

# MANOR NEWS

WINTER

2014

## Centennial, What a Year!

By Thomas Applegate and Kathy Monk

A big-huge-100-year-worthy thank you to everyone who helped us fund and organize a full year of celebration of the Ravenswood Manor Centennial—and thank you to everyone who joined us in the fun. You are awesome!

As we wrap up 2014, we offer a sampling of our accomplishments over the year.

- Neighbors showed their Manor pride by buying 295 t-shirts, and even former residents across the country, from California to Florida, grabbed a little nostalgia with their shirts. Dave gets the award for the farthest traveled Centennial t-shirt, wearing it proudly in Papua, New Guinea.
- We learned about our history and architecture from our Research and Tours Committee. Ten free walking tours were attended by 210 people, and four of the tours live on as downloadable, self-guided tours available on the RMIA website. The Committee also answered a raft of Curious Manor questions and pulled together Census records from 1910 through 1940 for you to explore online.
- The Centennial Bash, what can we say? You guys really know how to party. The Bash had 100+ bike paraders, 400+ hot dog eaters, endless jumpers in the bounce house, 100's and 100's of music lovers, a crowd of young aspiring artists, and we all had one heck of a good time. A big team makes for an easy Bash, so thank you to our eight planners and 38 day-of volunteers.
- We channeled the extra Centennial energy into improving communications with you. "More and better" was the motto in rebuilding the RMIA website, creating the RMIA facebook page in Summer 2013, and making better, more frequent use, of our email updates. In September, we launched an overhauled, redesigned, printed *Manor News*, and we hope you like the fresh new look. Thanks to Steve for his design.

As your Centennial Co-Chairs, we have been honored to guide this celebration of Ravenswood Manor and we appreciate the amazing support and energy from everyone who joined us in this adventure.



*"Manor Noir," one of the final Centennial Year neighborhood tours, was held on Saturday, Nov. 1st., the day after Halloween. The nighttime tour featured ghost stories about the Manor, including colorful characters, reportedly haunted houses, and apocryphal events. It was led by Jackie Klein (top, left) and Debra Desmond (right), and included a special appearance by "June Bacon," an infamous Manor resident who was portrayed by Mary Pendergast (middle). All three residents are members of the Manor Centennial Research Committee, which sponsored the one-time-only tour. (Photos: Alan Shortall)*

## Event Calendar

**Easter Egg Hunt:** Saturday, April 4th, 10:00 am, La Pointe Park

**Semi Annual Board Open House:** Wednesday, April 22nd, 7:30 pm

**Garage Sale:** Sunday, May 17th, 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Independence Bike Parade:** Saturday, June 27th, 10:00 am, meet at Buffalo Park

**Mini Bash:** Saturday, June 27th, 5:00 - 9:00 pm

**OktoberFest:** Saturday, September 19th

**Semi Annual Board Open House:** Wednesday, Oct. 21st, 7:30 pm

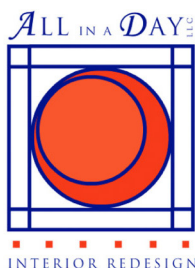
## Centennial Homes in 2015



2014 was the perfect time to start our Centennial Homes project and recognize the 120 structures in Ravenswood Manor that are 100 years old or older. A testament to the appreciation for the beautiful character of our neighborhood is that 14 of the 15 original “model homes” still exist, largely intact, from 1909.

We certified 120 structures as Centennial Homes in 2014 and, in January 2015, RMIA will certify the next batch built in 1915. Homeowners will receive a certificate from RMIA with instructions on how to order a bronze plaque for display on the front of their home. Plaques are optional and, as of October 1st, 34 homeowners had purchased plaques. We love walking through the Manor and seeing the plaques proudly displayed, and we get a good sense of how the styles of houses have changed over the years.

For more information about the project, go the Centennial Homes page on the RMIA website. We will post the 2015 list when it is available at: [ravenswoodmanor.com/themanor/centennialhomes](http://ravenswoodmanor.com/themanor/centennialhomes)



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## Do-It-Yourself Walking Tours

Would you like to know more about the history of our neighborhood? As part of this year's Centennial celebrations, the RMIA has sponsored a series of walking tours focusing on various aspects of the community's 100-year-old history.

However, if you weren't able to make it to one of these tours, you are in luck. Each of the tours will be posted on the RMIA web site, <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/walking-tours/>, along with a self-guided walking tour map.

The tours currently on the web site are:

- **Harmon's Model Homes**, which features the 11 original residences that were built in 1909-11 by developer William E. Harmon to help promote his Ravenswood Manor subdivision.
- **Gems of the Manor**, which lists the dozen neighborhood properties that were identified as “highly significant” in 1993 by the City of Chicago's Historic Resources Survey, due to their history and architecture.
- **Heart of the Manor**, which reveals the histories of the businesses that have occupied the retail spaces adjacent to the Francisco “L” stop and Ravenswood Manor Park.

Other self-guided tours will be added next year. Thanks to the residents who researched and led these tours, including: Athene Carras, Adrian Collins, Debra Desmond, Jackie Klein, Denise Morris, Mary Pendergast, and Jim Peters.

## Get Social in 2015

You like to have fun, and you like to have fun with your neighbors, right?! You are the perfect person to join in the fun of planning our neighborhood's annual events for 2015.

Athene Carras has been our social chair for the last few years and, now that she is RMIA's President, she could use your help in putting on the following annual events: Easter Egg Hunt, Garage Sale, Garden Walk, Independence Day Bike Parade, OktoberFest, and our Spring and Fall Open Houses. Athene will be around to help, show you what we've done before, and to encourage you to make it your own. Thomas Applegate continues working on communication for RMIA, so getting the word out and inviting everyone to your event will be easy. Don't be shy in 2015 and make a resolution to have more fun and make more fun for everyone by volunteering on the Events Team. Send Athene a note at: [events@ravenswoodmanor.com](mailto:events@ravenswoodmanor.com), and let her know what event(s) you're interested in. Thank you.



## I Am Curious (Manor)

By Jim Peters

**Q:** Which commercial movies have been filmed in the Manor?

**A:** Longtime Manor residents say they don't recall a movie being filmed in the Manor prior to the 1990s and 2000s, which is when a trio of large-budget movies were partially filmed in the neighborhood. The most notable of these were:

- **Richie Rich (1994).** This kid-oriented movie was based on the popular comic book character of the 1950s and '60s. The film was directed by Donald Petrie ("Grumpy Old Men" and "Miss Congeniality") and featured child actor Macauley Culkin in the title role, along with Edward Hermann and Christine Ebersole (as his parents), John Larroquette, and Jonathan Hyde. The Manor scenes included Richie and his butler waiting for the "L" at the Francisco stop and visiting one of Richie's "poor kid" friends, who lived in the office/apartment building at 4663-69 N. Manor Ave.



*Two characters from the movie, "Richie Rich," stand at the entrance to the apartment building at 4663-69 N. Manor Ave. "Richie" (left) was portrayed by Macauley Culkin, while his butler, "Herbert Arthur Runcible Cadbury," was played by Jonathan Hyde in this 1994 film.*

- **High Fidelity (2000).** Based on a British novel by Nick Hornby, this comedy-drama featured John Cusack as a record store manager beset by memories of his past girlfriends. The film was directed by Stephen Frears ("Philomena" and "The Queen") and also featured actors Jack Black, Tim Robbins, and Catherine Zeta-Jones. A Four Square-style residence in the 4500-block of Mozart was used for a "make out" scene and a basement party, while a Victorian farmhouse in the 4500-block of Richmond was the home of one of the girlfriends. Lane Tech students were cast as extras and Cusack spent some of his free time playing catch with neighborhood kids.
- **The Weatherman (2005).** Fake snow was used to "decorate" Manor Park for a winter scene in this comedy-drama. Actor Nicolas Cage played a Chicago TV weatherman in the Gore Verbinski movie ("Pirates of the Caribbean" and "Rango"), which also featured Michael Caine and Hope Davis. Another scene, filmed on Montrose Avenue, involved the former White Hen Pantry (now a 7-Eleven).

Several independent movies, advertisements, and television shows also have been filmed in the Manor. Our thanks to Harmeen Ahuja for submitting this question.

Next issue's question: Is it true that an expressway was proposed to run through Ravenswood Manor?



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## The Alley in Winter

By Katharine Byrne

Early this morning—with the turning of locks, release of chains, removal of an oaken bar—an urban door is opened. An elderly householder looks for her back stairs and sees below a smooth shape heavily blanketed. Her small dog slips and slides to the sidewalk below, clouds of snow covering her plummy tail. Cautiously the woman begins a perilous descent, one booted foot after the other, hanging on to banisters with both hands.

The dog is called simply Dog because when she found this puppy shivering and crying under a parked car, the woman was reluctant to carry it home. She didn't want another dog. "Never again," she had declared after the death of an Australian terrier named Toto. At the time she reasoned, "If I don't give this dog a name, it won't be hard to give her away." Twelve years later, Dog is occasionally called Old Friend.

Slowly the two of them trudge to the alley. The woman must wrestle the iron latch on an ice-crusting gate where cerise and blue morning glories bloomed last August, twisting and twining in the sun until an autumn wind ripped them apart and blew them away. Out in the alley a pale shaft of sunlight falls across the ice that covers layered patches of asphalt. Winds have driven last night's snow against garage doors. From the next block she can hear the plows and blowers of Jesus Sanchez and his sturdy crew of Mexican relatives. In summer they run their mowers up and down these streets and spade the edges of flower beds. In autumn they bag tons of maple and elm leaves.

The skitterings of squirrels and field mice and a pair of mourning doves are lightly etched on the crusted snow. These birds, she remembers, shared parenting tasks last summer, working from a nest in the depths of her Colorado spruce. A couple of string beans, frozen stiff, cling to a neighbor's fence, leftovers from last summer's bountiful crop. Delicate stems of Queen Anne's lace, blackened now, rise out of snow at the sides of the alley. These alley edges are composts of leaves, grass clippings, flowers whose seeds wash out of gardens or survive from earlier times when all this was prairie; and truck-flattened cans of many colors. Dog sniffs frantically for familiar landmarks buried beneath new snows.

Slogging in the opposite direction, people still gainfully employed pass by, bent against the wind on their trek to the train station. She thinks of them as "new people." They greet her minimally, if at all, through a muffling of scarves, glasses clouded with frost. She



*John Byrne takes a photo of his wife, Katharine Byrne, in 1949, the year they moved into Ravenswood Manor.*

doesn't really know any of them. Some have deposited their young children at the home of the local sitter, in whose living room cribs and playpens are lined up waiting for customers.

Most back yards are hidden by tall fences, constructed by new people or by old people anxious to protect their property, their persons, or their privacy. But here behind an old wire fence she can see the head and shoulders of a terra-cotta St. Francis. In more clement weather his outstretched palms offer seeds and water. Now most of his clients are sensibly wintering elsewhere.

In summer the alley is alive with traffic from other neighborhoods. A thoroughfare for men in rickety pickup trucks looking for the rehabber's discards, for Lebanese housewives in soft felt slippers, housedresses, head scarves—looking for broad grape leaves to wrap around lamp and rice spiced with mint and basil; for the Vietnamese elder who balances a long pole across his bicycle, on each end of it a plastic bag. He is looking for negotiable aluminum. And





(Top) Katharine at work in the 1960s. (Bottom) Katharine and her daughter in the 1990s. All photos courtesy of the Byrne Family.

locals as well: a few boys shooting baskets; old dog-walkers pausing in conversational groups to discuss the latest break-in, the young couple who have come to live in an old house, and medical bulletins—what the vet said about Ophelia’s arthritis or Bogart’s diet.

These dogs, she muses, are our children now. We are impelled by their needs to get up early, dressing in winter as though for polar expeditions; groping for a leash and the plastic sleeve from yesterday’s newspaper. They get us out of the house on missions necessary to them and good for us, even though we must move cautiously, fearing falls.

Near the end of the block, the woman sees Jason and his schnauzer, Beauregard. Jason’s summertime headgear has been replaced by earmuffs over a woolen Navy watch cap. Beauregard is wearing a plaid coat in the MacGregor tartan. His ears droop; he wants to go home. Jason waves his cane and shouts, “These winds remind me of the run to Murmansk in 1939.” She happens to know that

Jason was not in the Merchant Marines making perilous trips within the Arctic Circle in 1939. He is not a day over 1970. “We all like to brag a little,” she observes to Dog.

Last week, during a welcome respite, one of those false springs that punctuate the endless winter, the scene was awash with dirty melted snow. Wet plastic fast-food boxes, salsa- and mustard-smearred, and pizza ads still readable, stuck to the alley floor. Watching the birds, she thought of an old George Orwell essay about February in bombed-out London. Potholes, he noted, turned into shallow ponds where sooty sparrows, feeling the rustle of spring, “nerved themselves to take a bath, their first since last September.” On that morning she had looked hopefully at something rising out of a jagged asphalt crack, but it was only a thin green shard from a beer bottle.

At the end of the alley, woman and dog turn around. “Come on, Old Friend,” she calls to her companion. “This is it for us.” The wind is at their backs and the prospect pleases: hot coffee for her and a biscuit for Dog. Perhaps she will call an old neighbor shelved now in a high-rise with a view of the lake. Someone who can look at falling snow with pleasure and without concerns about who will shovel it. She will brag a little, claiming a somewhat longer excursion than the one she really undertook. She has read the backyard thermometer and will report what it says, not forgetting the radio announcement about the wind-chill factor.

At lunchtime, she looks at the side of the house only six feet from her kitchen window, remembered the way it looked before October winds tore at the red-bronze leaves that flourished there. Through swirls of slow-falling snow her eyes search stark ropes of Boston ivy that cling to this wall, and she chooses to believe that she can see a pregnant thickening at intervals of the naked vines.

*This essay was written in 1999 about Ravenswood Manor, although the names used were fictional. Katharine Byrne resided in the 2900-block of West Wilson Avenue from 1948 until her death in 2009. Her essays appeared in a wide variety of publications, including the Chicago Sun-Times, the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, and Commonweal. During the 1950s and ‘60s, Ms. Byrne also wrote an advice column in the Catholic weekly, The Young Catholic Messenger, under the pseudonym, “Janice Langley.” She and her husband, John, a Chicago Public Schools teacher, principal, and district superintendent, raised five children in the Manor.*

*Thanks to the generous permission of her family, we will be reprinting some of Ms. Byrne’s Manor-based essays in this newsletter on a periodic basis.*

## Centennial Celebration



(Above) Athene Carras and Kathleen Trainor shake hands at an October 1st party celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Ravenswood Manor-Gardens Community Club (RM-GCC). Carras is president of the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association, while Trainor is president of the Ravenswood Gardens Homeowners Association. The two groups are the descendents of the RM-GCC, which split into separate organizations in 1947. The party at Monti's, 4757 N. Talman, attracted approximately 75 neighborhood residents.

(Below) The former W. E. Harmon & Co. real estate sales office, 2851 W. Eastwood (c.1937), which had been the RM-GCC's original meeting site on Oct. 3, 1914. The building was demolished in 1956 and later replaced by the Manor Park pergola.



## 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."

Please contact the RMIA board if you have any questions or suggestions:

Athene Carras – President

Jim Peters – Vice President

Kathy Monk – Secretary

Rick Glick – Treasurer



Our contacts are:

Web site: [ravenswoodmanor.com](http://ravenswoodmanor.com)

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## Celebrate the Holidays with a Gift of Art



As part of our Centennial celebrations, Ravenswood Manor artist Thomas Melvin created this wonderful, hand-blocked print that is 36" wide by 20" tall. Three versions are available:

1. a single dark coffee color version, ready for framing, \$100
2. a hand colored version in which Tom adds colors to the print, \$160
3. a hand shaded version using the same coffee color as a wash to add dimension and interest to the print, \$160

This artwork is a limited edition of 80 prints, numbered and signed by the artist. Tom and RMIA are partnering to support the Centennial and to create an enduring keepsake for your home or office. Tom is generously donating his time in creating the piece, the artwork itself, and the proceeds from sales of the work.

Order your's here: <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/support/artwork/>

## Centennial Logo Prints Available



The official Centennial logo is available as a high quality 11" x 17" print, suitable for framing. This print can be framed, with or without a mat, and suggestions on framing will accompany each print.

### Cost and Delivery:

Cost is \$20. Prints will be available for pick up or delivery by volunteers to your home. Arrangements will be made by email.

Order your's here: <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/support/artwork/>

## Manor News Ads

Bringing in advertisers to support the newsletter is a big priority. We would appreciate any leads that you have for businesses that serve our residents, especially where you have a personal contact we can follow up with. Send contact information to Thomas Applegate at: [thomasapplegate@yahoo.com](mailto:thomasapplegate@yahoo.com).

### Rates: 1 Year / 4 issues

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Our newsletter team: Jim Peters - Editor, Steve Shanabruch - Layout, Joe Cesario - Distribution.



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## RMIA Membership Renewal Time

Ravenswood Manor is a strong community due to the collective and cumulative efforts of residents and their association over the past century plus. Thank you to you and all of our neighbors for their support. One of the many wonderful things about Ravenswood Manor is that we don't just work and party once a century, we make the best of every year, so RMIA looks forward to a busy and fun 2015 serving our community.

RMIA relies on your membership support each year in order to produce the following services for you:

- Fun for all at annual events: Easter Egg Hunt, Garage Sale, Garden Walk, 4th of July Bike Parade, and OktoberFest
- Representation of community interests and safety concerns with 33rd Ward Alderman Mell, City of Chicago departments, Police, Fire, Park District, neighboring associations, local schools, local businesses, and media
- Investment in Waters Elementary and support of the Waters Today organization
- Maintenance and programming in our parks and parkways, including principal responsibility for upkeep of LaPointe Park and our community garden there, and sponsorship of HPAC's summer concert series in Ravenswood Manor Park
- Partnering with homeowners and Manor Garden Club for tree planting
- Communication with residents through printed *Manor News*, email newsletter, special notice emails, mailings, flyers, Facebook, and our website at [www.ravenswoodmanor.com](http://www.ravenswoodmanor.com)

The membership year starts on November 1st, and we ask you to complete the membership form below or go to our membership page on the website: [ravenswoodmanor.com/membership](http://ravenswoodmanor.com/membership). Thank you for your support.

## Manor Details



*Stained glass window in Adrian Collins's bungalow.*

If you have a detail you'd like to submit for this new feature, please send it to [manordetails@gmail.com](mailto:manordetails@gmail.com).



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## Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association: Membership Form

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