

***From Your Editor***

The great recession. Earth quakes. Endless Middle East strife. Bankrupt states and cities. Is there any good news out there? You can hardly be faulted if your mood these days tends to swing to the negative side. But as the season of good cheer approaches, your friends and neighbors in Lincoln Central are hardly giving up hope. They are enthusiastically working to make our parks better. Our schools better. Making sure our youngsters are having fun growing up. Telling of the architectural beauty that is Lincoln Central. Their stories are chronicled in this issue of the LCA Watchdog. Enjoy the reading. And stay positive...*Tom McGavin*

LCA Board Members Spearhead Effort to Breathe New Life into Neglected Park.



If parks could talk, the so-called Fire Station Park would be begging for help. Because it has suffered from neglect for oh-so-many years now. The over-grown ugly duckling plot of land is situated on the west side of Larrabee Street just south of Armitage adjacent to the fire house.



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Now, though, help is on its way. If all goes according to plan, the little park will bloom again.

Plans call for it to become a jewel of a garden. Visionaries say come spring time it will be showcasing plants indigenous to Illinois. Such nature's wonders as prairie, savanna, wetland and woodland plants and eco systems will be on display. Park supporters also are setting aside an area where residents with a green-thumb bent can grow their very own favorite plants.

Sound like a dream come true? Very well could be. For sure, the park revival movement has picked up a heady head of steam in recent weeks.



Paul Maggio and Sally Drucker pull weeds at Fire Station Park

It all started when two Lincoln Central Association board members, Sally Drucker and Paul Maggio, agreed the tawdry park deserved a better fate. They swung into action. They enlisted

the support and picked the brains of landscape architects at Hoerr Schaudt. Other advice and counsel was readily offered by Openlands, Greencorps, a land preservation organization. The Department of Transportation pitched in, too. As did Alderman Vi Daley.



Fire Station Park gets the volunteer treatment

"The rebirth of the park means all of Lincoln Park will soon have a spectacularly beautiful garden to enjoy," enthused Maggio. He says the park can serve as a venue for educational and other events for adults and children, alike.

Drucker observed that, while "...the park rebirth journey is headed in the right direction, we are certainly not to the finish line yet. Plus, there will always be work to be done to maintain the park."

Both Drucker and Maggio encouraged volunteers interested in supporting the park effort to contact LCA at www.lincolncentral.org.

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By Dave Varnerin

Spring time found Lincoln Central Board members spearheading a dual effort to spruce up two neighborhood parks: **Bauler Park** (located at 501 West Wisconsin) and **Lincoln Central Park** (at the corner of Lincoln and Dickens).

Bauler Park was the site of an Earth Day cleanup on April 10 that was organized by Jennifer Uson in conjunction with the Friends of the Parks and the Chicago Park District.



Tom McGavin, Tracy Simmons and Rodger Owen at Bauler Park

A dozen energetic volunteers spent the morning trimming and cleaning bushes as well as power raking the grass areas. Alderman Vi Daley (pictured below), a long-time supporter and advocate for Bauler Park, stopped by to check on the day's activities. Subsequent to the

cleanup, the park's Advisory Council arranged for the remulching of the park's perimeter as well as the planting of additional ornamental grass. The Bauler Park 2010 Community Maintenance Program has raised \$4,000 so far this year.



Dave Varnerin, Marie Penchang, Elizabeth Samuels, VI Daley, Tom McGavin and Jennifer Uson

Additional funds will be used for more planting and for the replacement of one piece of playground equipment. If you would like to help out, go to lincolncentral.org for more information and to make a contribution.



Volunteers rake and bag debris at Bauler Park

Lincoln Central Park benefited from the generosity of neighbors who responded to a fund raising effort last fall. It was organized by Deirdre and Tom Graziano and Dave Vamerin. In early April, many new plants were installed including 15 large evergreens along the sidewalks bordering the park, five oak leaf hydrangeas just west of the park's central plaza and additional ornamental grass. Volunteers ensured that the new plantings took hold by daily watering for two weeks after installation.



Tom Graziano mans a rake



With an assist from ample spring rains, it can be happily reported that the all plantings took healthy root and are enjoying a thriving existence.

And thanks to all, both parks are looking really good.



15 large evergreens being installed along the sidewalks



Trees and flowers bloom for all to enjoy

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The Row Houses of Burling Street: Architectural Jewels from the 19th Century

By Deirdre Graziano

Take the time some evening to stroll the 2200 block of North Burling Street. You will be awed by the architectural gem that awaits... a collection of ten magnificent brick row houses that comprise the Burling Row House Landmark District.



The row houses of Burling Street



Shared setback, scale and height lend a flowing integrity to this housing

These splendid homes, at 2225-2245 North Burling, rank among the rarest groupings of high-quality Italianate-style row houses in Chicago. Constructed in 1875 after the Chicago Fire, they were among the first houses built following the passage of a (then) new city ordinance requiring fireproof masonry.

Each row house shares a party wall with its immediate neighbor. This commonality is both a strength and a weakness. The architectural unity provides a flowing presence. But when one of the row houses was threatened with demolition, the row house owners knew they were facing possible extinction.

Like a domino effect, the removal of one of the units could possibly trigger catastrophic consequences to the others. Because of their close proximity to the lake, the houses basically sit on a sand base. The owners' fears were well founded.

Losing these row houses would be losing an American historical tradition. Historically row houses came to America early and, although the east coast has many more in number, the beauty of the Burling row houses is difficult to surpass. Replicating them today would be virtually impossible.

As the plaque honoring the row houses states the houses are excellent examples of the Italianate style, which dominated Chicago architecture between the Civil War and the late 1870s. Because they were designed as an integral collection, the row houses have an exceptional architectural unity of common setbacks, scale and height. They are further distinguished by their fine window ornamentation and a extremely rare wooden cornice (shared by all ten houses) that remains intact.



Decorative lintel



Shared wooden cornice runs along roofline



Closeup of cornice

Original pent-style porch roofs still grace some of the houses. These small, single-slope roofs are attached just above the front doors. They provide shade and, with no columns or posts, are uniquely self-supporting.



Pent style porch roof



Adapted front porch



Throughout the years some porches were changed

The row houses were designed by one of Chicago's earliest and most important architects, Edward J. Burling (1819-1892). Some of his other prominent buildings include St. James Episcopal Cathedral, the Nickerson Mansion, and the Church of the Epiphany in the Jackson Boulevard District. L.C.A.'s street was named for Burling in the 1850s. Many of Burling's buildings have vanished – either destroyed in the 1871 fire or lost to redevelopment, making the row houses especially valuable.

The threatened demolition of an end row house was the catalyst that prompted the other row house owners to seek landmark status. In 2000, owners of the row houses, Landmark Illinois, Chicago Landmarks, Lincoln Central Association and Alderman Vi Daley finally succeeded in securing landmark status for these buildings. On November 15, 2000, the Commission on Chicago Landmark designated the row houses landmark status. An engraved plaque honoring the row houses is in place for your viewing. The row houses are now preserved for posterity. You and your family can now enjoy their presence and share in their beauty. So take a walk down a historical street. It's a trip you'll surely treasure.

(Much of the information in this article comes from the City of Chicago website <http://www.cityofchicago.org>.)

Photos by Deirdre Graziano

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Baseball takes center stage at Oz Park

By Richard Harris

On a warm Saturday afternoon last May cheers rose from the large attendance gathered in Oz Park for the inauguration of an exciting new baseball league. The inspiration of Dave Siegel, the Oz Park Baseball Association (OPBA) originated 15 months earlier, the outgrowth of parents expressing regret over the lack of organized sports activities for their children.



The Pirates of Oz Park Baseball Association (OPBA)

"A growing number of families were choosing to raise their children in the city rather than flee to the suburbs," Siegel said. "They were motivated by the city's improving schools and the charms of communities like Lincoln Park. But something was still missing," reflects Dave about the challenge that lay ahead.

Thirteen motivated moms and dads met at Four Farthings Restaurant. They agreed on a little league baseball program focused more on instruction and inclusion than competition. A board of

directors was formed. Dave initially sent out 200 invitations (400 to 450 youngsters was the target). The fledgling OPBA wound up with an astounding 760 eager participants.



Richard Harris addresses the group on Opening Day

Seventy teams in six divisions, ranging in age from four to 10, emerged. Illinois high school baseball coach of the year Dave Rosene volunteered. Payton Prep's Andy Pohl joined him. Alderman Daley gave her blessings along with a donation. Oz Park supervisor Adele Bach and district manager Brian Loll weighed in with support from the city. Additional encouragement came from Lincoln Central, Sheffield Neighborhood and Old Town Triangle associations. When Mike Lufano in behalf of the Cubs donated \$5000 things really accelerated. Enough funds were raised to even supplement Oz Park maintenance.



Left to right: Mike Lufrano (The Cubs), Alderman Vi Daley, Richard Harris (LCA), Dave Siegel (OPBA Founding President) and Mike Ashbeck (Sheffield Neighbors Assoc.)

"We partnered with a lot of generous folks to create something better than what previously existed," Siegel praises. "It's a league where everyone's a winner." Planning for next year are already in motion. For information contact opba.2010@gmail.com.

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Threatening weather in the morning had many concerned.

"We got very lucky with the weather," observed Jennifer Uson, one of the party's volunteer organizers. "That morning, Tracy (Simmons) and I met at the Farmer's Market under ominous gray clouds. After lunch, though, the sun came out, and we had a lovely party."

For all the kids, the party was an afternoon of non-stop treats and entertainment. Mr. Singer and Kerry Appleberry delighted with songs and dances. Steven Glick worked wonders with balloons by turning them into swords, light sabers, flowers and a variety of animals. Youngsters got a workout in the Bozo Buckets potato sack races.

A big thanks goes out to Kinder Cone's Vivian Lie for providing Halloween and back-to-school crafts. Another big thanks to the many volunteers and Bauler Park supporters.

What started out as a spooky weather day turned into a glorious day for all the little Spooksters.

Reported by Jennifer Uson; Photos: Tracy Simmons, Rodger Owen

















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BOO! Voted LCA's Scary Best Houses

There were some VERY scary homes this year in Lincoln Park for Halloween. Below are photos of the top 4 homes Lincoln Central Association selected as the scariest.









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All across Chicago, the playlots of public schools have become neighborhood recreation centers for residents to enjoy on weekends and after school hours. Our vision for Newberry's playlot is to become a key neighborhood resource fitting of the Lincoln Park community. While we want a great facility for students to use, we also want this to be a shared resource with the community.

With this in mind we are asking neighbors to help with funding the needed improvements to the playground and landscaping of Newberry Academy. Over the summer Friends of Newberry, the parent fundraising arm of the Parent Teacher Organization at the school worked with CPS on a landscape design to make improvements to the yard behind the school. This fall we are launching a campaign to raise money dedicated to making these improvements and adding features such as a turf field and running track to the playlot. Please consider ways to help us with this effort. We

encourage you to give a donation to the Newberry Neighborhood Playlot Campaign sponsored by Friends of Newberry. Your donation is tax deductible and you will be able to see use the tangible results of your contribution. Please email friendsofnewberry@newberryacademy.org to help with the effort or stop by or call the school at 773-534-8000.

Lydia Murray
Chair, Playlot Capital Campaign
Friends of Newberry

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Tips For Safe Fun Any Time of the Year

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When walking

- *Plan your route.* Avoid shortcuts through deserted parks, vacant lots and unlit passages. Walk only on streets with plenty of light and traffic.
- *Don't Loiter.* Remain alert at all times. Be prepared to run if followed. If followed by someone in a car, run in the opposite direction.
- *Change your route as needed.* Avoid unlit doorways and other shadowy areas. At night walk in the middle of the street if necessary until reaching a better illuminated street.

When Biking, Jogging, and other Outdoor Activities

- *Choose routes in advance and vary routes*
- *Avoid biking or jogging at night*
- *If possible, bike or jog with other people*
- *Consider carrying a whistle or shriek alarm*
- *Stay alert by not wearing headphones*
- *Know the area.* Learn the locations of business establishments, hospitals, police and fire stations where you can go for help.

When in Public Places

- *Beware of pickpockets.* Watch out for anyone who jostles you. A good purse has a flap which folds over the opening and fastens at the bottom. Men should carry their wallets in inner or side pockets.
- *In theaters, try to sit near an aisle.* Avoid dark corners or areas of vacant seats at the rear or in the balcony. Do not place your purse in an empty seat next to you.
- *In restaurants or taverns, be wary of strangers.* In conversation, avoid giving your name, residency, or location. Do not leave your purse on the floor or on an empty chair.

Your Automobile

- Cash for Clunkers was a great deal for many folks who wanted to buy a new car, but, because the "clunkers" had to be destroyed, prices for used car parts are now sky-high. This makes it very attractive for thieves to steal your old car and chop it for parts. If at all possible, park your car under a street light or in a secure area.

Let's all have a great time in Chicago. Whatever the season. And remember: Play it safe

Reported by Steve Vandervoort

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