

The Manor News

Ravenswood Manor Community Newsletter

Winter 2007

Snow Removal

Despite some unusually warm weather in December, no one expects to see spring tulips in the Manor without first enduring some snow storms. Snow and ice are inevitable in Chicago in the winter.

Recently, the RMIA committed to keeping the sidewalks on the Wilson Avenue Bridge shoveled. Despite some assurances from local officials that the bridge would be shoveled for pedestrians, the sidewalks remained icy during the first snowfall this winter. With the closure of the Francisco train station, there has been a significant increase in the number of Manor neighbors using the bridge each

day to walk to and from the Rockwell station.

The RMIA stepped in to ensure that the bridge sidewalk will be shoveled while the station is closed. The RMIA contracted with a private vendor to provide snow removal on the bridge. However, snow removal on the bridge will not come without a cost.

The RMIA will pay for snow removal on a per snowfall basis, so the more it snows this year the more it will cost. The group is working with local officials to help defray some of the costs, but it is also seeking donations from neighbors who use the bridge to help offset some of snow removal costs.

In addition to the bridge, snow and ice on sidewalks make it difficult to get around in the winter. Help keep Ravenswood Manor safe by remembering to shovel the sidewalk along all of your property. With everyone shoveling the walk in front of their house, the Manor will be much safer when snow falls.

Chicago's Sidewalk Snow Removal Ordinance (0-8-180) requires that everyone "shall remove the snow and ice from the

sidewalk..." and to use salt or sand if the ice is stubborn.

It's a common misconception that attempting to remove snow and ice renders property owners liable. The State stepped in to clarify with the Illinois Snow and Ice Removal Act (P.A. 86-1324.) (745 ILCS 75/1) which explains that anyone making a good faith effort to remove snow and ice "...shall not be liable for any personal injuries allegedly caused by the snowy or icy condition of the sidewalk..."

With the station closed this winter, people are walking all about the Manor to catch trains and buses. Sidewalks that do not normally get much traffic are seeing more pedestrians this year. The RMIA took the lead in having the bridge shoveled, so now everyone can contribute by shoveling their walk.

The Snowflakes are back

Thanks to Alderman Mell and the 33rd Ward for helping to get the RMIA holiday snowflake decorations installed on our lampposts this season. The snowflakes and the lighted wreath in the park looked great!



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Historic Ravenswood Manor

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (“IHPA”) has determined that Ravenswood Manor is a good candidate for designation as an Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. Based on a submission prepared by RMIA volunteers, IHPA believes that the Manor is historically significant for its preservation of the original development plan for the neighborhood and for the variety of architectural styles represented in the Manor.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the Register include districts,

sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Listing in the National Register honors a historic place by recognizing its importance to its community, State or the Nation. However, owners of private property in an Historic District listed in the National Register are free to maintain, manage, or dispose of their property as they choose. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.

The support of IHPA is only the start of the application process

for listing on the National Register. The next step is to be officially nominated. Nominations are submitted to a review board, composed of professionals in the fields of American history, architectural history, architecture, and other related disciplines. The review board makes a recommendation as to whether the proposed historic district meets the National Register criteria.

RMIA volunteers will be working with the IHPA to prepare the application for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Anyone interested in participating should contact rmiaboard@ravenswoodmanor.com.

Manor Garden Club News

At the Manor Garden Club meeting on Monday, January 15, 2007 at 8:00pm at Horner Park, Sam Darin will give a demonstration and instructions for sharpening all types of garden tools as well as information about the proper tools to use when sharpening. Sam is a Chicago Botanic Garden instructor and a Master Gardener who has been featured in the local media.

On Monday, February 19, 2007 the club will present a lecture on cultivating orchids by Raymond

Wiggers, Lake Forest College professor and author.

The Manor Garden Club meets the third Monday of the month in September, October, January, February, March, April and May at Horner Park at 2741 W. Montrose, second floor. A business meeting at 7:30pm is followed by a program. The Club serves refreshments and conducts a raffle at each meeting, hosts a holiday party in November and arranges an outing in June. The main fundraiser is a plant sale in May.



The Manor News is published by Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association (RMIA) as a service to our members. It contains news, information and other items of interest to those living and working in Ravenswood Manor. Please make submissions or comments to Editor at PO Box 25486, Chicago, IL 60625 or call RMIA Hotline at 312.409.3213. www.ravenswoodmanor.com

Officers

Adam Betzen *President*
 Chuck Renner *Vice President*
 Pamela Matsch Levine *Secretary*
 Tracy Ring *Treasurer*

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Waters Today

The past several months have been busy for Waters Elementary School and Waters Today. Here are some highlights:

Infrastructure Improvements:

On November 4th, Comcast employees, Waters' parents, community members and the new Waters' engineer all worked together to complete more painting within the school. The hallways are now sunny yellow and look smashing!

The local neighborhood organizations have been wonderful contributors to Waters this fall. RMIA and GRO both donated money to upgrade the carpet in the main office and in the library. Waters Today extends its thanks for the generous contributions and to the volunteers.

A mural was completed in the first floor preschool bathroom this fall. The mural, which took between 35 to 40 hours to complete, was a generous donation by Liesl Lavery. Ace supplied the free paint.

The prairie-style garden has long been a part of Waters Elementary emphasis on ecology. And, not surprisingly, where Liesl found her inspiration: "Since I knew the painting was geared toward young kids, and the pre-K program has a bilingual component, I wanted to incorporate some animals kids might find in a garden... a bird, frog, rabbit and butterfly, along with the Spanish names for them," Liesl explains.

Fundraising to help continue school programs:

The Crate and Barrel fundraiser held on November 16 was attended by roughly 100 people. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and were busy making purchases that benefited the school. Ticket sales for the event raised \$5,000 while Waters' proceeds from the sales that evening added \$3,300.

Waters Elementary is one of five schools nationwide to receive dedicated support in a new program sponsored by U Promise. Save money for your family for college by signing up for free at: www.upromise.com/schools and selecting Waters Elementary as your school (use zip code 60625 for the school lookup). You will automatically raise money by shopping at Jewel, Dominick's, CVS, Exxon, Mobil and shopping online through the Upromise website at 450 retailers such as Target, Sears, Dell, the Gap, etc.

If you have a Target Red Card, please go to www.target.com/tcoe or call 1-800-316-6142 and add

Waters Elementary (school id 45994), Waters receives 1% of all Target purchases.

Waters is collecting WWaters is collecting BoxTops4Schools which are on General Mills, Betty Crocker, Pillsbury, Kleenex, Ziploc and many other products and Kemps gallon jug milk caps. Please drop any such items you have off at Waters to help them raise additional funds.



Liesl Lavery completes the job.

The Heart of the School:

A Kindergarten Roundup/Open House was held on December 9 at Waters Elementary. This event gave interested parents an opportunity to learn more about what the school offers from an academic and special program perspective. The event was well attended with many questions during the principal talk. The children also had a great time enjoying a free art class from Abrakadoodle. Several families did apply for admission to Waters through the CPS lottery process. Neighborhood families are encouraged to apply early for next year so officials can plan accordingly for the 2007-2008 school year.

Congratulations are in order!

Waters School has been in a partnership with Riverbank Neighbors and Friends of the Chicago Rivers since 1993. Recently, Riverbank Neighbors and Waters received two important awards:

1st Place Mayor Daley's Native Landscaping Award

1st Place EPA/Chicago Wilderness Native Landscaping Award.

An Abrakadoodle art class for kids ages 2 to 5 will be offered on Mondays starting January 22. Call Chris Soto at 773-314-7622 for more information. Tot Tuesdays and Tot Storytime will start again in the next few weeks so please check Waterstoday.org for dates and time.

A company called Global Explorers that teaches kids about multi-cultural diversity by looking at different cultures through dance, art, drama, folklore and song, has been awarded a \$5000 grant from Loews! Global Explorers will be using that money to offer afterschool classes to students at Waters School.



Business District Update

As part of the El station reconstruction, the El contractor will be making any necessary repairs to the curbs and parkways on the west side of Manor currently being used for construction staging. The curbs and some sidewalks along the west side of Francisco between the El station and Eastwood need replacement and the 33rd Ward is attempting to schedule that work for 2007. Because both areas could potentially be repaired at the same time, the Ward has asked the RMIA and Horner Park Advisory Council to draft a combined recommendation for that immediate area. Instead of replacing concrete in all of its current locations, the Business District Committee of the RMIA and the HPAC are recommending the following changes:

Relocation of the Existing Bike Racks

Relocating the bike racks from the west side of Francisco to the west side of Manor (to the area currently being used for construction staging) would make better use of a parkway that has been difficult to landscape and thereby freeing up more desirable landscape area on the west side of Francisco. An additional parkway tree on the west side of Francisco

may be possible as a result. Relocating the existing bike racks might allow for more rack space as well.

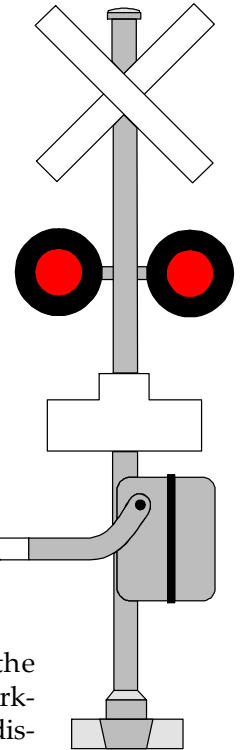
Additional Crosswalk

Currently the sidewalk on east side of Francisco abruptly stops at the north tip of Manor Park. An additional textured crosswalk at this location could connect this pedestrian pathway to the east side of Manor.

“Bump Out” Curb at Existing Crosswalk

Creating a “bump out” on the northwest tip of the Manor Park parkway would shorten the crosswalk distance at this critical pedestrian point and prevent parked vehicles from blocking the crosswalk.

There is no additional parking, nor changes to existing parking, being discussed as part of this sidewalk repair initiative. Residents have previously expressed strong concern about any such changes. There is no additional lighting being discussed as part of this sidewalk initiative. This initiative is in no way connected with HPAC’s initiative to create a “Council Circle” at Buffalo Park. If you have questions or comments about this sidewalk initiative around the El station, you can contact RMIA’s Committee at businessdistrict@ravenswoodmanor.com or attend the next Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 20 at 7:35pm at the Go Get Your Smock Studio on Francisco.





RMIA Elects New Board, Officers

Congratulations are in order, even if there was no official swearing in and no inaugural ball. The RMIA recently elected three new officers and two additional new board members. Adam Betzen was elected President; Pamela Matsch Levine was elected Secretary and Tracy Ring was elected Treasurer.

Adam is replacing Brian Basler as President of the RMIA. When he's not in the Manor, Adam works as an attorney handling commercial and employment litigation. However, many Manor neighbors may be more familiar with Adam as the garden coordinator behind the RMIA's Community Garden at LaPointe Park. Adam not only organized the garden, he also dug up the entire garden himself.

"Ravenswood Manor is such an incredible neighborhood with so many positives, I find my job as RMIA President relatively easy," Adam said. "Brian captained the organization well so the most pressure I feel is to not disappoint the community."

As a new President, Adam has committed to initiatives for the RMIA that help build community within the neighborhood and help people interact with their neighbors. "If a neighborhood is not a community, then it is just a collection of houses," Adam said.

One of the first initiatives that Adam has spearheaded is the website redesign project. "The new website will be a resource for the community to post news and share information with others in the community," Adam said.

Pam Levine was elected to the Secretary position. Pam has already taken charge of recording and organizing the membership list for the latest membership drive. The RMIA Board is grateful to have Pam after enduring months without a permanent secretary.

The RMIA Board appointed Tracy Ring to the Treasurer position at the January board meeting. Josh Silverman, the outgoing Treasurer, graciously agreed to stay on in that role after the candidate for Treasurer withdrew from consideration just before Annual Meeting at the end of October. Tracy recently volunteered to take over the position, and Josh is glad to finally have a replacement.

Chuck Renner will remain in his role as Vice President and will also continue his work as the chairman of the RMIA Business District Committee.

Betsey Jeffries and Eileen Rochford were elected at the Annual Meeting as new board members.

Eileen has agreed to chair the Social Committee and is already busy planning the Winter Social.

The new and current board members owe a debt of gratitude to Brian Basler and Josh Silverman for all their work as officers and for leaving the RMIA in such great shape. Both Brian and Josh will continue on in their roles as board members after stepping down as officers.

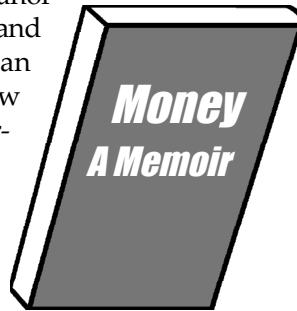


The Manor Book Club

The Manor Book Club is off and running in the new year. The group held its first meeting January 9 at Horner Park. A group of enthusiastic book lovers came out to discuss "The Memory Keeper's Daughter" by Kim Edwards.

The club is new this year and is designed as a way for Manor neighbors to meet each other and discuss books, whether it is an old favorite or something new on the best seller list. Club organizer Jen Betzen said she hopes the group will have a wide variety of book selections, from nonfiction, fiction and biography.

"We want this club to be accessible to everyone, so don't think you have to have a doctorate in English literature to come to our meetings," Jen said. "This is simply a fun group and an informal way to discuss books that you love or got you thinking." Members are kept updated of club news by e-mail, so if you would like to be added to



the list, please contact Jen Betzen at manorbookclub@ravenswoodmanor.com. The Book Club is working to select the books to be read at the March and April meetings. If you would like to be kept in the loop of new selections, check the next RMIA newsletter or have your name added to the e-mail contact list.

In February, the club will be discussing the non-fiction book by Liz Perle, "Money: A Memoir: Women, Emotions, and Cash." The book explores the relationship women have to money, both good and bad, and the influence money has on all relationships.

Thank you to all who have expressed interest in this new club," Jen said. "We have a terrific core of initial club members, but are also welcoming new members." Drop Jen a line by e-mail or at 588-8213 for more information. All meetings are at the Horner Park Fieldhouse from 7:45 to 8:45pm. The meeting schedule is as follows.

Tues., February 13: "Money: A Memoir" by Liz Perle

Tues., March 13: TBA

Tues., April 10: TBA



Board Forms Web Redesign Committee

The RMIA Board voted in November to form an ad hoc committee to oversee a redesign for the RMIA website and the new committee has already begun working on a new site. In the past, the RMIA has managed to have a consistent web presence at www.ravenswoodmanor.com. However, in calling for the new committee, President Adam Betzen expressed a commitment to moving the Manor to a concept of "Web 2.0."

"Ravenswoodmanor.com will become more than some information about the neighborhood, it will be a resource for the community," Adam said. "The new website will be continuously updated with new

content so that people will want to check back each week."

The Web Redesign Committee is planning a website where individuals from the Manor can contribute to the website through user forums currently under development. There will be blogs through the website for contributors to share news and information about the neighborhood on an incredibly local level.

The new website will have a merchandise section so that neighbors can buy official RMIA Ravenswood Manor t-shirts, sweatshirts and more. Plans are being made to regularly update with new and creative RMIA merchandise.

Scott Wheeler, president of Wheeler Multimedia Consulting and RMIA Board member, currently services as webmaster for the website. While the website has been in Scott's able care, he alone is able to update the content on the current site. The new website will have an improved content management system so that organizers and committees will be able to update their information. The new website will have up-to-date information constantly updated by many sources.

Anyone interest in more information about the web redesign project or who is interested in participating with the redesign committee should contact the RMIA at board@ravenswoodmanor.com.

RMIA Winter Social Potluck Sunday, March 4th

Come join your neighbors at the Horner Park Field House Banquet Hall for lunch and fun on Sunday, March 4th from noon to 3pm. RMIA will provide pasta, salad and beverages for lunch. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share with your neighbors.

We will host a raffle with great prizes and a cake walk for the kids, along with other fun adult and kid-friendly activities (board games, flooring, etc.). RMIA will also provide babysitting at the children's activities, so parents can sit down and eat lunch!

Please join us for a relaxing afternoon to catch up with neighbors, have some lunch and fun.

Mark Your Calendar!

Book Club Meeting, 7:45pm	February 13
Garden Club Meeting	February 19
RMIA Committee Meeting, 7:35pm	February 20
Winter Social Potluck, noon	March 4
Book Club Meeting, 7:45pm	March 13
Easter Egg Hunt	April 7
Book Club Meeting, 7:45pm	April 10

Useful Local Numbers

Police Emergency	911
City Services	311
Police Non Emergency	311
Chicago Police 17 th District Station	312-744-8346
Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)	312-744-3774
Alderman Richard Mell	773-478-8040
RMIA Voice Mail	312-409-3213
Recycling Resource Center	773-821-1351
Graffiti Removal	312-744-5000 or 311