

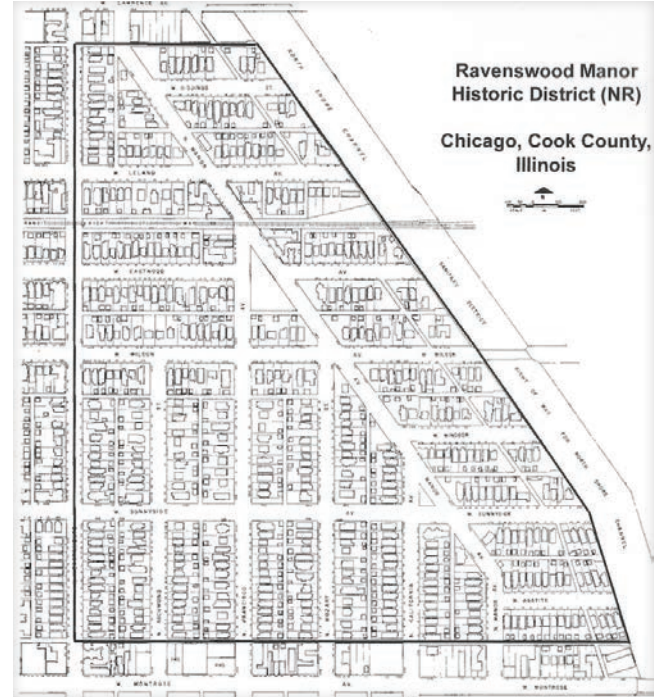


MANOR NEWS

WINTER

2017-18

Does the Manor Merit Local Landmark Protection?



Credit: National Register of Historic Places

The consistent scale and design of the buildings in Ravenswood Manor make it a good candidate for Chicago Landmark status. Boundaries of a local district would be similar—but not identical—to those of the existing National Register Historic District (see map).

In 2007, when Ravenswood Manor was being considered for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, an architectural survey found that 91 percent of its 520 buildings “contributed to the character” of the proposed historic district.

Today, just a decade later, that figure has dropped to **83 percent**, due to the demolition—or major exterior alterations—of a number of historic buildings in the 60-acre neighborhood, which is roughly bounded by the Chicago River, Lawrence, Montrose, and Sacramento avenues (see map).

In the past four years, for example, three of the area’s original “Model Homes,” which were built in 1909-10 by pioneering real estate developer William E. Harmon, have been demolished or seriously altered. Several other controversial projects, including 4432 N. Mozart St. (see photos,

page 4), have brought attention to the fact that existing zoning controls are insufficient to address some redevelopment projects.

As a result, in November, the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association Board voted to commission a study of the neighborhood’s potential for designation as a Chicago Landmark District. This action followed an earlier recommendation by the RMI’s Zoning Committee to consider local landmark protection as a way to help regulate major exterior alterations and building demolition.

Following are some common questions and answers relating to potential Chicago Landmark designation.

What are the chances Ravenswood Manor will meet the standards for designation as a Chicago Landmark District?

Preliminary indications are the neighborhood should meet at least two of the required criteria for landmark designation: “Distinctive Theme as a District” and “Exemplary Architecture.” The Ravenswood Manor subdivision was developed following the extension of the Ravenswood Branch of the Northwestern Elevated Railroad (CTA Brown Line) in 1907.

Ninety-six percent of the buildings in Ravenswood Manor were constructed between 1909 and 1933, according to the National Register nomination. The neighborhood also features standard lot sizes and building setbacks. A consistent historic character is defined by such early-20th century architectural styles as American Four Square, Chicago Bungalow, Colonial Revival, Craftsman, Free Classic, and Tudor Revival. *(continued on page 4)*



Designing LaPointe Park

A task force has been formed to help redesign LaPointe Park (Giddings and Manor Avenues). The RMIA is now looking for volunteers to serve on the task force.

The triangular-shaped parcel, which is owned by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Chicago, has been maintained as a park by RMIA since 1977, when it was named for longtime RMIA President Arthur J. LaPointe.

The park's 1994 landscape plan is showing signs of wear, while periodic flooding has limited the park's use. The RMIA Board has authorized funding for improvements—but a comprehensive design plan is needed.

If you are interested in serving on the design task force, please contact Lorin Liberson, chair of RMIA's Parks and Parkways Committee, at lapointepark@ravenswoodmanor.com.

Event Calendar

CAPS-17th District, Police Beat 1724 (south of Wilson Avenue) Tues., Jan. 16, 7 p.m., Horner Park Field House

CAPS-17th District, Police Beat 1713 (north of Wilson Avenue) Tues., Jan. 23, 7 p.m., North Park Campus Center, 5000 N. Spaulding Ave

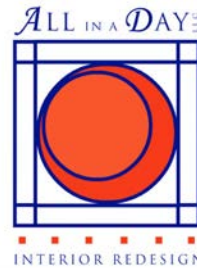
Easter Egg Hunt
Sat., Apr. 1, 10 a.m., Ravenswood Manor Park

Semi-Annual Meeting
Mon., Apr. 2, 7 p.m., Horner Park Field House

Weekly and Monthly Events:

RMIA Board
2nd Mondays of the month, 7 p.m., Horner Park Field House.

Horner Park Advisory Council
1st Mondays of the month, 7 p.m., Horner Park Field House



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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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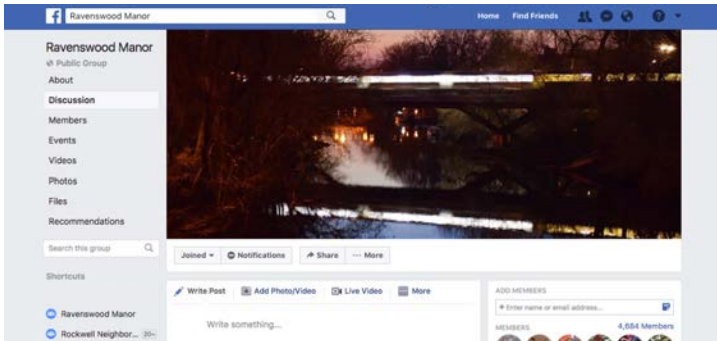
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“Best of Chicago”

The October 26th issue of *New City* magazine featured two area attractions in its annual listing of the “Best of Chicago.”

The **Ravenswood Manor social media site** was identified as “Best Facebook Neighborhood Group.” According to *New City*, the group “sets a high bar for community engagement... equal parts gossip and a modern-day neighborhood watch.”

The article applauded the group for helping to mobilize response to Nazi graffiti at Waters Elementary School, helping residents stay informed about crime in the area, and communicating with the alderman’s office and police department. See facebook.com/groups/65240842795/.

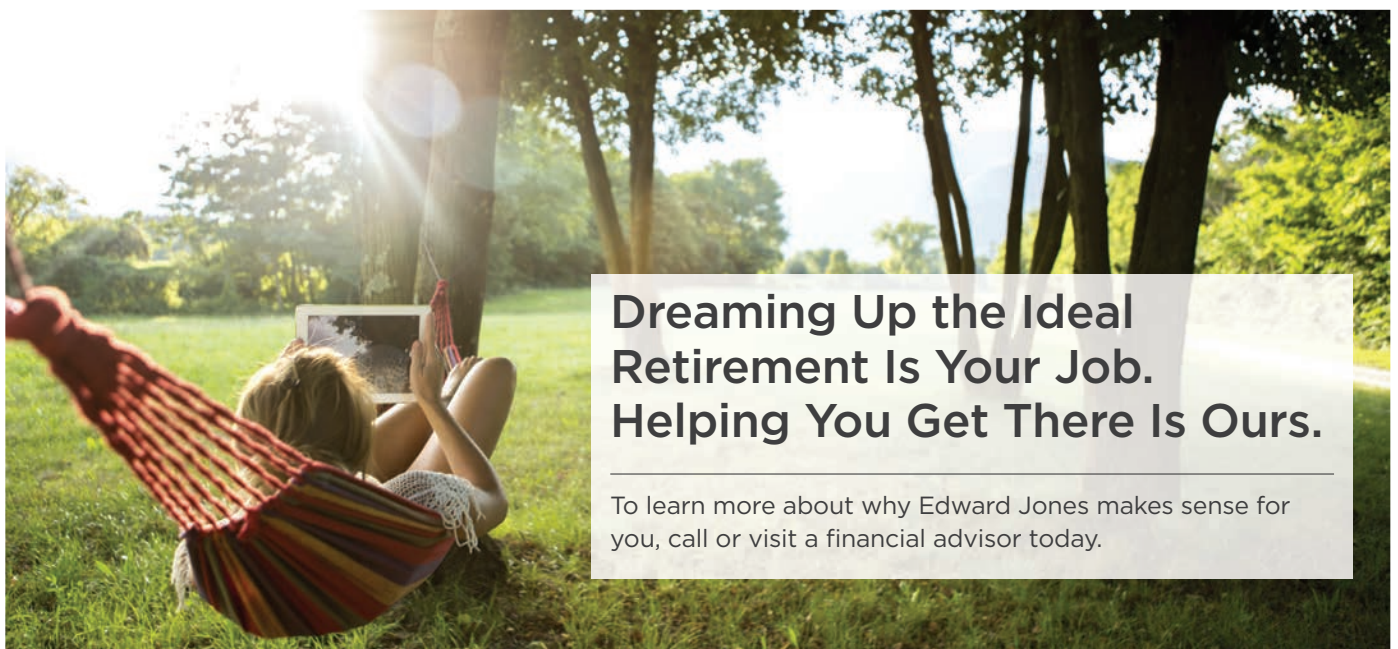
The Ravenswood Manor Facebook group is not affiliated with the RMIA organization, whose Facebook group is titled Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association.



People of East Albany Park (PEAP) was honored as having the “Best Neighborhood Block Party,” which is held on the 4500-block of Albany Park Avenue in early August.

“Most block parties in the city are provincial affairs,” *New City* said, “but the block party put on by PEAP welcomes whoever wants to come...in a welcoming spirit of generosity pretty much unparalleled by others in Chicago today.”

PEAP represents the area bounded by Montrose, Troy, Whipple, and Wilson avenues, immediately west of Ravenswood Manor. See facebook.com/PeapBlockClub.



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Landmark Protection, continued

Credit: Jim Petros



Credit: Conlon Luxury



The three-year saga of the historic 1909 residence at 4432 N. Mozart St. (shown in these three photos and one illustration) provides one example of why local landmark regulations might be beneficial for the neighborhood.

How long does the landmark designation process take?

Creating a Chicago Landmark District usually takes about a year—from the drafting of a research report and a preliminary designation by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks (CCL) to a final recommendation by the CCL and official listing by the Chicago City Council.

When will residents be able to comment about the potential landmark designation?

The RMIA plans to hold a couple of public meetings, including the Semi-Annual Meeting on April 2nd (after the research report is prepared) and at least one during the designation process itself. We also will solicit comments from residents via a dedicated email address: landmarkdistrict@ravenswoodmanor.com.

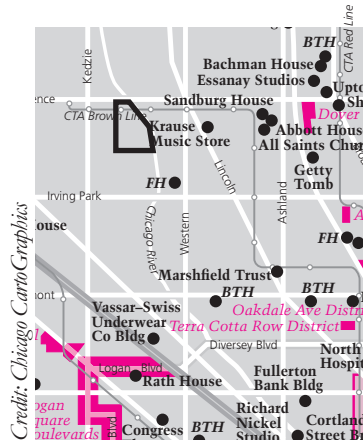
If the CCL determines the district meets the landmark criteria, it will vote a preliminary determination, after which a “request for owner consent” would be mailed to each property owner in the proposed district. After those consent forms are received, the CCL will hold a public hearing. If, following that meeting, the CCL recommends landmark designation to the City Council, the Committee on Zoning, Landmarks, and Building Standards will hold a final public hearing.

What type of building alterations will need approval if the Manor becomes a local landmark district?

Once the CCL determines the district is eligible for landmark designation, all exterior changes requiring a City of Chicago building permit—including demolition, new construction, and additions visible from the public right-of-way—will be subject to review by the city’s Historic Preservation staff. Paint colors and landscaping do not require city permits and interior alterations are not subject to review in a landmark district, although they may be in an individual landmark, such as the Chicago Board of Trade Building or a design by Frank Lloyd Wright. (Note: If the CCL decides, following its public hearing, not to recommend landmark designation to the City Council, temporary review of exterior changes would be dropped.)

Are any financial incentives available for owners of Chicago Landmark properties?

The main incentive for a residential property owner in a Chicago Land-



This excerpt from the City of Chicago’s map of local landmarks shows the proximity of Ravenswood Manor (outline) to other individual landmarks and landmark districts.

mark District is a “building permit fee waiver” for rehabilitation projects, which is approved through the local alderman’s office. Ravenswood Manor already is eligible for a Property Tax Freeze Program (see *Manor News*, Winter 2016), due to its listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

What is the impact of landmark designation on property values—or on real estate taxes?

Virtually every economic study has shown no negative impact on property values following landmark designation. In fact, some studies have shown a slight increase in property values, because of the certainty that

local landmark protection provides. Real estate taxes are not directly affected by district landmark designation.

Where are some other Chicago Landmark Districts?

The city has more than 50 landmark districts. Some of the best known are: East Lake Shore Drive, Michigan Boulevard, Old Town Triangle, Pullman, and Wicker Park. The closest residential landmark districts to the Manor are: Alta Vista Terrace (3800-block, north of Wrigley Field), Dover Street (4500- to 4700-blocks), Logan Square Boulevard, Old Edgebrook (south of Devon, west of Central), and the Villa (north of Addison, east of Pulaski).

Where can I get more information?

Please check out the Historic Preservation section of the City of Chicago’s web site, which includes a list of Chicago Landmarks, the Landmarks Ordinance, the Rules and Regulations of the Commission for Chicago Landmarks, and “Q&As for Owners of Proposed Chicago Landmarks.” You also are invited to send your comments or questions to landmarkdistrict@ravenswoodmanor.com.

Bookkeeper Wanted

The RMIA is looking for a volunteer to work with the RMIA Board as its bookkeeper.

The person would interact with RMIA Treasurer Suzy Thomas, in handling budgeting, monthly reports, and processing of membership fees. QuickBooks experience preferred.

If you are interested in this position, please contact RMIA's President, Athene Carras, at president@ravenswoodmanor.com.



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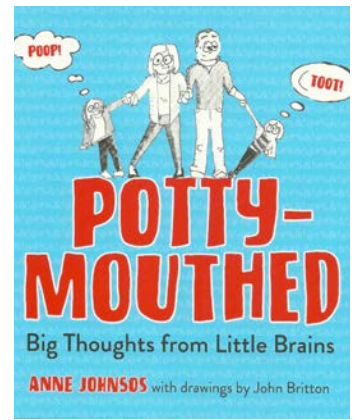
Don't forget that walking tours are available on the RMIA web site, along with a walking map.

Tours on the web site (ravenswoodmanor.com/walking-tours):

- Harmon's Model Homes
- Heart of the Manor
- Gems of the Manor
- Tall Tales



Credit: Steingold's of Chicago



Neighbors in the News

Elizabeth Abowd and Aaron Steingold (Lawrence Avenue) are scheduled to open, in January, "Steingold's Station" at 4648 N. Francisco Ave., in the former Merle's/Hot Bar space south of the Brown Line L station. It's designed to be a walk-up service version of "Steingold's of Chicago," their acclaimed deli that opened this past summer at 1840 W. Irving Park Road....

"Potty-Mouthed: Big Thoughts from Little Brains," by journalist **Anne Johnsos (Leland Avenue)**, was published in November. The 211-page book features illustrations from John Britton and documents real conversations that Anne and her husband have had with their children. "It captures the little moments of parenthood," one reviewer noted. "But it's not saccharine or self-congratulatory," the liner copy points out. Furthermore, the acknowledgements page thanks "the unicorn collection that is The Manor." The 6" x 6" book is available for \$13.36 (not including shipping) from Amazon.com....

Two Manor homeowners were among the 16 winners of this year's Driehaus Awards from the Chicago Bungalow Association. **Brigitte Doherty (Wilson Avenue)** earned an honorable mention for Interior Rehabilitation, while **Lorin and Rick Liberson (Leland Avenue)** earned an honorable mention for Exterior Rehabilitation.



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Forty volunteers helped plant more than 20 trees in the parkways throughout the Manor this past fall.

RMIA Annual Report

The 103rd Annual Meeting of the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association was held on Monday, October 9th, at the Horner Park Field House.

In addition to the election of board member and officers, there was a presentation by Dick Lanyon, a former Manor resident and the author of “Draining Chicago”. RMIA President Athene Carras also summarized the organization’s accomplishments for 2017, which included:

- **Centennial Plaques.** Manor property owners whose buildings were constructed in 1917 were given forms for ordering a bronze “Centennial Home” plaque. This annual program began in 2014, during RMIA’s Centennial Year. Forms for houses built in 1918 will go out in early-2018.
- **Easter Egg Hunt.** This year’s annual Race for the Eggs was held on April 15th and attracted 100 children and their parents to Manor Park. Thanks to Athene Carras for organizing.
- **Garage Sale.** This massive event continues to grow in size, attracting thousands of bargain shoppers to Manor alleyways, where more than 100 residents opened their garages on May 21st. Thanks to RMIA Board Member Suzy Thomas for helping to organize—and to the Chicago Police Department (and 17th District Commander Elias Voulgaris) for assisting with traffic management.
- **Garden Walk.** Thanks to Jeff Sell, Shelly Staat, and their committee for organizing the 60th anniversary edition of this event, which dates to 1957. This year’s garden walk featured 22 gardens and more than 175 attendees.

- **Holiday Decorations.** RMIA maintains and funds the installation of the eight illuminated “snowflakes” that adorn the neighborhood between Thanksgiving and Presidents Day. Thanks to Thomas Applegate and Jim Peters for coordinating this effort—and to Brian Basler, who installs the holiday wreath and lights on the gazebo in Ravenswood Manor Park.
- **Independence Bike Parade.** Thanks to Lisa Jamiolkowski and Cheryl McNally for organizing this four-block long parade on Sunday, June 25th, which featured more than 100 children and their parents, as well as countless bikes, trikes, wagons, and other vehicles.
- **Manor Stories.** A series of audio recordings, focusing on various aspects of our community’s history, were posted this summer on the RMIA’s web site (under “History”). The first collection, entitled “Bygone Businesses,” contains snippets of oral history interviews conducted with nine longtime neighborhood residents. Many thanks to RMIA Research Committee members Jackie Klein and Linda Montalbano, as well as to Thomas Applegate, Matt Lachy, and Victoria Wiedel, who helped create the web site home for these interviews.
- **Parkway Tree Plantings.** Many thanks to RMIA Board Member Lorin Liberson for coordinating the planting of more than 20 trees this fall in the public parkways along Manor streets. Lorin worked with Openlands TreeKeepers Program on the effort, which took place on Saturday, Sept. 23rd. Thanks, too, to the more than 40 volunteers who assisted with the tree planting effort.



Clockwise from top left: A c/1920 photograph, showing the pergola that graced the north end of Ravenswood Manor Park (one of the many tales in “Manor Streets”); one of the decorative “snowflakes” installed by RMIA during the holiday season; one of the yards featured in this past summer’s Garden Walk; and a Centennial Home plaque on a house built in 1916.

- **Quarterly Newsletter.** Four issues of *Manor News* were published and distributed to 1,100 residences and businesses in the neighborhood. Thanks to our network of residents for delivering the newsletter and to our advertisers who help defray the printing costs.
- **RMIA Committees.** Thanks to the ongoing work of the various committees of the RMIA Board: Communications (Matt Lachy and Victoria Wiedel, chairs), Community Relations (Alan Mueller), Membership (Craig Pierson, chair), Nominating Committee (Cristina Chavez, Alan Mueller, Jennifer Payne, Jim Peters, and Julia Smith, members); Research (Jackie Klein, chair), Safety (Joe Valentin, chair), Social (Brinda Gupta, chair), Parks and Parkways (Lorin Liberson, chair), Transportation (Bette Rosenstein, chair), and Zoning (Jim Peters, chair).
- **Summer Concerts.** The 23rd season of this concert series was organized by the Horner Park Advisory Council, with the financial support of area residents, businesses, and the RMIA. The free concerts and theater walks took place in Horner, Ravenswood Manor, and Sunken Gardens parks.
- **Web Site.** The RMIA’s web site (www.ravenswoodmanor.com) was completely redesigned this year, thanks to Thomas Applegate and RMIA Board Members Matt Lachy and Victoria Wiedel.

- **Wilson Avenue Bridge Murals.** The four bare concrete approach walls to this bridge over the Chicago River were transformed this summer, thanks to four river-inspired murals by artists JoAnne Conroy and Tom Melvin. Our appreciation to Ald. Deb Mell (33rd Ward), Ald. Ameya Pawar (47th Ward), and the countless others—including the RMIA—who helped fund this effort. If you would like to help maintain these murals (which, unfortunately, already have been vandalized on two occasions), please make a contribution at www.wilsonbridgemural.com.

At the annual meeting, these current RMIA board members were elected to new two-year terms: Athene Carras, Alan Mueller, Jim Peters, Joe Valentin, and Victoria Wiedel. Three new board members were elected to two-year terms: Brinda Gupta, Mina Marien, and Lisa Washburn. The four RMIA board officers (see page 10) were re-elected to one-year terms.

If you have questions—or would like to volunteer for any of these activities—please contact the RMIA President, Athene Carras, at president@ravenswoodmanor.com.

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Manor Details



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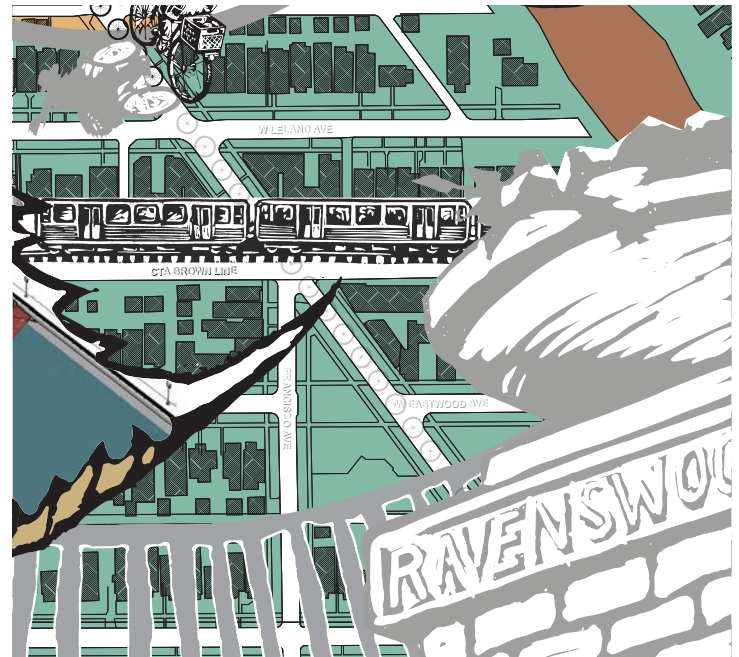
Thus begins the text accompanying “Lawrence Avenue Bridge,” one of 50 community design solutions featured in “Between States—50 Designers Transform Chicago’s Neighborhoods,” which is part of the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

The project is by Farr Associates Architecture and Urban Design, Inc. It was submitted as one possible design concept for redevelopment of the former Summit Industries site in the 2900-block of Lawrence Avenue. (Farr Associates’ president is Doug Farr, a Manor resident.)

The exhibit is the latest in the Chicago Architecture Foundation’s multi-year “50 Designers/50 Wards” project, which explores how designers and residents might participate in identifying growth opportunities in Chicago neighborhoods. The goal of this particular exhibit was to challenge Chicago-based design teams to identify a physical asset—in each of the city’s 50 wards—which could benefit from a redesign; thus imagining a way to transition them “between states.”

Although the Summit Industries site was purchased last year, the new owner did not commission this study. Nor is this an actual plan for redevelopment of the site. Rather, “Lawrence Avenue Bridge” simply models “an idyllic future community,” featuring Chicago River access, a mix of low- and moderate-density housing, and other techniques to “transform” an underperforming space into a “rejuvenated civic anchor.”

The “Between States” exhibit is on display through March 1st in the CAF Atrium Gallery, 224 S. Michigan Ave. It is free and open to the public.



Top: One of the panels in a current exhibit at the Chicago Architecture Foundation proposes some design concepts for the former Summit Industries site in the 2900-block of West Lawrence Avenue. Details from the panel show (left and right): potential open space uses, a map of the area near the Francisco L. station, and a conceptual massing design for the site itself. (Note: These are not actual proposals for the site, which was recently purchased by a new owner.)



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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
Suzy Thomas - Treasurer

Web site: ravenswoodmanor.com
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SUZY THOMAS

It's Time To Come In Now

By Katharine Byrne

This essay originally appeared in the October 2, 1994, issue of the Chicago Tribune Magazine. The author (1913-2009) was a 62-year resident of Ravenswood Manor, residing at 2917 W. Wilson Ave. She wrote articles for a wide variety of publications and, with the permission of her children, John and Peg, we are periodically reprinting some of her essays that relate to the neighborhood.



Of course I talk to my plants. "It's time to come in now," I told them this morning. The chill in the air and the protective shrivel of certain leaves tell me that the first frost, killer of green things, will soon strike the garden. Into the house come the baskets and pots that I carried out into the sunshine last spring. For the past months, Swedish ivy has swung from a branch of the plum tree; winding its way out of a ceramic pot, Boston ivy has been circling the base of an American ash.

At first, after being housebound all winter, a five-year-old fuchsia and a line of crooked geranium spurs looked wan and puny out there on patio bricks or tree stumps, but after a summer of sun and rain, like city children let loose in the country, they are taller, heartier, prettier-and their color is much improved.

Some plants, like pupils who do not like classrooms and yearn for vacation time, will not like to come indoors. The red-and-yellow croton will shed leaves and turn pale. A certain philodendron will just stand there sullenly, refusing to turn out a new leaf until spring comes again. But the begonias, like fresh-faced, agreeable children, will keep on bloom-

ing, and so will the pink clumps of impatiens if they can see the sun from a south-facing window.

Working in my own potting shed—actually, it's my kitchen table—I must find bigger living quarters for plants that are crowded and furnish them with the right mixture of soil and peat moss. They all need vitamins: food to make up for lost hours of sunshine in the shorter, darker days ahead.

If I handle each one with affection, it is because I remember where it came from. I acquired them one at a time over many years, and each has a story tied to it. This giant spider plant was handed over the fence by a neighbor who could not take it along to her new home in Florida. For 10 years it has lived here, sending forth dozens of long arms covered with tiny white flowers and green-and-white plantlets I can nip off and give away. This asparagus fern sheds like an Airedale, but what can I do? It was a Christmas present. This fat pot of pungent basil? It was a rootless sprig when I carried it home in a plastic envelope from a Greek island last year. Long ago, a little boy gave me a six-inch rubber plant; now the plant and the boy are six feet tall.

I have read about floral engineers who come to your home like interior decorators—taking the temperature, measuring the light rays, moving in hundreds of dollars' worth of greenery in coordinated colors and the appropriate combination of thick and thin, tall and short, upright and dangling. Guaranteed to flourish. No room for error.

Even though my own green thumb has sometimes failed me and I have had to bury my failures, I do not think I could enjoy such instant, large-scale luxury. Nor could I speak with confidence to imported green things arranged in scientifically determined positions and relationships. In the long winter ahead, I will talk to my plants as I used to talk to the children who lived here, encouraging them to perk up and persevere, waiting out winter, looking forward to one more spring when they and I will get out into the yard, warmed by the sun again.

But what could I say to a crowd of strangers?



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Membership Renewal Reminder

Ravenswood Manor remains a strong community due to the collective efforts of its residents, as well as to its neighborhood organization—one of the oldest in Chicago (founded in 1914).

The efforts of the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association's many volunteers are described elsewhere in this newsletter. However, many of these projects wouldn't be possible without the financial support of our members. Thus, we strongly urge you to either renew your membership or to join us for the first time.

Our membership year began on November 1st and a membership renewal form recently was sent to all of the households in the neighborhood. But, if you've misplaced that letter, do not despair. There are three other ways to join RMIA:

- 1) Complete the membership form below and mail it to RMIA, P.O. Box 25486, Chicago, IL 60625.
- 2) Go to the "RMIA" tab on our web site (www.ravenswoodmanor.com/membership) and pay, either using PayPal or a credit card.
- 3) Use your Chase Bank or QuickPay account and reference the email: treasurer@ravenswoodmanor.com. NOTE: This method will save you the cost of postage or us the PayPal processing charges.

Finally, thank you for your continued support.



Athene Carras, President, RMIA

Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association: Membership Form

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