



Ridge Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

October-November 2004

Visit the web site at www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org

A Request

The Park Commissioners ask that parents speak to their children concerning the damage that is being done to the South American Lilies in the pool that is situated in Prospect Park. Children while playing about the pond throw stones, either to skip them across the water or they throw the stones directly at the large leaves of the lilies. The result is that several of the big leaves are badly punctured. Of course, it is understood that the damage is not being done through a spirit of maliciousness, and if the children understand what they are doing it is thought that they would desist from throwing the stones.

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
August 30, 1913

FAMILY CHRONICLES

Small-town Morgan Park in the 1930s and '40s

by Bill Meisel

(Bill was one of the first to welcome us when, as newcomers in 1957, we visited Morgan Park Methodist Church. He has lived in Columbus, Ohio for many years, but was in touch with us this summer and promised to send the boyhood stories he has written for his sons. The following is a portion of this endeavor. Sue Delves)

My parents bought our house, 10717 S. Wood, in Morgan Park, three months before I was born. The builder was Mr. Hoff, who also built the house of the family of pretty Marjorie Secord at about 10711, an upscale version of our own. I remember hearing that construction of our house had been delayed in 1919 by the on-site theft of its lumber. The theft was attributed to a near neighbor. He moved away soon after that!

I played a lot in all of the local parks and playgrounds, but Prospect Park, closest to my home, was by far the most favorite of us kids in the neighborhood. Its half-moon shape is bordered by Prospect, Homewood and Pryor Avenues. We boys loved to climb its trees: "Lonesome Pine" in the center, and the forked pine at the western corner. But mostly, we liked the little grove of thorn apples along the path on the Homewood side. The dozen or so trees were short and sturdy, planted close enough that we could climb from one to another. We played "tree tag" scrambling for hours like monkeys, trying not to be tagged nor falling to the ground, either of which would make us "it".

My leg was broken in the spring of 1930. (I was playing unwisely on the curb in front of Morgan Park Methodist Church before Sunday services and a car brushed me hard enough to do the damage.) That put me into a heavy thigh-to-toe cast for several weeks and kept me out of school past the end of semester. But it didn't keep me from playing tree tag with my friends. I just didn't "trouble" my mom by telling her about the tree tag.

We also played "bike tag", another game we invented. Each of the players tied a 7-8 ft. long piece of dangling string behind his bike. The game could have been called "dogfight" for the slight variation in which everyone playing could be "it" instead of just one as in "tag". Of course, the idea was to come up behind an opponent, run into his string and break it.

We'd race around the park on its regular paths, then on its grass, up and over the mound by the pond, making sure to slow and turn before hitting the low rock curb at the water's edge. Lloyd Turner was too fast one day and ended up with his bike sprawled 15 ft. out, in water 2 ft. deep.

The pond was the fanciest feature in the park. It was oval, 100 ft. long by 40 ft. wide, with cat-tails at one end. There were frogs and goldfish too, and in the spring the shallow edges were crowded with black tadpoles. We'd watch them grow larger and then grow legs. Then all at once they were gone, hopping away to adult life.

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Good Shot... Poor Timing

Last Tuesday Herman Niner, who was twenty-four years old and lived at 119th and Page Streets, was killed on the Rock Island Railroad tracks.

It is said he was shooting pigeons, and after having made a shot he attempted to climb over the bumpers between two freight cars. The train was given a sudden jolt by the engine and this threw Niner to the ground. It was stated the fall broke his neck, which in itself was merciful because fourteen cars passed over his body.

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
November 8,
1913



Newsletter Item Prompts Response From Great-Grandson of Charles Goes

Dear Editor,

I have a copy of the Ridge Historical Society Newsletter, June-July 2004, and enjoyed seeing my great grandfather's obituary notice in the newsletter.

It has information we were not aware of.

The Goes family established Goes & Quensel in 1879 and, by 1890, they built a home at 103rd and Charles Street which they occupied until 1921 when my great grandmother, Mrs. Goes, built a home in South Shore at 6757 Euclid Avenue. This home was occupied by my family until 1957 when my grandfather, Charles B. Goes, Jr., relocated to 2122 West Howland Avenue in Beverly until 1977, when he retired from Goes Litho and moved to Wisconsin to be near his daughter.

His cousin, George Goes, Sr., and his family resided in Beverly from 1921-1985 when they moved to Flossmoor. George, Jr. was very active in the Beverly Hills Tennis Club.



Welcome to the following
new members:

Jim and Eleanor Gorski
Bill and Becky Gierhan
John and Monica
Somerville
Declan O'Connor
Nan Barsotti

Charles Goes, Sr. was a founder of the Beverly Country Club. He always took the train to Englewood Station for his commute to work. His two sons and daughters attended Morgan Park Academy prior to it being a military academy. His line sent 12 graduates through the school, including myself, Charles B. Goes IV, who graduated in 1966.

The Goes family moved to Beverly to enable his father-in-law, "Opa" (who was caught in the fire and scorched his eyes from smoke) to view soft colors of green and breathe pure air in his retiring years. At the time the area was called Washington Heights.

I would be interested in helping the research program and obtaining any family information.

Sincerely,

Charles B. Goes IV, President
GOES LITHOGRAPHING COMPANY

Ridge Historical Society NEWSLETTER

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Open to the public Tuesdays, Thursdays and
Sundays, 2 to 5 pm, or by appointment.

FAMILY CHRONICLES

Continued from Page 1

Water entered the pond from a very natural looking jumble of granite rocks, to gurgle over a little waterfall into the pond. Of course we drank "spring water" from above the upper falls.

Prospect Park was kept beautiful and immaculate by just one man, Mr. Vinke. Besides tending the grass, the trees and the pond, he kept extensive flower beds in constant bloom from early spring through October. There was a succession of bulbs — crocus, tulips, iris and lilies. Then came snapdragons, petunias and marigolds, ending with chrysanthemums at the end of the season

Mr. Vinke cycled his bulbs and grew seedlings in beds next to his house near the curving intersections of Church, Prospect and Hermosa. By his hand Prospect Park was lovely. He was friendly to us kids, merely cau-

tioning us to be careful as we played in the trees near his work shed in the park. Everyone seemed to take personal pride and was careful of his gardens. The park was his life.

Then in 1933 Chicago's politics changed. Local park districts were abolished as the huge Chicago Park District took over. Mr. Vinke's skill and devotion went for naught as he was replaced by someone from "the right party". An old man, out of work at the depth of the depression and likely brokenhearted, Mr. Vinke took his own life. Rest in peace and beds of flowers, Mr. Vinke, thank you and God bless you.

(Editor's Note: In recent years, CAMP the local improvement association, and the Park District have worked to restore and tend the Jens Jensen landscape of the little park.)



This 1934 photograph shows the Sunday School Class of Morgan Park Methodist Church. Bill Meisel is third from the right in the front row.

Photograph courtesy of the Morgan Park United Methodist Church

A Costly Favor

Last Wednesday morning, Mrs. M.G. Price, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Long of Western Avenue, while backing her Cadillac auto into the alley south of Becker's Drug Store, in order to turn it, noticed that a wagon along Commercial Avenue needed a little more room to go by. In order to give it the necessary space, she slowly backed a little farther into the alley than she otherwise would have done, with the result that the right rear fender grazed the large south window of Mr. Becker's store and broke it into hundreds of pieces.

Mr. Shults had Owen and Richard Conrad sleep in the store Wednesday night, after hanging mosquito netting in the opening, and on Thursday a new glass was put in.

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
August 2, 1913

A Narrow Escape

Mr. Leslie Perrine and a party of friends had a narrow escape from being struck by a Rock Island train at the Morgan Avenue crossing last Friday evening. Were it not for some quick work in throwing on the emergency brake several of our young people might have been severely injured, if not killed.

Must we wait till someone meets his death to have precautions taken to protect persons passing this crossing? Even a light would help a lot.

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
June 21, 1913

Preliminary Report of Conservation Assessment of RHS

Editor's Note: The Ridge Historical Society recently participated in a Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) funded by a grant administered through Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The two-fold purpose of this grant was to assess our stewardship of our collections as well as the condition of our museum building, Driscoll House. This preliminary report was presented to the Board of Directors by Jennifer Kenny, and is in advance of the final report to be submitted to the Society by the CAP Assessors. The Editor felt that the information contained in this report is especially important to our members.

Day 1: Morning Tour of RHS, Afternoon Intensive "getting to know you" session

The assessors, Neil Cockerline and Linda Grubb arrived early and were greeted by Niko Herzog (RHS liaison). The assessors were very interested in viewing all interior spaces of the house, as well as the exterior, and asked questions throughout the tour to learn more about how the house was used by RHS. Bill Sandstrom was on hand to answer questions about any work that had been completed on the house, our maintenance schedule, and other miscellaneous house concerns.

The assessors started by explaining the purpose of their assessment and their goals for the two day visit. They wished to spend the first afternoon "getting to know RHS," asking numerous questions about how we operate, staffing, budgeting, programming, outreach, visitation numbers, etc. They told us that in order to best serve us with this assessment and make relevant recommendations about RHS, the house, and the collections, they needed to know the good and the bad, what works and what doesn't. The conversation was very serious, with important and pertinent questions. The assessors will provide us with a time-based report, to help us prioritize in preparing a long range preservation plan for our collections, to develop funding strategies, and to take important steps regarding our museum site.

Here is a list summarizing what seemed the most important points the assessors made on the first day:

We need to hire an executive director. After over 30 years of existence, it is time we take this next step in our natural development.

They told us that an executive director, who is solely responsible for day to day activities (including hiring/firing of any other personnel) following the policies established by the board, is key to the success of any local museum. Currently we have what the assessors called a "working board," with principal tasks carried out by a volunteer and hard-working board. The goal is to become a "standard board," with three primary functions:

1. Hire/fire an executive director;
2. Raise money;
3. Set policy.

We need to make accessibility to our collections a priority. In order to write and receive grants, we need to identify specific projects, starting with a small and manageable project (at the \$5000 level this coming spring) and then working our way up to larger and more costly projects. We should increase our budget for the archives (archival entering and maintenance, curatorial and archival supplies line items) to show the foundations/grant awarding organizations that we are serious about our collections. A great deal of funds are available to support collections efforts (i.e. specific projects and staffing for those projects). There is also funding for the house itself, since many condition aspects of the house (fixing water problems, HVAC, foundation stabilization) directly affect the collections housed within it.

They will recommend the Ridge Historical Society as a prime candidate for a MAP assessment, (A grant program like the CAP, specifically dealing with board and regulatory issues) which will guide the board with the governance of our institution. Neil was concerned about the number and tenure of board members. He thought that we have too much turn over on our board every year (1/2 of our board goes off each year). He thought we should have three year terms instead, 1/3 of terms expiring each year to give us more stability. When asked about the voting status of the emeritus board, he suggested that we don't want to lose the important advice and efforts of emeritus board members, but believed that by giving emeritus board members a vote, the board grew exponentially and became unwieldy, which was not healthy.

We need to work further on our Collections Management Policy, narrowing our collections scope and reviewing the legalities (a serious

Continued on Page 5

CAP Preliminary Report (continued from Page 4)

issue we have underestimated) of our de-accessions policy. Neil's organization will provide support, but he thought we should also consult statewide organizations in regards to Illinois as pertains to collections management.

They were dismayed that we had not progressed very far in some important aspects from 1974, based on a report written after the visit of a field service rep. from the Illinois State Historical Society. RHS, after 30 years, has still not addressed many issues of concern back in 1974. The same concerns that were brought up then remain concerns in 2004.

Day Two: Detailed documentation by assessors and further interviews

On the second day, the assessors spent much of their time scouring every space within and without the house, documenting the condition of the building and the collections with extensive notes and photographs. Here are the highlights:

Linda Grubb sensed some concern about the locational permanence of RHS. She said that we have to decide, once and for all, if we are going to stay in the Graver/Driscoll House. Permanence and commitment to this building is crucial when applying for grants – no grants will be awarded to work on the house (to stabilize the collections) if there is any question that we will be moving elsewhere. Unfortunately, our indecision to stay in the house may prevent us from receiving grants and will likely be in her report. This decision should be made by the board A.S.A.P.

She did point out the strengths and weaknesses of the Graver/Driscoll House that we should consider in our decision:

There is interpretive value in the house. The house represents an era in our community's history and the people who lived and built on the Ridge. It also reflects the natural history of the community just by being on the crest of the ridge.

The house is a significant structure in both the Longwood Drive local and Ridge National Register of Historic Places districts. This could give us priority when applying for grants.

The Graver/Driscoll House is the only house

atop Longwood Drive (a so-named historic district) open to the public. (While the Castle is somewhat accessible, it is not truly representational of a home on the ridge.)

RHS is a role model in this historic and architecturally significant community. We need to think about the message we are sending out to the community by moving out of a historic home and "bad mouthing" our historic house publicly. We must be aware that the community and others are watching how we respect or disrespect our historic property.

The architectural integrity of the house, that is, the features of the house that add to its historic character, was discussed. The house does retain excellent integrity on the exterior and well represents a 1920s Tudor Revival mansion on the ridge by one of the community's most important local architects, John Hetherington. However, the house did have a fire in the 1960s that has compromised the architectural integrity of the interior. This could be to our advantage since there are very few character defining features that need to be preserved. We could undertake an extensive remodeling project on the first floor, without destroying architecturally significant materials. Most museums housed in historic structures have to worry about historic trim, ornament and floor plan – we do not. She suggested we remove the kitchen and office, reconfigure the plan of the first floor, and dedicate it entirely to exhibit space. This will also bring us within requirements for wheelchair accessibility to all exhibits, which is of major significance when applying for grants. Second floor rooms can then fulfill office, storage and work space needs.

Due to weight loads, the architect said we will need to relocate our library. She said, although she hadn't studied the structure intensively, she thought that "unless we like plaster in our living room" we should place the library on a lower level, such as the basement that has a concrete floor.

We may have a zoning issue since our initial special use permit in an R-1 residential district was contingent upon RHS having a caretaker residing on the premises. She suggested we look into this matter A.S.A.P.

A monthly maintenance plan is vital to establishing ourselves as credible stewards of our collections. If we don't have one, funding bodies will not look upon us favorably for grants.

Big Waste of Water

Last Saturday night some miscreant tampered with the fire plug on Ada Street near Morgan Avenue and turned the water on. It was discovered early Sunday morning and reported to the Village authorities. The street and prairie were flooded.

The police are on the lookout for the offender.

Various opinions have been advanced as to whom the party or parties may be. One was that some misguided colored person had turned the water on, thinking thereby to wreak vengeance on the powers that be because of the recent arrest of two colored boys.

Another opinion was the white people had done it with the idea of casting suspicion on the colored people.

And so it goes.

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
June 28, 1913



NEWS BRIEFS

OUR MOTTO: IF IT FITS IT'S NEWS TO US!

Police Protection

Thanksgiving night about 12 o'clock a man jumped from behind a bush near Mr. MacCoy's porch. Lorin MacCoy, a boy of fifteen, hurried to the Village Hall to summon Police-man Scott.

Upon arriving at the house, which had been unoccupied since early afternoon, Mr. Scott said: "You go through the basement and let me in the kitchen door."

The boy didn't even have a match, let alone any weapon of defense, but he saw his duty and went into the house, down through the basement, and opened the kitchen door as requested by our guardian of the peace.

Can you beat it?

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
December 6,
1913

Ever heard of a Smartboard? If you'd been hanging around the Ridge Historical Society lately, you'd know the name! It is a fabulous tool for presenting educational programs, and the one destined for RHS has finally arrived. (To learn more about this exciting technology, go to www.smarttech.com on the Internet and check out these interactive whiteboards.)

Thanks to late local resident and veteran teacher, Dorothy Ann Saly and her attorney, Jean Roche, also of this community, grants from the Saly estate were carefully dispersed to BAPA, the Beverly Art Center, Morgan Park Academy and the Ridge Historical Society in late 2002. Further funds have been awarded to local schools and used to create a professional development series for teachers, now beginning its second, exciting season.

The event presented last fall at RHS was highly praised by all who participated in the two lively, interactive workshops. This year's offering looks to top it in many ways, including use of the Smartboard as a program tool.

Essentially, the Smartboard is a huge, interactive monitor... a big screen and a mouse all in one. (You touch the screen and your hand becomes the cursor - how cool is that?!) Included in the package are the Smart Notebook and other Smart software, which can bring to life an amazing blend of resources, including the Internet, photos, maps, movies, music and more.

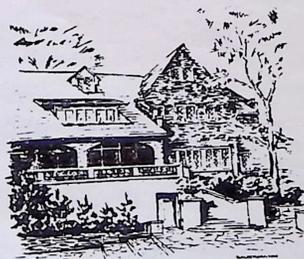
After an initial \$10,000 for local educational efforts, RHS was awarded an extra \$5,000 for the Smartboard - with the stipulation that it be shared with BAPA and made available to the community at large for educational purposes. The board and accessories to date have cost \$3,410, and just under \$750 was spent on a lap-top computer to run it. What's left has been earmarked to cover the cost of

RHS's new Internet access. As yet, just the right kind of furniture is still needed to hold some equipment during use. If you have portable pieces (suitable for a lap-top and a projection unit) to donate, please let us know.

Next on the agenda will be a training session on Smartboard features and applications. RHS is seeking interested parties to attend - those willing to help with creative educational research, development & design, presentation, or merely to provide some technical assistance. The return will be hands-on experience with this neat new tool, plus other potential perks. Our files are filled with local history materials dealing with art, architecture, gardening and cooking, plus many other subjects than those considered strict history, and there is fun to be had creating learning programs around them. Please call the Ridge Historical Society to get the ball rolling.

Don't forget to plug the Dorothy Ann Saly Teacher Enrichment Program series at RHS in November! These fun FREE workshops for teachers are geared to grades 5 through 8, but are also intended to be "adjustable" up or down. We are offering CPDUs, great programs, delicious food and more to all teachers who attend. Please encourage your schools to participate! For further information call RHS at 773-881-1675.

Linda Lamberty





This undated photograph shows a Sunday School class from the Morgan Park Methodist Church on the waterfall rocks in Prospect Park.

Photograph courtesy Morgan Park United Methodist Church



This postcard image from the RHS collections is of the lily pond in Prospect Park. The sidebar item on Page 1 makes mention of children throwing stones at the lily pads.

Foxy! Foxy!
Foxy!

It's a well-known saying that "The way to a man's pocketbook his through is stomach." Here comes the Woman's Guild with a great big dinner of turkey and fixings, all for half a dollar. The Woman's Guild mind you! Yes, but on the way out of the Parish House you pass by the booths of the bazaar of fancy hand work, embroidered linens, what-you-call-thems and what-not, and bang! There goes another quarter! Well, Well, bless 'em, what would we do without the women after all?

Morgan Park
"Town Talk"
November 29,
1913



C.L. ANDERSON
Morgan Park

Real Estate, Loans
and Insurance

Choice vacant for
cash or on time
payments. Bungalows
sold part cash and
balance in monthly
payments like rent.

OFFICE
11135 Commercial Ave.

1913 Ad in Town Talk

Pleads for Squirrels

One of the pleasurable parts of putting the newsletter together is digging through the newspaper archives to find items for the sidebars. I find that the writing style in these old papers is often quite witty and infused with subtle sarcasm. I especially enjoyed this piece from the December 20, 1913 issue of Town Talk. It is all too familiar to anyone who has done battle with our furry friends, the squirrels.

Dave Daruszka

Pres. Kimmey reported the receipt of a letter from A.M. Duller, 10933 Fairfield Avenue, concerning what Mr. Duller claimed was the wanton destruction of squirrels. The letter, which was read to the board, referred to the squirrels as harmless, and asserted that they should be protected, and mentioned the case that came to Mr. Duller's attention,

where a resident of Prospect Avenue had gone out one morning and shot nineteen.

The ordinances were examined, and it was found that Morgan Park has an ordinance prohibiting the shooting of firearms within the village limits.

Pres. Kimmey asked some of the police who were present as to their possible knowledge of any shooting and they knew of none. He added that the statement that nineteen squirrels were shot in one day sounded peculiar, and that he intended to ask Mr. Duller for the name of the party who did the shooting. He also stated that there were two sides to the question, some people claiming that the squirrels were an annoyance, and in many cases had taken the products of fruit trees and gardens.

Ridge Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Ridge Historical Society
10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643

DATED
MATERIAL

FIRST CLASS
MAIL

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