



MANOR NEWS

FALL/
WINTER

2019

Summer Concerts: An Endangered Species?

By John O'Connell

In 1992, the Horner Park Advisory Council (HPAC) advocated for the removal of a short section of Eastwood Street, between Manor and Francisco avenues, in order to unify the south and north portions of Ravenswood Manor Park. HPAC then raised funds for the construction, in 1994, of the wood pergola, which anchors the park to this day.

Soon after the pergola was completed, HPAC built upon the longstanding RMIA tradition of a single concert each summer, and launched a more-extensive series of summer concerts. For the past 25 years, it has been my privilege to be chair of HPAC's Summer Concert Committee. During that time, we have presented more than 260 free concerts and dozens of plays in Ravenswood Manor Park, as well as shows in Horner and Sunken Gardens Parks. The Series, which has grown to include HornerFest and several Manor Bashes, has offered marvelous free entertainment for hundreds of our neighbors each year, inspiring children with the gift of music and providing much-needed support for local artists.

However, I was taught that 25 years is a generation. And so, after 25 years, it seems fitting that the next generation of our neighbors should take over this tradition. I have decided to no longer Chair HPAC's Summer Concert Committee.



Most of the summer concerts are held in Ravenswood Manor Park.

(See "Endangered" page 6)



Left: The stump of a diseased ash tree. Right: Ald. Rodriguez-Sanchez and 33rd Ward staff (33rd Ward photo)



ANNUAL MEETING:

Alderman, Ash Borer, and Board Elections

The annual membership meeting of the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association (RMIA) will be held on Tuesday, Oct. 22nd, at 7:30 p.m. in the basement assembly room of the Horner Park Fieldhouse, 2741 W. Montrose Ave. This will be the RMIA's 105th annual membership meeting, dating back to the organization's founding in 1914.

The meeting agenda will include the election of Board members and officers, a report on current RMIA activities, an update on the treatment of ash trees for ash borer beetles, and a discussion with Ald. Rossana Rodriguez-Sanchez (33rd Ward), who took office in May.

Board Elections

The following Board members are being nominated for an additional two-year term on the RMIA Board: Brinda Gupta, Mina Marien, Alan Mueller, and Jim Peters.

The following RMIA members are being nominated for an initial two-year term on the RMIA Board: Magdalen D'Alessio, Rob Lott, Peter Moore, and Cynthia Mueller.

The following board members are being nominated for a one-year term as officers: Bette Rosenstein (President), Suzy Thomas (Vice President), Mina Marien (Secretary), and Craig Pierson (Treasurer).

We thank our four retiring Board members, including President Athene Carras, Joe Valentin, Lisa Washburn, and Victoria Wiedel.

Thanks, also, to the RMIA Nominating Committee for its work in developing the slate of board candidates. The committee members are Robin Armour, Cristina Chavez, Mina Marien (chair), Cynthia Mueller, and Bette Rosenstein.

Manor News Changes Its Frequency

This issue marks the transition of *Manor News* from a quarterly to a semi-annual publication, an action that was approved in June by the RMIA Board.

Issues of the newsletter are now scheduled to be delivered to residents in September and March, in advance of the Annual (Fall) and Semi-Annual (Spring) meetings of the Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association.

In addition to the twice-a-year newsletter, the RMIA also provides communication to Manor residents via *RMIA Email Updates*, posts on Facebook ([ravenswoodmanor](https://www.facebook.com/ravenswoodmanor)) and Instagram ([ravenswoodmanorchi](https://www.instagram.com/ravenswoodmanorchi)), and through its web site (www.ravenswoodmanor.com).

To register for the email updates, go to <http://ravenswoodmanor.com/contact>.

Event Calendar

RMIA Annual Meeting: Tues., Oct. 22, 7:30 p.m.,
Horner Park Fieldhouse

Weekly and Monthly Events

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

Horner Park Advisory Council: 1st Wednesday of the
month, 7 p.m., 2nd floor, Horner Park Fieldhouse

RMIA Board: 2nd Monday of the month (*except October*),
7 p.m., 2nd Floor, Horner Park Field House

CAPS—17th District, Police Beats 1724 and 1713:
Tues., Nov. 19, and Tues. Jan. 21, 7 p.m., Horner Park
Fieldhouse (please confirm schedule at www.chicagopolice.org/caps/district17)

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About RMIA

Manor News is published twice a year 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."

RMIA Board

Athene Carras – President	Alan Mueller
Suzy Thomas – Vice President	Jim Peters
Kathy Monk – Secretary	Deb Robinett
Craig Pierson – Treasurer	Bette Rosenstein
Tony Armour	Gary Smith
Tom Eul	Joe Valentin
Brinda Gupta	Matt VanderZee
Patrick Johnson	Lisa Washburn
Michael Leff	Victoria Wiedel
Mina Marien	

Web site: ravenswoodmanor.com
Facebook.com/[ravenswoodmanor](https://www.facebook.com/ravenswoodmanor)
E-mail: board@ravenswoodmanor.com
Mail: P.O. Box 25486, Chicago IL 60625

Manor News is delivered to residents and businesses by volunteer block captains. Past issues are available on our web site (see "Communications"). Editor: Jim Peters; Design and Layout: Steve Shanabruh; Advertising: Thomas Applegate.



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LISTEN TO MANOR STORIES

A series of short recordings featuring the memories of longtime Manor residents can be found on the RMIA web site at www.ravenswoodmanor.com/manor-stories.



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Tree planting, Fall 2015 (Mary Valentin photo)

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Tree Planting Day

The next round of neighborhood tree plantings will take place on Saturday, October 12th, when 20 new trees are scheduled to be planted on vacant parkway sites throughout Ravenswood Manor.

Adjacent property owners pay \$100/tree and agree to water the tree for the initial year. The trees, equipment, mulch, and supervision of the plantings are supplied by the Openlands' TreeKeepers Program.

If you would like to participate as a volunteer tree planter, please contact us at trees@ravenswoodmanor.com. No experience is needed, as volunteer teams are guided by expert tree planters. Volunteers will be notified the week prior to the event as to meeting time and location.

Over the past five years, Manor residents have planted more than 70 new trees in an effort to replace older trees that have been lost to storms, age, or insect damages.



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Manor Bash, June 2019

RMIA's Year in Review

The Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association (RMIA) is one of the oldest neighborhood organizations in the city of Chicago, dating to 1914. In accordance with the organization's mission statement (see p. 2), the RMIA undertook the following activities in 2019.

CENTENNIAL PLAQUES

Manor property owners whose buildings were constructed in 1919 were given forms for ordering a bronze "Centennial Home" plaque. The Centennial Home plaque program began during RMIA's Centennial Year in 2014. (Forms for houses built in 1920 will go out in early-2020.)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Committee members updated the RMIA's web site (www.ravenswoodmanor.com), issued a twice-monthly e-mail "blast," published and distributed a quarterly, eight-page newsletter to every household in the Manor, maintained the RMIA Facebook page, and started a new Instagram page ([ravenswoodmanorchic](https://www.instagram.com/ravenswoodmanorchic)) featuring neighborhood photographs. (Outgoing Committee Chair Victoria Wiedel)

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

This committee coordinated activities with other organizations, including the Horner Park Advisory Council and business owners along Francisco, Manor, Montrose, and Lawrence. (Committee Chair Alan Mueller)

EASTER EGG HUNT

This year's Race for the Eggs was held on Saturday, May 20th, attracting more than 100 children and their parents to Manor Park. Thanks to Thomas Applegate, Athene Carras, Scott Manary, Craig Pierson, and Sean and Victoria Wiedel for organizing this event.

GARAGE SALE

This annual tradition, which continues to grow in size, attracted thousands of bargain shoppers to Manor streets and alleyways on Sunday, May 19th. Thanks to Social Events Committee Chair Brinda Gupta and Suzy Thomas for helping to organize the event—which involved more than 100 participating garages—and to the 33rd Ward office and the Chicago Police Department for assisting with traffic management.

GARDEN WALK

Thanks to Jeff Sell, Shelly Staat, and the Manor Garden Club for organizing this event, whose origins date to 1957. This year's garden walk on Sunday, July 28th, featured more than two dozen gardens and over 200 attendees. Thanks to Kathy Boedeker and Tom Melvin for the map/fan design and production.

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

RMIA maintains and funds the installation of the illuminated "snowflakes" that have surrounded Buffalo and Manor parks over the holiday season. Thanks, also, to Brian Basler for installing the holiday wreath and lights on the gazebo in Ravenswood Manor Park. Patrick Johnson is leading the effort to add new holiday lighting this year to the pergola in Manor Park.

INDEPENDENCE BIKE PARADE

Thanks to Lisa Jamiolkowski and Cheryl McNally for organizing this event on Saturday, June 29th, which attracted more than 100 children and their parents for a four-block-long parade along Manor Avenue. Free paletas were handed out at the parade's terminus in Manor Park. Thanks, also, to the Chicago Fire Department for leading the parade with a fire engine and for the numerous volunteers who helped with traffic control.

LAPOINTE PARK REDESIGN

A major redesign of the triangular-shaped open space at Giddings and Manor avenues was carried out this year, thanks to \$7,500 in funding from RMIA and \$2,900 in donations from neighborhood residents. This included a landscape design by Manor resident Ted Wolff, a re-grading of the central lawn to minimize flooding, and the planting of native plants. (See article, p. 7.)

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY

A replacement library box was installed in August at the northwest corner of Eastwood and Francisco. Thanks to Thomas Applegate and David Pott for the installation.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

This five-member group submitted the slate of potential RMIA Board members for election at the Annual Meeting on October 22nd. (Committee Chair Mina Marien)

PARKS AND PARKWAYS COMMITTEE

Committee members help maintain the plantings along the east entrance ramp to the Francisco "L" station and coordinate other activities, including tree plantings; see page 3. (Committee Chair Deb Robinett)



Thomas Applegate and David Pott install the Little Free Library at the corner of Eastwood and Francisco.



Left to right: Garden Walk, Independence Bike Parade, Garage Sale, and Centennial Plaque.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

This committee monitors CAPS meetings held by the Chicago Police Department (see Calendar, p. 2) and coordinates responses to safety issues with Ald. Rodriguez-Sanchez’s 33rd Ward office. (Outgoing Committee Chair Joe Valentin)

SUMMER CONCERTS

The RMIA sponsored one of the Friday night summer concerts—and the Saturday Manor Bash events—held in Ravenswood Manor Park, which were organized by the Horner Park Advisory Council. (See story p. 1)

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

This committee participates in the 33rd Ward Transportation Action Committee (TAC) and monitors other transportation-related issues, including the CTA Francisco station and street/bridge closures. (Committee Chair Bette Rosenstein)

WELCOME WAGON

Postcards are sent to new Manor residents, welcoming them to the neighborhood and providing key information, including links to the RMIA web site and Facebook page. (Membership Committee Chair Craig Pierson)

ZONING COMMITTEE

This committee monitors zoning variances, upon request by Ald. Rodriguez-Sanchez’s office, including the scheduling of neighborhood meetings to discuss new projects. This year, the committee discussed potential design guidelines for building additions, as a follow up to block meetings in Summer 2018 regarding the potential of a local landmark district. (Outgoing Zoning Committee Chair Gary Smith)

If you are interested in volunteering for one of the above activities—or in serving on any of the RMIA’s Committees—please send an email to president@rmia.com.

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The Horner Park Jazz Band plays the first concert under the newly-built pergola in Manor Park in June 1995. (John O'Connell photo)

Endangered, continued

It is my sincere hope that the Summer Concert Series will continue on in Ravenswood Manor Park in 2020, but that is not guaranteed. If Ravenswood Manor residents want to see the concerts continue, a new generation needs to get involved. Thus, HPAC is looking for both veteran residents, as well as our younger and more recent transplants to Ravenswood Manor, to step up and help to raise the funds and produce shows in 2020 and beyond.

Very Important: This is a great opportunity for civic-minded neighbors to work with me, while I am still in the neighborhood, to advise

HPAC and our volunteers on how to produce the shows that make our wonderful neighborhood so special. It is up to YOU to help keep this tradition alive! I have been blessed to learn the joy of giving back to my own neighborhood, and would like to pass on that joy to others, and let them share in the reward that only comes from working for the betterment of one's own community.

Organizational meeting: Oct. 16

For those interesting in helping out—and in deciding whether there will be a summer concert series in 2020—there will be a planning meeting at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 16th, at 4530 N. Mozart Ave. All are welcome to attend. Please email me at johnroconnell4530@gmail.com to let me know your thoughts and how you can contribute your talents to maintain this special neighborhood tradition. More information can be found at www.hornerpark.org, or email us at stewardship@hornerpark.org.

In conclusion, I am grateful for all of the support of our household subscribers, local businesses and organizations, and the public servants who have provided funds to us over the years for the Series. Without their contributions, we would never have been able to accomplish so much. I also am grateful to the Chicago Park District for partnering with us these many years, and I greatly appreciate all of the work of the Summer Concert Series Committee, as well as all of the HPAC volunteers who constantly and unselfishly give their time and talent to make our parks and neighborhood so great. But, most of all, I am grateful to the love of my life, my wife Susan, who has enabled me to make our vibrant neighborhood of Ravenswood Manor better.

“You who choose to lead must follow.” - Robert Hunter, *Ripple*

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Hollywood Comes to Mozart

By John O'Connell

For three days in early August, my wife and I allowed our house on the 4500-block of Mozart to be used as a film set. What were we thinking?

For a small fee—and two free nights at the Ambassador Chicago Hotel—we gave up our home for an “indie” flick, *I Used to Go Here* (aka *Alma Mater*), a comedy expected out in theatres next year (Myriad Pictures).

Written and directed by local filmmaker Kris Rey, who made the well-received *Unexpected* (2015), it tells the tale of a famous alum who returns to campus only to encounter complications from her old friends. It stars Jemaine Clement (*Flight of the Conchords*, *Moana*, and *What We Do in the Shadows*) and Gillian Jacobs (*Community*, *Don't Think Twice*, and *Girls*).

The film crew started by taking photographs of everything and protecting our floors. They then removed our television and couches, repurposed some of our furniture, and filmed for a full day. After a bit of minor wall repainting, they returned our home to us in its original state.

It was fun to witness the “hurry up and wait” activity. My sole purpose was to stay out of the way and to grant permissions (they were extremely deferential). The day of shooting went well after midnight, and the crew stayed into the next day restoring our house.

On reflection, it was a positive experience, and I hope we didn't inconvenience the neighbors too much. And best of all, I was able to finagle a nice autograph from Jemaine (“Tomato”) for my grandchildren Samson and Johanna.

Editor's note: Other movies filmed in Ravenswood Manor include *Richie Rich* (1994), *High Fidelity* (1999), and *The Weather Man* (2005).



The film crew of “I Used to Go Here” set up their equipment along Mozart Avenue.



“Before/after” views of LaPointe Park, which was redesigned and re-graded this summer. The temporary fence will remain through Spring 2020, in order to ensure that the new lawn and native plantings are well established. (Deb Robinett and Jim Peters photos)

Phase One of LaPointe Park Redesign Nears Completion

A major re-grading of LaPointe Park, the triangular-shaped open space at Manor and Giddings avenues, took place this summer. As part of the park's redesign, a new grass lawn was seeded and perimeter native plantings were installed.

To ensure that the new lawn and plantings become well established, the temporary fencing around the park will remain in place through next spring. After that time, the fencing will be moved back to protect the native plantings that surround the open lawn.

Drainage in the swale area closest to Giddings Avenue continues to be a problem, and park designers are considering options to remedy this.

Many thanks to the volunteers who helped water the new lawn this summer and pull weeds, particularly LaPointe Park Committee chair Deb Robinett.

Funding for the new landscape design and plantings came from the RMIA (\$7,500) and private donations (\$3,000). Donations for additional plantings can be made at bit.ly/lapointepark. More information about the project can be found at that site.

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 begins on November 1st. A membership letter will be sent in October to all households. 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. Please provide a street and email address if using Chase Quick Pay.

Finally, thank you for your continued support.



Athene Carras, President, RMIA (Oct. 2014 - Oct. 2019)

Ravenswood Manor Improvement Association: Membership Form

Pick Your Membership Level: \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10

Please return form to:
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Additional donation of support for RMIA’s work in the neighborhood: \$ _____

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