning mill of George Gerner & Sons, composed of one- and two-story frame buildings, occupying 100 feet of ground each way. The fire started either on top or within the boiler-room of the mill, the generally accepted theory being that it was set by sparks from a passing engine on the North Western road.

“Only a block away, on the east side of Clark Street and Jackson Avenue, stands the old Rogers Park Town Hall, the pride of all citizens there, which is now the headquarters of Precinct 44 of the Chicago Police Department and Chicago Fire Department's Truck Company 25, with two men under the command of Lieutenant Healy. The two pieces of horse-drawn apparatus there consist of a truck, hose wagon and chemical combined, and is of the

general variety used in country towns. The alarm at the Gerner factory was immediately sent in for this piece of apparatus, but it is reported that that it was fully 20 minutes before the scene of the fire was reached, and, of course, the big mill, dry as tinder, like everything else in the neighborhood was doomed. Moreover the fire was reaching after three frame cottages standing north of the mill, and for Burbank's Drug Store, a two-story frame building standing east of the mill and facing Clark Street. The firemen attached their lines to the hydrants, but the streams which issued from them would barely reach a foot from the nozzle. Rogers Park, though annexed to Chicago for nearly a year, has been without city water all that time, and compelled to depend on a private water works, which were pumping under about ten pounds pressure when yesterday's fire broke out. Calls for assistance were quickly sent out by Lieutenant Perry to the Evanston and city departments. Hose companies from Evanston were earliest to respond, but by the time of their arrival, all of the buildings save one in the doomed block had been destroyed, and the fire was endeavoring to grasp the City Hall across Clark Street, as well as a long row of frame buildings containing the Chicago Public Library, several stores, and the houses of many families. The City Hall was set on fire several times, but the Evanston men managed to avert the danger, while several young men from the same classic town by hard work prevented one building from going down on the burning block.

“After the flames had almost destroyed everything on the block, Fire Marshal Frederick J. Gabriel of the 13th Battalion arrived, followed by the Engine Companies 70, No. 55 from 685 Sheffield Avenue, No. 56 from Noble Street and Clybourn Avenue, No. 53 from Clybourn and Southport Avenues, and Hose Company No. 4 from Clark Street and Belmont Avenue, and No. 6 from Balmoral and Ashland Avenues. Some of the companies had driven six miles at full pace, with the thermometer at 95° in the shade, and men and horses were alike worn out. But the former went to work with a will in a dire emergency. Every building on the block save one had gone down, and the fire had extended to the east side of Clark Street, where the two-story building occupied by W.P. Foote's grocery and home and office of Expressman Anthony Cook had taken fire. Captain A. William Lawson and Lieutenant Quinlan with their men pushed into the building to stay the start the fire had taken for the destruction of another block. While at work,

Lawson and Quinlan were overcome by the heat and fell into a mass of burning debris on the second floor, whence they were rescued after heroic efforts, both being painfully burned. The building was gutted. Marshal Gabriel and Lieutenant Perry had by this time succeeded in getting the manager of the private water works to put on a greater pressure, and after a hot fight at Clark Street and Greenleaf Avenue the flames were barred from further progress.

“At 10:00 a.m. the wires of the Chicago, Milwaukee & North Shore electric railway company and the Chicago Telephone company were burned or cut down to avert danger, and there were no telephonic or electric car communication between the city, the northern suburbs, and Evanston until late last evening.

“[Police] Officer John Weldon was the hero of the fire. He is from the Summerdale Station. After the Burbank store and residence on the corner of Greenleaf Avenue and Clark Street had been encircled by fire he rushed up the stairway leading to rooms above. Mrs. Gurney, mother-in-law of Dr. Lowell, was there with Mrs. Burbank, both women frantic from fear. Mrs. Burbank hurried down the stairway, her clothing taking fire in her progress. She was seized by bystanders, who extinguished the flames on her gown, and she escaped with a few slight burns. In the meantime, Officer Weldon held Mrs. Gurney at a window, from which smoke was issuing freely, and was calling for a ladder. He knew the attempt down the stairway was fraught with danger. Finally, a ladder was placed against the window and the officer carried Mrs. Gurney to the ground where both fell unconscious from the smoke they had inhaled. Officer Weldon was also burned on one side of the face. Other praiseworthy work was done by Lieutenant George W. Perry and the twenty-two men of his command, in the way of saving threatened property and one of their deeds was of particular daring. On the railroad track less than fifty feet from the blazing mill stood a tank car loaded with oil and wedged in between the other cars on either end of it. There was great danger of an explosion of the oil, which would have added horror to the fire disaster. Lieutenant Perry called all his men together and with desperate strength they removed the cars from one end of the tank car, which had become heated to a dangerous point, and then they shoved the oil car to a safe distance.

“The three cottages north of the planning mill on Market Street [Ravenswood Avenue] went down in a hurry before the flames. Nicholas Stuer and his wife, living in part of the first cottage, lost everything, while Louis Petrie saved

only a pair of trousers. Nicholas Michaels, living in the next cottage, saved part of his effects, while James Michaels, in the third cottage, saved all his furniture. The last building on Market Street, a large livery stable operated by J.P. Goodwin, was quickly destroyed, with a number of sleighs and a quantity of feed. He succeeded in saving his horses, carriages, and hearse.

“Fronting on Clark Street, besides the Burbank Building, were a double two-story frame building occupied by John Hinds’ bakery and John Weas’ shoe store, a brick building occupied by Sharp Brothers’ dry goods store, and a brick residence annex, and the frame residence and meat shop of J. Lindley. The undertaking establishment of Peter Weimeskirch, which also constituted the Rogers Park Morgue, was but partially destroyed, the undertaker finding time to save most of his stock. His residence was saved.

“G[eorge] Gerner, in whose planning mill the fire originated, thinks with proper protection the fire should have been extinguished in a few minutes with but little loss.

“Serious complaints were made against the private water-works and the newly-annexed people think the city should take charge of the water supply. Mr. Keeler is the Superintendent of the works, which are said to have been originally built by the National Tube Company and later delivered to a stock company. The works stand at Touhy Avenue and Sheridan Drive and are substantial and well equipped. Citizens complain that besides not being protected in cases of fire the water company charges exorbitant rates.”



The 2009 Rogers Park Mural Project

by *Lea Pinsky and Dustin Harris*

The 2009 Rogers Park Mural Project stretches from Estes to Greenleaf on Glenwood Ave. With a general subject of “Community of Rogers Park,” the mural takes a historical approach, looking at Rogers Park over time—from when it was inhabited by Native Americans and was rife with birch trees—to its current life in 2009.

Carrying the belief that we can all be better citizens by knowing about our past, the mural can educate as well as beautify. Two phrases with a common message run down the 330-ft long wall, one in paint and the other in mosaic tile: “Connect Origins to Destinations” and “Reveal Roots to Respect.” Interspersed between the words is the history urged to be revealed. The artists researched at the Rogers

Park/West Ridge Historical Society and spoke with community leaders, past and present, about their personal experiences throughout transition and change in the neighborhood. Some of the images we chose to convey this history and the attitudes towards it are:

- Chief Metea, a Pottawattamie negotiator between his tribe and the new settlers in the Chicago in the mid-1800s;
- An old Chicago streetcar, showing how the train system boosted Rogers Park’s population in the early 20th century;



Clockwise from upper left: Leah Pinsky helps campers prepare for the day’s painting activities; Chief Metea has a prominent place in the mural’s depiction of the area’s history; Dustin Harris directs campers’ work. (Photos by Carolyn Read)



Above left and below: Howard Area Community Center Campers at work. Above and left: local personalities and businesses play a prominent role. (Photos by Carolyn Read)



- The Howard Theatre and the Ashkenaz Deli on Morse Ave., two historical landmarks representing the 40s social nightlife, and Rogers Park’s Jewish population;
- A turnstile with arrows coming from many different directions and converging to pass through together, signifying Rogers Park’s “port of entry” as a first home for many immigrants to Chicago; and,
- A “family” of grills at the beach, expressing the connectedness that Rogers Park’s close access to Lake Michigan brings to this diverse community, in the spirit of shared meals.

One of the most important components of this project was the partnership with the Howard Area Community Center’s (HACC) Summer Camp. The mural was a regular activity that the full camp—80 kids ages 8-13 and a dozen teens and adults—would participate in, throughout all stages of the process. Working with a different group of 20 campers each day

Monday through Thursday, we met with each group six times. The first week we designed together (using images from our research), the second week we primed the wall with gesso, and finally we painted for four weeks. On Wednesday afternoons, the mosaic club met to create that component of the wall, led by mosaic artist and Chicago Public School art teacher Ingrid Swenson. Following the end of camp, we finished the mural independently with the assistance of a few staff at HACC, and it was ready on time for the Glenwood Avenue Arts Festival on August 22-23.

About the Authors

Lea Pinsky and Dustin Harris are professional artists and teachers in community and public projects. Over the last four years, they have collaboratively led numerous large-scale mural projects in Chicago with youth and families in schools and community centers.

Some of their collaborations include a youth group room at Fourth Presbyterian Church downtown; the lunchroom, library, and hallways at Pulaski Fine Arts Academy; and the playground, lunchroom and history wing at Boone Elementary School.

They have a passion for working with communities to beautify spaces, and giving back to their neighborhoods.

As active participants in the Rogers Park cultural community, they have painted in the Artists of the Wall event (the annual interactive “RockBench” game), exhibited and performed at the Morseland, and worked with arts organizations such as Lifeline Theatre (Lea is the Education Director).

They have received the City of Chicago’s Neighborhood Arts Program Grant for two school murals, and they have both been recognized as “Artists of the Month” in February and March of 2008 on www.rogerspark.com.

Visit us
at our new website:
<http://www.rpwrhs.org>

Discuss neighborhood
history:
[http://groups.yahoo.com/
group/rpwrhs](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/rpwrhs)

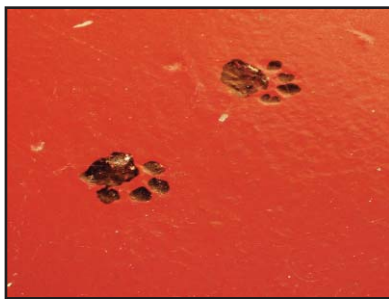
An Affair with History

by Nancy Jane Lauren

Who else remembers dreading high school history class? Anyone else think the Roman Empire was boring—both its rise AND fall? Well, when I was in school, I did. Back then I thought of history as something that happened to someone else in some other lifetime, that had nothing whatsoever to do with me; something to be memorized late at night just before an exam and forgotten the day after.

All that would change over the years, but it took me a while to notice. It was the sort of thing that sneaks in through the back door when you're not really paying attention. I was gradually developing an interest in all the changes that time leaves in its wake along with a budding curiosity about my ancestors. Who were they, where did they come from, and how did they affect the lives of those they lived alongside? Were there any others who had brown hair, brown eyes, a sweet tooth, and daydreamed through history class?

Time marched on and, as years can go by in a blink, it somehow became the fall of 1996. Somewhere along the way I grew up, got married and was looking for a vintage home with my husband. "Something with character," we said; "Something with a past." Then, late in the afternoon on an Indian Summer day, I found myself face-to-face with my first Chicago bungalow—a house that not only changed my view of history but became the inspiration for where I am today.



It was a solid brick structure—still adorned with original leaded glass windows and graceful arched doorways, built during the era of Prohibition, speakeasies and organized crime. Reminders of the home's age were everywhere. At some point, the original stove had been moved to the basement, near some old tools used to stoke and clean the coal-fired furnace. A bricked-in area outlined where the old ice box had been. The Hoosier cabinet still sat in the kitchen along with its built-in flour-sifter and pull-out porcelain work surface. Then there were the paw prints—dozens of them. Tiny impressions that dimpled the basement floor back in 1925—before the concrete could harden. There was even a shoe print in the corner. Only one. Evidence of some trespassing squirrel or rabbit, and maybe a construction worker who liked to hop?

This house, our house, had been anchored to the same spot throughout the Great Depression, WWII, a building boom, the Beatles,

Woodstock, and the first man on the moon. The creaky floorboards and stubborn windows were those honest wrinkles the home had earned throughout all of its years of

keeping people warm and safe.

Several generations lived in this house before we did. Generations of people just like us who had swept the steps and washed the windows; people who had celebrated, grieved and then celebrated again—all those

things that inevitably follow us through life. Now, after 13 years in this solid-brick structure, I still wonder what they talked about over breakfast. Did they discuss the headlines when they carried news of Capone and Dillinger or did they complain of aching feet after a Charleston contest the night before. In the 40s did they talk about Roosevelt's Fireside Chats? Did they discuss who came back from the war—or who, tragically, did not? In the 50s did they argue for and against nuclear weapons? Did they comment on the new cars designed with fins and "wasn't that one of them parked on the next block?" All these discussions of the past in a place where we now sleep each night.

So this was "history"—the same history I once dismissed as "something that happened to someone else in some other lifetime that had nothing whatsoever to do with me." History looked very different from inside that bungalow than it had from that high school classroom. Truth is, history is composed of bits and pieces of moments here and there that fill in the gaps between the main events. Ultimately, all the bits and pieces add up to a life lived in the past. It may not be in the forefront of our consciousness every day, but as we go about our daily lives we can't help but make history. We are making it right now!

Nancy Jane Lauren spent her childhood in West Ridge. She then lived in Lincoln Park for several years and in 1996 she and her husband bought a home back in West Ridge. Nancy Jane is a freelance writer, and sits on the board of the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society where she heads up the Oral History Program.

Annual Meeting Date Set

The 35th Annual Meeting of the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 10, 2010, at 7:00 pm at the Devon Bank, 6445 N. Western Ave. While the meeting is still several months away, pencil in the date on your 2010 calendars so you don't miss it.

After the exceptional 2009 Annual Meeting, we're going to stay with that format for the 2010 meeting. As in 2009, the format will include board elections, some limited business, an educational presentation, and fellowship. If you liked this year's meeting, you'll love next year's meeting.

We expect to be able to provide some details regarding the May 2010 House Tour. This year's tour of Germania and Eastlake Terrace was a big success, with over 100 participants joining in the festivities.

As usual, there will be annual reports on the Society's financials and operations. We've done a lot this year and these should be quite interesting.

Volunteers who have made exceptional contributions to the Society will be honored, and we're planning to have a presentation about our community's history, similar to the one Glenna Eaves made at the 2009 meeting.

We're missing some back issues of our newsletter.

After several moves, it appears that some of the issues of previous newsletters have gone missing. We're hoping that some of our long-time members may have retained one or more of them. We would appreciate being able to borrow and scan, the missing issues. Naturally, we'll return any such issues to their owners.

The missing issues are, surprisingly from recent years:

The oldest missing issue is Fall 1995. We have only the May-June and September issues from 2004. We have only the May and September issues from 2006. And we have only the June issue from 2008.

We are in the process of converting the 80 other issues into word-searchable PDF files. These will be made available on our new website in the near future.

At this time of year . . .

Give someone you know who is interested in local history a gift membership using Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover credit cards, either on line at our website, www.rpwrhs.org or by phone at 773-674-4078. We still take checks, money orders, and cash, as well.

Volunteer Now!

The Society is always in need of help: from pitching in on organizing events, to helping with publications like the website, The Historian and the E-Newsletter. Let us know how you can help by sending an e-mail to rpwrhs@aol.com.

IBP Weathervane

continued from page 5

Along the way, Frank made some improvements, internally, that made the new weathervane more environmentally friendly and more sensitive to the meanderings of the local wind. The old weathervane contained lead for balancing purposes. This was replaced with copper. And the bearing, upon which the weathervane turned for approximately 80 years, was finally worn out. A quick trip to American Science and Surplus on Milwaukee Avenue solved this. They had some large glass marbles that were exactly what was needed.

Now the newly crafted weathervane, bearing the Roycroft Mark and Frank's registered mark is ready to be put up on the roof of the IBP fieldhouse.

Some time, in the near future, it is Frank's intention to donate the old weathervane to our Society for safe keeping. We'll give it a good home.



Frank Glapa holding the new weathervane in front of the front door of Indian Boundary Fieldhouse

New Website Up and Running

by Hank Morris

As announced in the July 2009 issue of *The Historian*, we have a new website. It is now up and running. Many of those members who receive our e-mail blasts were notified of this and several have already become members.

Why become a member of the website when I'm already a member of the Society? Simply because we're adding many features that will not be available to the casual visitor to the website. As this is in its infancy, only a few of these features are already in place. Several articles that are longer than what we can publish in the newsletter are already on line and available to members only. Members can also suggest links to websites that we haven't listed. We'll check them out and, if appropriate to our membership, these will be added to our already extensive links collection.

Members who have a story to tell will be able to submit it to us directly from the website. We'll work with that person to put it on the website, or put it into the newsletter. We're always looking for stories and articles. If you have an idea for one or wish to discuss something you'd like to write or see on the website or in the newsletter, leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society office 773-764-4078, or by e-mail: rpwrhs@aol.com.

Should a Society member who is registered on the website visit the Society Store page, all pricing shown is at Society Members' pricing. The nonmember prices are displayed to the casual or unregistered visitor. Members get a discount. We now accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover,

and American Express via PayPal. So, you can purchase the books, posters, or photos on-line and renew your membership, too.

Planned enhancements available only to members include word-searchable copies of all previous Society newsletters and most of the House Tour booklets.

We list the missing newsletters and house tour booklets on the new website. If you have any of these and would be willing to loan or donate them to the Society so we can complete our collection, leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society office.

We will have a link to a virtual exhibit of the thousands of photos in our Photo Archives and Cataloging Project. Any of these photos can be purchased for personal or research purposes for a reasonable cost.

Details will be available when this feature launches.

If you have photos, drawings, booklets, etc. from the early days of Rogers Park and/or West Ridge and would like to loan or donate them to our Photo Archives and Cataloging Project, leave a message for Rob Case at the Society office.

Later on, we're going to make podcasts available containing many of our oral histories conducted by Nancy Jane Lauren. She's always looking for more participants. Maybe you would like to be a part of the Oral History Program, or know someone who should. Leave a message for Nancy Jane at the Society office.

Still later, we'll be creating a HistoryWiki for researchers and anyone interested in more detailed information about Rogers Park and West Ridge. If you've ever used Wikipedia, you know how great this

continued on page 13

Changes in Office Personnel

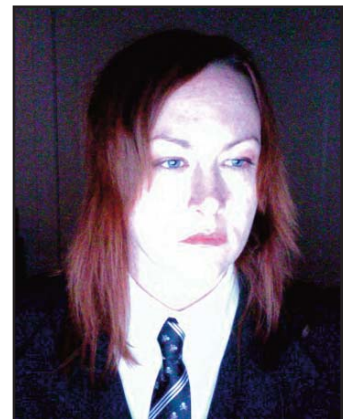
by Glenna Eaves

Due to unforeseen family matters, Donna Harnett is unable to continue to meet the commitment for maintenance of Wednesday and Friday afternoon public hours.

We welcome Alexa Smith to our team. She will assume primary responsibility for our office administration duties and be the presence for our public open hours. Alexa brings us a wealth of talent, skill and experience in design, legal and project management and is a delightful and creative addition to our team.

The Operations team is developing a plan for shared responsibility for this service in which our staff and volunteers will complement one another to seamlessly maintain—or even enhance—our schedule of open hours and accomplish our administrative projects in a timely and effective manner.

Let's all welcome Alexa.



Society Receives Bust of Sam Leone

by Hank Morris

In late August, we were contacted by sculptor Tom Sackley who has made a bronze bust of Sam Leone, the legendary head of the lifeguard service at Rogers Park and Beach (later renamed Leone Beach in honor of Sam Leone).

In his youth (late 30s, early 40s), Tom lived at Estes and Sheridan. He spent most of his youth at Rogers Park and Beach (predecessor to today's Leone Beach). Whether playing basketball in the unique gym (its ceiling was at two different levels, making for interesting bank shots into the basket) or participating in the workshop (where they maintained, among other things, Sam Leone's "Woody" automobile) or ice skating, Tom was there. It's no wonder that he has many fond memories of Sam and Sam's son, Phil. After Phil died in a car accident, Sam gave Tom Phil's ice skates, saying "I think he would have wanted you to have these."

Sam Leone touched many people's lives. As a lifeguard, he was personally responsible for having saved over 500 swimmers and boaters from the ravages of Lake Michigan. Sam found a dilapidated boat in the Chicago River and

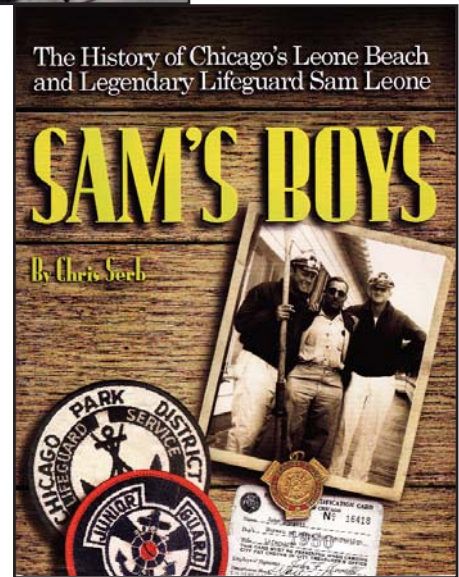
brought it to Rogers Park and Beach where boys working in the workshop, including Tom Sackley, fiber-glassed the rotting hull to make the hulk into Sam's boat, *Alert*, which was put into lifeguard service.

When interviewed, Tom Sackley remarked that he made the bust in tribute to Sam Leone as his way of saying, "Thanks, Sam." We're honored that Tom felt that the best place to put the bust was in our care.

Former lifeguard Chris Serb honored Sam Leone by writing the book *Sam's Boys: The History of Chicago's Leone Beach and Legendary Lifeguard Sam Leone* (©2000, ISBN 0-615-11408-3). Mr. Serb was kind enough to donate a box of these books to us for sale to our membership. In honor of the receipt of the bust and books we are making the book available until Christmas 2009 for the price of \$18.00 for non-members and \$16.40 for members. The book can be ordered on line at our website, by mail or by phone. We accept Discover, MasterCard, Am-



Bust of Sam Leone sculpted by Tom Sackley (above) the real Sam Leone (left) and Chris Serb's book, *Sam's Boys* (below).



erican Express, and Visa, money orders, checks, and cash.

Website, from page 12

will be. The HistoryWiki will tie together all the stories into a single searchable resource. We will be seeking volunteers—it will take lots of hands, minds, and time. If you want to get involved, leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society office.

Once we have a new permanent home, we plan on reopening our museum. At that time, we'll be

offering many different in-house programs, guest speakers, and exhibits. So, the website will begin to cover this facet of the Society, too. If you have any artifacts or memorabilia you would like to donate to the Society's collections, leave a message at the Society office.

So you can see, this new Web service to members is growing, and will continue to grow, offering new features and capabilities for years to

come. If you haven't already joined the website go to www.rpwrhs.org. And, come back often, things are constantly changing.

If you have the time and desire to help this website grow and reach its true potential and wish to be a part of it, leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society office. No knowledge of HTML or other programming languages is required.

Mystery Question Answered!

by Hank Morris

The Mystery Question from the March 2009 issue has been answered. Congratulations to long-time member David Marshall, Chicago, IL. Here's his reply—

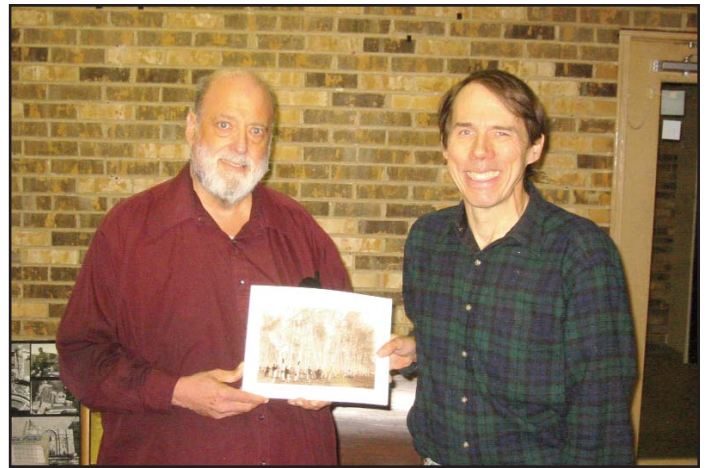
July 10, 2009

The woman's query about Pingree Street piqued my interest, although I can't answer the question completely.

Pingree Street ran from 6800 to 7599 North—from Pratt to Howard. It was renamed Bell Avenue sometime before July 1948, when William H. Martin compiled his *Chicago Street Nomenclature*. Bell Avenue was named that long before the inventor became famous, and probably honors Union Army Captain, George Bell of the 37th Illinois Infantry, who served under Julius White, an Evanston resident buried at Rosehill Cemetery.

Pingree is much more obscure. The name originated in Worcestershire, England ("origin unexplained" the reference says.) There is a Pingree Road and also a Pingree Square in Kane County, named after a family who settled there in the 1850s. The only other Pingrees I could find listed in the city directories were close to downtown or on the South Side. It is possible there was an early settler who left before Rogers Park was annexed, but my guess is that the name honors somebody some resident either served with in the Civil War or had some business dealings with. Daniel Pingree was a Kane County Commissioner; George Ely Pingree was a Captain in the New Hampshire Infantry who came to Illinois after the War.

The Historical *Chicago Tribune* site on Ancestry.com (and on the Chicago Public Library's website) lists too many stories about Pingree Street to list here, but a few are worth mentioning. In 1931, Pingree Street was finally paved from Morse to Pratt at a cost of \$19,000. Other stories concerned accidents, petty crimes, a woman's club president, a picnic fund-raiser for St. Margaret Mary Church, and an extortion plot. In 1930, Erik Borg, a wealthy building contractor at 7000 N. Pingree was the target of two threatening notes, which he ignored, but the third note threatened his 17-year old daughter, Beatrice, and he called the police, who staked out a tree in front of the Armstrong School. Two detectives arrested the youths who came to pick up the \$500 down payment left in a



Newsletter editor Hank Morris presents a copy of *Chicago's North Side* to Dave Marshall who answered the mystery question in the March 2009 issue.

crook of a tree branch. Mr. Borg later pleaded with the grand jury not to indict the boys, who were schoolmates of his daughter.

I'd guess that the name was changed by the end of the 1930s, although residents might have called it Pingree even after that.

Mystery Photos are Really Mysteries!

by Hank Morris

The Mystery Photos from the March and July 2009 issues remain mysteries. To date, nobody has been able to identify either of these buildings.

These are not trick photos. We bring them to our readers because they have stumped us. The Mystery Photos are taken from our Photo Archives and Cataloging Project and are not adequately identified.

We present them to our readers in hopes that someone will recognize the contents of the photos and, thereby, allow us to add this information to our photo database.

For each issue, the first individual that identifies a photo gets his/her choice of either of our two Society-published books. These sell to non-members for \$35 each. So, having the right answer or knowing the contents of a photo is rewarded. It's not just an intellectual exercise. Keeping our photo database correct and up to date is vital. We have over 4,000 photos already scanned in and several thousands more waiting.

Third Society Book Subcommittee Being Formed

by Hank Morris

Thanks to the generosity of photographer and Society founder Marty Schmidt, we are heirs to his entire photographic collection. Marty was seldom seen without his trusty camera hanging from his neck. He walked all over the area snapping photos. Gathering seven huge storage boxes of photographs, which are now in our offices. Those who knew Marty know that he had a good eye for photo composition. His photos have been used by the Society for many years in books and newsletters. You can see examples of his work in the July 2009 issue of *The Historian*. They're in color on the Society's website: www.rpwrhs.org.

Over 800 of Marty's photos are already in our Photo Archive and Cataloging Project database. Thanks

to Marty's gift, we've got several thousand more to add.

Because Marty was a master photographer, he's created quite a loving and historic collection from which we can extract some of his very best photos and produce our third Society-published book. There are undoubtedly sufficient quantities of high-quality photos to make our book, tentatively entitled: *Rogers Park Through the Eyes of Marty Schmidt*. There may even be enough for a 4th or 5th book. But, we won't know anything until we dig through these photos.

So, the Publications Committee is forming the Book 3 Subcommittee to sort through these photos and separate the wheat from the chaff, and then to go on and produce the

book(s). Anyone interested in participating in these efforts should leave a message for Hank Morris at the Society office, 773-764-4078 or by e-mail at rpwrhs@aol.com. This could prove to be a most rewarding and interesting experience.

Do We Have Your E-mail Address?

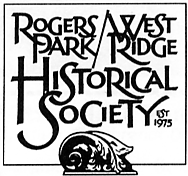
We've been e-mailing issues of our new

Electronic Newsletter

If you didn't get yours it's because we don't have your e-mail address.

It's a simple enough problem to fix; just send us an e-mail asking to be added to the list.

Send it to: rpwrhs@aol.com



New and Renewing Members

Please check the appropriate category box for your renewal or new membership.

Member Category	Annual Dues	Member Category	Annual Dues
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$750	<input type="checkbox"/> Family-Sr.	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Donor	\$200	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior/Student	\$15
<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Business	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Sponsor	\$250

Name _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

New Membership Renewal I would like to volunteer at the Society.

Mail your check to *RP/WR Historical Society, 7344 N. Western Ave., Chicago, IL 60645*

For Credit Cards please call us at 773-764-4078 or 773-764-4079.



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

The Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society is conducting an on-going oral history project. We're 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 about our neighborhoods before all the complexities of "modern life" settled in.

Memories are precious. Whether they're yours, a friends or a relatives. Help preserve our community's past through oral history today.

You can reach Nancy Jane Lauren to arrange an interview at: 773-338-5365 or nancyjanelauren@sbcglobal.net

Society Store Now On-line

On our new website, <http://www.rpwrhs.org>, members will be able to directly order any of our books, posters, or photographs from the "Society Store." We are now able to accept credit cards on-line. You will also be able to renew your membership and purchase a gift membership. Of course, we still accept checks, money orders, and cash.

Don't Forget to Register on the New Website

The new website has many member-only features already in place and new ones planned for introduction in the near future. Be sure to register so you can take advantage of these new features as they become available.

Join at <http://www.rpwrhs.org>

Consider Society Books as Gifts for the Holidays

The Society presently offers five books on the history of our neighborhood that would make wonderful gifts for family or friends who want to learn more about the neighborhood in which they live. You can place your order on our new website or by calling the Society office for more details. We take cash, credit cards, and personal checks.

Do You Know?

What do you know about this house?
Send the solution to rpwrhs@aol.com.
The first to correctly identify the building gets a copy of one of our books. We have had no right answers on any month's photo to date.



Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society
7344 N. Western Ave.
Chicago, IL 60645

773-764-4078
<http://www.rpwrhs.org>
rpwrhs@aol.com
Open Wed. & Fri. 2 pm - 5 pm
Other times by appointment

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Chicago, IL 60645
Permit No. 5830



To reduce our carbon footprint, we can send you this newsletter electronically instead of in print.



To participate, send an e-mail to rpwrhs@aol.com with the subject line "Green."

**Save the Date for the Annual Meeting
Wednesday, February 10, 2010**