



MANOR NEWS

SUMMER

2016

Event Calendar

Summer Concert Series

(opening night): “Expo ’76,” Fri., June 10th, 7 p.m., Manor Park.

Community Meeting: Manor Greenway Project, Wed., June 15th, 6 – 8 p.m., Horner Park Field House, 2741 W. Montrose Ave.

Independence Bike Parade: Sat., June 25th, 10:45 a.m., meet in Buffalo Park, California and Sunnyside.

Manor Garden Walk: Sun., July 24th, 1 – 4 p.m.

Weekly and Monthly Events:

Walk the Manor: Wednesdays, 6:30 – 9 p.m.

Farmer’s Market: Saturdays, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m., Horner Park, California and Montrose.

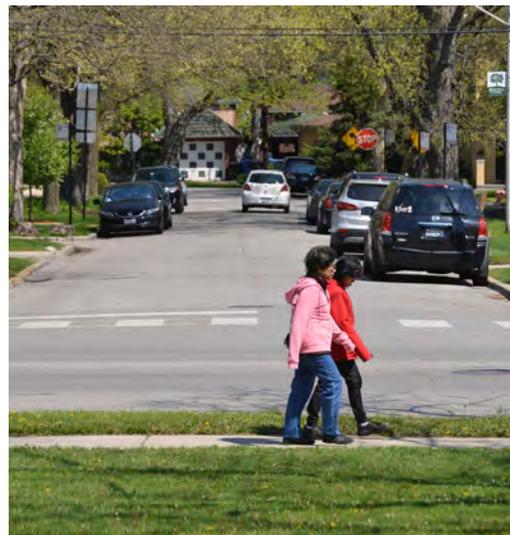
RMIA Board: 2nd Monday of the month (except July and August), 7 p.m., Horner Park Field House

Horner Park Advisory Council: 1st Monday of the month (except August), 7:30 p.m., Horner Park Field House

CAPS-Beat 1724 (south of Wilson) Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Horner Park Field House

CAPS-Beat 1713 (north of Wilson) Meetings: 4th Wednesday of the month, 6:30 p.m., Magnuson Campus Center, North Park University, 5000 N. Spalding Ave.

Greenway Coming Our Way?



The proposed “Manor Greenway” stretches from Lawrence to Montrose avenues. Above: Looking north on Manor Avenue, from Horner Park.

Manor residents are invited to a presentation and discussion of the draft “Manor Greenway” project, which will be held at 6 p.m., on Wed., June 15th, in the Horner Park Field House, 2741 W. Montrose Ave.

Goals of the project include improving access to neighborhood parks and providing a comfortable walking and bicycling connection between Horner Park and the North Shore Channel Trail by incorporating traffic-calming features. The presentation will be made by representatives of the Chicago Department of Transportation.

CDOT will discuss existing conditions and present draft concepts developed in conjunction with Alderman Mell’s Office, the 33rd Ward’s Transportation Action Committee (TAC), the Horner Park Advisory Council (HPAC), and Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association board members.

The TAC met with CDOT in summer 2014 to tour existing neighborhood greenway projects and discuss how “traffic calming” can make Manor Avenue more comfortable for all users. Since that meeting, CDOT has been working with neighborhood residents to develop design alternatives. CDOT would now like to receive feedback from Ravenswood Manor residents.

The draft concepts for Manor Avenue, which were presented in March to the RMIA Board, included:

- Improving neighborhood access to Ronan Park and Horner Park by providing more comfortable pedestrian/bicycle crossings of Montrose and Lawrence avenues.
- Traffic-calming features, such as raised crossings of Manor Avenue at Lawrence and Montrose, which also would serve as traffic-calming speed bumps at the north and south entrances into the neighborhood, as well as an increased number of 20 MPH speed limit signs along Manor.
- Curb extensions at California and Ravenswood Manor Park, which would provide safer pedestrian crossings.

Development Updates

The RMIA's Zoning Committee, which is chaired by board member Suzy Thomas, has been involved in a number of projects this spring, including:

4432 N. Mozart St.

This total renovation of a historic house (built 1909) was the subject of a stop-work order and lengthy review by the city's Department of Buildings in February and March, after a follow-up inspection—requested by Ald. Deb Mell on behalf of the neighbors—found the project had been granted several inappropriate zoning approvals, including large dormers and a front addition.

After a series of meetings with RMIA's Zoning Committee and the City, the developer agreed to several alterations, including adding windows on the front façade and removing a balcony on the front porch. But, in early May, the city's Zoning Administrator denied the developer's request for an "administrative adjustment," citing the project's incompatibility with neighborhood character. As of press time, the issue had not yet been resolved.

For a complete social-media history of this controversial project—what one resident called a "college-town rooming house"—see the nearly 100 postings on the "Ravenswood Manor" Facebook page, which start on January 22nd.

2901-41 W. Lawrence Ave.

This 1.23-acre property, currently occupied by Summit Industries, is under contract, reportedly to a tech company that is going to retrofit the existing buildings. The site, which fronts on the Chicago River and is bisected by an alley, includes a brick-and-terra cotta building at 2901 (built in 1922 for a hydraulic coil company); a brick structure at 2919 (built in 1945 as a garage); a parking lot at 2923-37 (originally a used car lot); and an apartment building at 4763-65 N. Manor.



4432 N. Mozart St. (left), as it appeared in April. Right: the Summit Industries site at 2901-41 W. Lawrence Ave.

In January, amid rumors of Summit's closing, the RMIA sent a letter to Ald. Mell, urging that a community planning process be created in advance of any formal redevelopment proposal. The site is currently zoned C1-2, which permits a wide range of uses, including ground-level retail and upper-story residential.

2907 W. Wilson Ave.

The Wilcox-Garland House, which was built in 1909 as a "model home" for the Ravenswood Manor subdivision by Wm. E. Harmon & Co, was demolished in April by the longtime owners, who plan to replace it with a new residence, scheduled to be completed in mid-2017.

The architect of the new house is John Ronan, known for such designs as the Poetry Foundation (61 W. Superior St.), Gary Comer College Prep (7131 S. South Chicago Ave.), and the Akiba-Schechter Jewish Day School (5235 S. Cornell Ave.).

For another look at the topic of development in Ravenswood Manor, see "What Happens When a Historic District Loses Its History?," which appeared on *DNAInfo.com* on April 18th.



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I Am Curious (Manor)

By Jim Peters

Q: The oldest houses in the neighborhood date to 1909-10. Are any garages that old?

A: Although alleys were a key feature of the Ravenswood Manor development from the beginning, it doesn't appear that many garages were built until a decade later. The reason was simple: Very few Chicagoans owned an automobile.

In 1910, for example, there were just 13,000 cars in the entire city, compared to 58,000 horse-drawn vehicles. As a result, the Manor's developers emphasized the neighborhood's proximity to the newly-built Ravenswood Branch of the Northwestern Elevated Railroad (today's CTA Brown Line) in their promotional materials, even offering "free carfare for one year" on the "L" to those who had built and occupied a house by 1910.

By 1914, there were 78 houses in the Manor, but only two had rear structures facing the alley. Amazingly, one of those original garages has survived: at the rear of 2720 W. Sunnyside Ave. Although it's been altered and added onto, the original frame portion of the garage still fronts on the alley.

By the end of the decade, dozens of other one-car garages—some frame, some brick—had been built in the neighborhood. In 1925, the number of cars in Chicago had grown to 300,000, compared to only 18,000 horse-drawn vehicles. Following World War II, many early garages were replaced by larger two-car garages, making one-car garages a growing rarity along Manor alleys.

Next issue's question: The Spring 2016 issue of *Manor News* noted the neighborhood's newly-installed "historic district signs." Has Ravenswood Manor always had identification signs?



This frame structure behind 2720 W. Sunnyside Ave. is believed to be the oldest garage in Ravenswood Manor.

Are you curious?

If you have a Manor-related question you'd like to see answered, please address it to the *Manor News* editor at peters.e.james@gmail.com.

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Notable Neighbors

Michael J. Ahern: Capone's Attorney

By Debra Desmond



Gangster Al Capone (left) and his attorney, Michael J. Ahern, confer at Capone's trial in 1931. Photo: *ChicagoTribune.com*

Did Ravenswood Manor really have a bona fide connection to Al Capone and his crime-laden years in Chicago? Well, yes, although it was at the end of Capone's notorious career. Defending Capone in his 1931 tax evasion trial was criminal attorney Michael J. Ahern (1887-1943), who lived at 4536 N. Mozart St. during the 1930s and early-1940s.

Ahern was the Johnnie Cochran of his day. At the trial, in his second defense summation, Ahern depicted an oppressive government using questionable means to convict Capone to satisfy the public, the newspapers, and prosecutors.

"You gentlemen are the last barrier between the defendant and the encroachment and perversion of the government and the law in this case. The evidence shows only one thing against Capone – that he is a spendthrift. The government is spending thousands of dollars for that purpose, and in these depressed times this money could be better spent on soup kitchens."

A great argument, perhaps, although it didn't win the case for Capone, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

Ahern had grown up in Chicago, where his father was the chief of traffic for the Police Department. He graduated Loyola University, before teaching at St. Ignatius High School. After law school, Ahern became a founding partner at Nash & Ahern, with Thomas D. Nash, a former alderman and longtime 19th Ward Democratic Committeeman.

At age 34, Ahern became part of a defense team that represented three of the eight Chicago White Sox baseball players who had been accused of intentionally losing games in the 1919 World Series, in exchange for money from gamblers. The favored Sox ended up losing the series to the Cincinnati Reds.

Ahern began his penchant for grandstanding at the so-called "Black Sox Scandal" trial of 1921 after one of his player's confession to the grand jury was read in court by the prosecutor. Ahern objected, "You won't get to first base with those confessions!" The prosecutor replied, "We'll hit a home run with them!" Ahern responded,



Top: 4536 N. Mozart St., where the Ahern family lived for half a century. Above: White Sox players Swede Risberg, Buck Weaver, and Happy Felsch pose, in July 1921, with attorneys Michael Ahern (second from left) and Thomas Nash (second from right). Photo: *BlackBats.com*

"You may get a long hit, but you'll be thrown out at the plate."

Unlike Capone, however, the White Sox players were found not guilty. Nonetheless, Commissioner of Baseball Kenesaw Mountain Landis banned all eight from ever playing professional baseball again.

Ahern died in 1943 in his home of a heart attack, at age 56. His funeral Mass was held at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church and the *Chicago Tribune* called him a "prominent figure in law." Ahern's obituary noted that "early in his career he made a name for himself in famous murder trials, but since then he had engaged largely in civil practice." There was no mention of either the Capone or Black Sox trials.

Ahern's wife Catherine continued to live in the Mozart house until the early 1980s. She died in 1987. The couple's three children were Robert M. (1920-85), Peggie (later Mrs. Robert Schultz, born 1921), and Eileen (born 1925).

Spring in the Manor

Photo: courtesy of Brian Basler



Earth Day volunteers gather in Manor Park on April 23rd.



The annual Manor Garage Sale on May 15th featured more than 100 sellers.



Empty Easter Eggs, following March 26th hunt in Manor Park.



Nine ducklings were rescued from a storm drain in the intersection of Mozart and Wilson on May 2nd. For a video and more details, see that day's posting on the "Ravenswood Manor" Facebook page. Photos: Meagan Grant and Cheryl McNally

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About RMIA

Manor News is published quarterly by the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association.

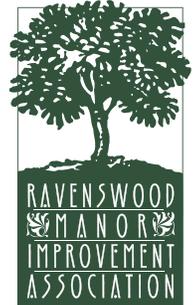
Established in 1914, the RMIA is a neighborhood association run entirely by volunteers. We hold monthly board of directors meetings, stage various social events and special projects, and maintain communication channels through our web site, e-mail alerts, and newsletter. Your annual RMIA membership helps to support all of this work.

The RMIA Mission Statement is: "To promote the welfare of the community in respect to the maintenance and improvement of the physical appearance of the private and public property; the compliance with the laws as applicable to private and public property; the maintenance of facilities with respect to the safety, health, and welfare of its residents."

The RMIA officers are:

Athene Carras – President
Jim Peters – Vice President
Kathy Monk – Secretary
Rick Glick - Treasurer

Web site: ravenswoodmanor.com
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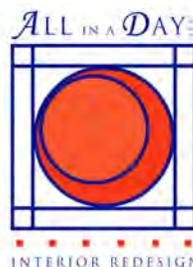


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Hot Time, Summer in the City

Thanks to our neighborhood volunteers, a wide range of events is planned for this summer in Ravenswood Manor. Please mark your calendars for the following:

Farmers Market Opens: Sat. June 4th

The third season of this weekly market is scheduled to open at 9 a.m., Sat., June 4th, at the northwest corner of Horner Park. The four-hour-long, weekly market provides access to farm-fresh produce and other goodies from local vendors, along with performances by area musicians. The Farmers Market is sponsored by the Horner Park Advisory Council (HPAC).

Opening Night Concert: Fri., June 10th

The 22nd season of HPAC's "Summer Concert Series" will kick off on Friday, June 10th, when the group Expo '76 fills Manor Park with the sounds of rhythm-and-blues music, starting at 7 p.m. This opening night event is sponsored by the RMIA.

Other events in June will be: a "Theatre Hikes" play, *Jungle Book*, at 1 p.m., Sat., June 18th, in Horner Park, and the Old Town School of Folk Music's Irish and American Ensembles at 7 p.m., Fri., June 24th, in Manor Park.

Five HPAC series events will take place in July: the Spektral Quartet, 7 p.m., Fri., July 8th, Manor Park; the Narloch School's Piano Recital, 3 p.m., Sun., July 10th, Manor Park; the Chicago Mambo All-Stars (and a movie), 7 p.m., Sat., July 16th, Horner Park; the Hot Rocks, 7 p.m., Fri., July 22nd, Manor Park; and the "Theatre Hikes" play, *The Illiad*, 1 p.m., Saturday, July 23rd, in Horner Park.

The series wraps up in August with four events: the musical group Generation at 7 p.m., Fri., Aug. 5th, Manor Park; Rokko Jans' Neighborhood Talent Show, 7 p.m., Fri., Aug. 19th, Manor Park; the "Theatre Hikes" play, *Driving Miss Daisy*, 1 p.m., Sat., Aug. 20th, Horner



Park; and the Will Barnard Quartet, 7 p.m., Sat., Aug. 20th, Sunken Gardens Park (4500 N. Virginia Ave.).

Independence Bike Parade: Sat., June 25th

This annual event will begin between 10:30 and 10:45 a.m., on Saturday, June 25th, when Manor kids and their parents begin assembling in Buffalo Park, at California and Sun-

nyside, with their decorated bicycles, tricycles, and other vehicles. The parade, which begins promptly at 11 a.m., will be accompanied by a Chicago Fire Department truck (with sirens sounding) for its three-block journey north, on Manor Avenue, to Manor Park.

Thanks to this year's parade volunteers, Lisa Jamiolkowski and Cheryl McNally, who are still looking for volunteers to help stop traffic at Wilson for 10-15 minutes. Please contact Cheryl at cherylmcnally@gmail.com if you can help.

Garden Walk: Sun., July 24th

This popular neighborhood event returns this year, thanks to chief volunteer Jeff Sell. The walk is scheduled to take place on Sunday, July 24th, between 1 and 4 p.m. More details will be posted on the Facebook sites of "Ravenswood Manor" and "Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association."

Consider sharing your own work with your neighbors by including your garden—front and/or back—in the walk. Please contact Jeff, at jeffreysell@gmail.com, if you would like to participate.

Once again, thanks to all of the neighborhood volunteers who make these annual events possible for all of us.



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SUZYTHOMAS

Manor Details



A surviving "coal chute," which had been used to supply a basement coal-burning furnace, which were common through the 1950s.

If you have a detail you'd like to submit for this new feature, please send it to manordetails@gmail.com.

Neighbors in the News

Cory Creighton (Leland Avenue) opened Bru Coffeeworks in April, at 3005 W. Lawrence Ave. Check their Facebook page for hours of operation.....**Helen Donovan** (Giddings Avenue) is the author of "What Goes Around" (Indigo Sea Press), which is her first novel.....

Dave and Megan Miller, the owners of Hot Bar (4642 N. Francisco Ave.), were among the Chicago semifinalists in the 2016 James Beard Awards, under the category of "Outstanding Baker".....**Carey Peters** (Giddings Avenue) was the subject of a profile in the March issue of *Forbes Woman* for her health coaching business.

If you have neighbor news, please send it to the Manor News editor at peters.e.james@gmail.com or to P.O. Box 25486, Chicago, IL 60625

TUTA: The Utopian Theatre Asylum

By Kathy Monk



Cloaked in the former offices of *Chicago Shimpō* (a Japanese newspaper), at 4670 N. Manor Ave., TUTA was originally established in 1995 in Washington D.C. by Zeljko and Natasha Djukic. In 2002, the Djukics decided to relocate the company to Chicago, in order to introduce TUTA to what they call "one of the most important theatre communities in the world."

Last fall, TUTA moved to its current space on Manor Avenue, where the Djukics found the proximity to the Francisco 'L' stop an attractive feature for theatre-goers, as well as for the students who attend their acting and theatre classes.

Their latest production, *The Edge of Our Bodies*, drew such acclaim that it was extended an extra month, through late May. After entering the tiny theatre space from the alley behind the building, the audience found itself in another world. TUTA has found its niche in bringing Eastern European and other international influences into American theater and, now, to Ravenswood Manor.

TUTA: *The Utopian Theatre Asylum* is located at 4670 N. Manor Ave. For general information, go to www.tutato.com or call 312-945-6398.



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