



# My Ravinia

## Ed Kugler, Entrepreneur Extraordinaire

By Becca Servedio

Ed Kugler, an entrepreneur who has spent most of his life in Highland Park, helped create the Earth Day Taste-A-Thons at Indian Trail Elementary School, and also started an organic garden project with a science teacher there. The Earth Day Taste-A-Thons spread to all eight schools in the district as part of his “Try Before You Buy” philosophy, aimed at providing produce that would offer healthier food choices for the children of Highland Park. When his son started High School in 2005, Kugler extended his efforts there until 2010.

Two generations of students have now been introduced to hundreds of different organic and natural food samples, which Kugler said were important to eat. In addition to the schools, Kugler in 2004 started a Trick or Treat Taste-A-Thon on McCraren Road. Over a ten-year period, this practice extended to other locations, such as Barberry Road, Burton and Pleasant Avenues in Ravinia, the Highland Park Community House Halloween Event, the Downtown Highland Park Trick or Treat Days and some Sunset Park Halloween events. In 2010, Kugler created an Organic Teaching Garden, with a Taste-A-Thon experience at the end of each visit to the garden for the next 12 years. The produce being grown was sold at his first attempt to start a market of his own, which he called the Highland Park Farmers Market at Port Clinton Square. After operating there for a couple of years, he moved it to another location at the North Shore Auto Group on Highway 41 at Park Avenue.

Kugler then tried to provide an evening Farmers Market on Thursdays at the Harvest Chapel Church parking lot, but that didn't work out. He started to be a vendor on Wednesdays at the Ravinia Farmers Market in 2012, selling his organic produce with Robert Boyce from Natural Environments. Boyce had been one of Ed's vendors at the Port Clinton market and they both began working together growing organic produce. The Organic Teaching Garden affiliated with the Highland Park High School environmental science classes that Ed started in 2010 ended up introducing more than 200 students annually to the 101 Dummy Version on how to grow organic food.

It was during his years at college that Kugler felt he was missing something on campus, and looked elsewhere for an experience that could help him stay healthy by eating healthy. Intrigued by differing perspectives, he said, “I learned off campus at the natural food stores, co-ops, and vegetarian restaurants in East Lansing, Michigan, that you are what you eat.” From that point on, his perspective changed dramatically into wanting to regulate his diet and set a future course in that field for his life's goals.

In 1976 Ed started traveling around the country to learn more about organic and sustainable lifestyles. During his travels the following year, he created a rustic booth at the Wisconsin Renaissance Fair, selling freshly handmade fruit tarts, which helped introduce him to a fellow who had a sprouting business. After the fair ended, he went to Minnesota to learn more about sprouting.



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## Neighbors Gather to Inspect Firefighters' New Digs on Familiar Site

By Jeff Stern

The word certainly got out regarding the Open House/Re-Dedication of the Fire House for Highland Park's Engine 32 and Ambulance 32 at 692 Burton Avenue on July 15. A crowd of somewhere near 200 curious Ravinia neighbors, their kids and others turned out to inspect the new digs, enjoy coffee and other treats, and meet the crews who serve the emergency needs of most residents and businesses south of the city's core.

Like so much of the neighborhood, what gives Ravinia its charm and appeal is the constant upgrading of both the traditional style and function of its architectural gems. The old train station is but one such example. Said to be the oldest still serving commuters in the entire metropolitan area, the frame structure had separate waiting rooms for men and women when it was opened in 1889, largely so ladies wouldn't have to endure the cigar smoke and use of cuspidors by gentlemen of the day.

Building Ravinia's new fire house on the same property and with the same address as the original 1929 structure provides much the same continuity. The tradition of keeping some of the old with the new is reflected in the new house by using two of the actual pedestrian entrance doors from the old house at the entrance to the exercise room in the basement of the new building. The timbered look of the exterior is also in keeping with the 1929 design of the old house.



Engine 32 and Ambulance 32 were parked on the driveway of the new fire house so firefighters could answer visitors' questions about how the apparatus worked. (Photo by Jeff Stern)



Fire Chief Joe Schrage, Mayor Nancy Rotering and City Manager Ghida Neukirch were delighted to receive gifts from RNA Board Members Jeff Levin and Jeff Stern of prints of the Fire Department's 1940s headquarters together with a unique photograph by fine art photographer Mark Hirsch of the 1929 and new Ravinia fire stations superimposed with each other. (Photo by Tim Olks)

Perhaps the most noticeable feature that makes the new house different from fire houses in other suburban communities are the separate sleeping accommodations for the crews that are on duty for 24-hour shifts, compared to the common bunkrooms of the past. Another is the storm room just off the apparatus floor that provides a secure space for crews to wait out a severe storm that might be damaging other structures in the neighborhood. There is also an elevator serving all three floors.

A highlight of the official ceremony marking the re-dedication of the fire house was the presentation by the Ravinia Neighbors Association (RNA) of a unique photo of the new facility to Mayor Nancy Rotering and Fire Chief Joe Schrage. Superimposed on the photo is an image of the engine that went into service when the original fire station was opened in 1929.

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## A Love Letter to Roger Williams, Ravinia

By Maddie Yastrow

The truest gem in Highland Park does not lie on Central or Second. Less than 2 miles away from City Hall and steps from the renowned Ravinia Festival is a little street called Roger Williams.

RW has taken many shapes in my time here. Once a bustling strip with a diner, French bistro, BBQ joint, pharmacy, convenience store, video store, gas station and full-service grocery, the early aughts brought somewhat of a stall to the “town” locals call Ravinia. (It’s part of Highland Park). Walgreens eventually came through and took over the plot once known as Safway grocery store (not part of the large chain), the video store turned into a nail salon and storefronts remained somewhat empty save for a hippie driven novelty shop called Superfine Things and a few dry cleaners.

Post-pandemic the ‘hood is on the up and up. Populated by city-longing Millennials and the boomers who have stuck around for their grandkids, the less than 1 mile stretch of a street called Roger Williams has action from Green bay Road to the banks of Lake Michigan.

Sure, our Walgreens is no match for the big one uptown with its cool toned surfaces and culturally appropriate grocery section, but we’re really glad to have it. I’ll never forget receiving my first SMS message in that newly paved parking lot. Those who remember the fry-grilled Chicken, Baked Mostaccioli, and Turkey burger deeply miss Ravinia BBQ, but we’ve got an always-bopping brewery with almost too spicy Mexican food and adjacent burger takeaway in its place. Sushi doesn’t get more accessible than Happi Sushi, Viaggio has blessed us with city-worthy Italian, and in the mind of this lifer, only one deep dish pizza exists and that’s obviously Piero’s. How else were you supposed to make plans with cute boys if you didn’t get a pizza delivered on Fridays after school?! AOL? As if!

Vegan or not, Chunky Scone’s got fresh sourdough in addition to a selection of savory specials & sweets. Most of all, we’re all just the absolute luckiest to say Abigail’s American Bistro is on our street. There’s not a single restaurant in downtown HP (or Highwood) that boasts such a consistent level of excellence.

\*Insert shameless plug, while we’re on subject please come grab some lovingly made “grub” at my eponymous shop, Maddie’s Market. We’re kind of known for our expertly made salads, homemade soups and dill pickle hummus, but we’ve also got the best snacks in town.\*

The market, which was a pipedream made real by Covid, is sandwiched between shops owned by some of the hardest working artisans/experts I have ever had the honor of knowing. Dana Reed Designs on the corner of RW and Pleasant is helmed by husband and wife team Dana & Scott Reed. Not only are they talented, but they’re cool as hell. They’ve actually got STYLE. On my other side is Just Wellness and if you know owner Sam Gao, well, then ya just know. Beyond his ability to heal your body (and mine weekly), Sam has that special something that just speaks to your soul. In addition to massage and bodywork, a recent remodel allows clients to decompress with a float in a zero-gravity tank or reboot in an infrared sauna that can be booked by the hour.

East of the tracks on RW you can enjoy an organic nail spa called Ency, a vintage shop, a well-lauded thrift store, an atelier of sorts, or you can fuel up on fresh roasts at Astra Coffee and then have your portrait taken by Jeff Cohen.

Our brand-new Fire Station sits next to the always busy Taylor Reese salon. Get styled by Scott, color with Bridget, waxed by Ellen, or chat with Fautini any day of the week.

That’s all in just 2 blocks AND there’s plenty of open storefront just hoping for the landlord to invest in another small biz.

I haven’t even touched on the incredible Farmer’s Market on Wednesdays curated and passionately maintained by longtime resident Ed Kugler or the absolute hottest event in town, Food Truck Thursdays (both at Jens Jensen Park).

*(Continued on page 13)*

## An Intriguing New Shop on Roger Williams Avenue

By Elliott Miller & Carol Sanes-Miller

In 1980 my wife, Carol and I bought the estate of a retired Chicago book dealer -- about 10,000 books stored in a warehouse. This came about when I was working for The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago--a charitable and social service organization. My colleagues at the Federation had contacted several book dealers in Chicago to see, and hopefully purchase, the collection, but nothing resulted from their efforts, so I bought the books, rented a truck, and Carol and I moved them into storage.

William (Bill) Logan Newman, owner of A-1 Books on Michigan Avenue in Chicago, had passed away. His nephew and heir had recently donated the books to the Jewish Federation. Originally, there were about 200 boxes and many loose books in the collection, which was stored in a rather dark and gloomy room on an upper floor of a bonded warehouse in Chicago's River North neighborhood. In his later years, Newman had practically lived in that warehouse storeroom. Having provisioned the space with an easy chair and floor lamp, he spent his days reading and writing there.

The owner of the warehouse, a man from Highland Park named Al, regaled us with several stories about Mr. Newman. One was particularly memorable.



What you'll see in the display window at 469 Roger Williams  
(Photo by Jeff Stern)

Newman more than once had fallen asleep in his storeroom, thereby missing the daily closing of the bonded warehouse. On one occasion, however, Bill, somewhat distraught, called Al at his home from the warehouse office, telling him what happened. Al responded, "Well, there's some food in the kitchen. Just stay there until morning when we open."

"But Al," Bill replied desperately, "it's Friday night and it's a holiday weekend!" So, Al found himself driving down to Chicago from Highland Park late that night to unlock the building and let Bill out.



Elliott Miller sits where he can greet those looking for the unusual  
(Photo by Jeff Stern)

Much of the book collection mirrored Bill Newman's interests. For example, among the oldest books were several written by Sir Francis Bacon, published in the 1620s. Newman believed it had actually been Sir Francis who wrote Shakespeare's plays. At the time of his death, Bill was in the process of writing a book on the topic, which he never finished. Other interests of Newman included the literature of D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce, L. Frank Baum (Wizard of Oz), and anything on the topic of chess.

(Continued on page 9)

## Ed Kugler, Entrepreneur Extraordinaire (Cont'd)

(Continued from page 1)

He then started his first business growing over 10 varieties of sprouts. Over the next three years he opened The Sprout Shop in Highwood. In 1981, he became involved with his family's business as his father's health was declining, but still maintained his interest in the organic natural food industry.

In 1988 he created the Taste of Health taste-a-thon concept at Chicago's largest block party, called The Halsted Street Market Days, that over 200,000 people attended, giving out samples that supported his Taste Marketing company's motto "Try Before You Buy". He also became a brand ambassador for over a hundred manufacturers, which led to his representing them to the public, helping bring more awareness to each company. Besides being a brand ambassador, he has also taken part in over 300 such events since the 1980s. When asked if he had any advice for others, he said, "I've learned that by working or observing, you can teach yourself what you need to know".

Kugler's main focus has changed a bit from being in the industry for so long, but it still revolves around similar concepts as when he first started. Currently, he is running an Organic Teaching Garden and the Ravinia Farmers Market which helps build community and teach others about organic foods, the experience and the taste of it, and how to grow organic. He has created internships within his garden that help him fulfill his interest in teaching others about organics. This year he also created the "Taste of Ravinia" to help bring more attention to the Ravinia Business District.

Ed sincerely hopes people understand the reason "WHY" they should go to a farmers market or buy organic products. "Three important reasons to go to such a market are because that's how you can purchase the freshest/healthiest products locally made, support the local economy/carbon footprint, and get to know the people who make your food. Also, organic farming is the only farming method that can keep the eco/bio systems alive, it is totally sustainable, and when you purchase products sold there you support the well-being of the planet. ■

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## Neighbors Gather to Inspect Firefighters' New Digs on Familiar Site (cont'd)

(Continued from page 3)

The photo was the creation of Mark Hirsch, a fine art photographer who lives in the area and has a gallery at Port Clinton Square. The RNA also presented the Fire Department with two framed prints of the 1940s-era fire station on Green Bay Road that was later moved behind the Water Tower to become the Youth Center. Summarizing the positive observations of the scores of visitors who toured the new fire house during the July 15 festivities, Chief Schrage said, "The Fire Station Open House was a huge success! Our firefighters are truly grateful for the incredible support from the residents of this community. Having a new fire station helps provide a more efficient response and advances the opportunity for enhanced service. We are proud to be an essential part of Highland Park!" ■

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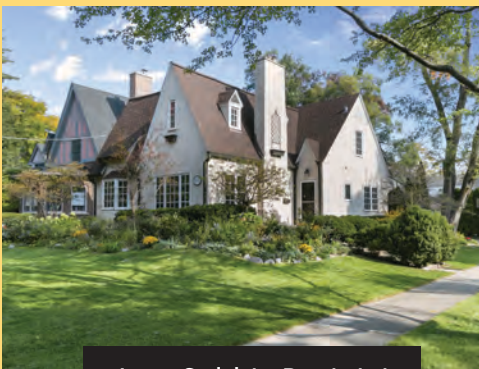
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## An Intriguing New Shop on Roger Williams Avenue (Cont'd)

*(Continued from page 5)*

At the time we purchased the books, we had the idea that we might someday open a bookstore, perhaps when we retired. Well, here we are, 43 years later. I retired eight years ago, and my wife soon will. It's now or never. We have leased the former jewelry store at 469 Roger Williams Avenue and have set up our shop, "Ravinia Books, Antiques, Etc." We are located next to Vintage Rescue and are enthusiastic about our little stretch of Roger Williams becoming a destination for interesting shopping. We have a nice view of Jensen Park and the Rosenwald Memorial, and are situated only steps from the Ravinia Train Station.

Most of the original book collection has remained in storage until now, boxes not having been opened since 1980. It's very much a literary treasure hunt. Aside from books, we are also selling antiques, glassware, hand-made linens, and all sorts of things we have acquired over the years.



*Ravinia Books, Antiques, Etc. is a "new kid" on a well-known Ravinia block (Photo by Jeff Stern)*



*Someone's treasure beckons for adoption at 469 Roger Williams (Photo by Jeff Stern)*

As we open our new shop, and in homage to Bill Newman, we have created a small display consisting of two seminal books on chess playing from the collection: "The Chess Player's Handbook" and "Chess Praxis" by Howard Staunton (published in the 1870s).

It was Staunton who, in the 1850s, gave the chess world the iconic game piece designs (king, queen, knight, etc.) that we know today and are still required for competition. Also displayed is a relatively modern chess book from the 1970s that contains fantastic and humorous illustrations by British artist Alan Cracknell. Of course, there are other chess-related books for sale. We expect to exhibit books on other topics from time to time.

*(Continued on page 13)*



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## Vintage Rescue

By Izzy Tolpin

Are you looking for a cool store that's a bit out of the box? Vintage Rescue is just around the corner! When I walked into the store, I was amazed at the variety of vintage that rested on the shelves. Before doing the interview for this article, I procrastinated and wandered around the store in search of some cool jewelry. It just drew me in! I found so much of what owner Faye calls "excellent junk" on my search that I had to take a step back and try to focus on the task at hand. When I finally did start the interview, it was just as interesting as the store.

Vintage Rescue opened in Ravinia on February 1st of this year, upon which it received a warm welcome from the community. However, that wasn't the first time owners Faye and Richard Rosenberg opened a store of this kind. They were lawyers by trade and also ran a vintage store called Antiques Etcetera. They moved the store to Ravinia so they could be closer to home. Now retired, both Faye and Richard can now focus on their passion for antiques.

Becoming a unique store in the neighborhood was easy for them. Any type of vintage you can think of lies within Vintage Rescue. From clothes to cameras, everything is a best seller. However, the music is a specialty. Many kids from Highland Park High School come in to look at vinyl records. But if you're looking to spice things up Vintage Rescue also sells Galena Canning products, which contain sauces and dips. Sometimes, people come in just to buy those delicious dips.

Even though from the outside Vintage Rescue might seem small, I assure you the inside is a different story. There is a kids' room with vintage toys, books and kids' vintage clothes. I could spend hours on end reading the many volumes of Archie Comics stocked on the shelves. However, if books aren't your style, you can search the room of vintage fashion, which has every type of clothing you can think of, plus purses and accessories.

I highly recommend that you stop by. Vintage is so much fun and good for the environment. On top of that, the store atmosphere is super welcoming. When I asked



(Photo credit: Jeff Stern)

Faye who her ideal customer was, she said anyone who takes joy in looking at everything. It's clear that the Rosenbergs put their hearts and souls into their business. They are open Wednesday through Saturday 10-5, and will be open some Sundays in the summer. ■



## Progress on Clavey Road Reconstruction Project Continues

By Jeff Stern

Work on the Clavey Road Reconstruction Project is largely completed but will require landscaping and some other aspects of the project to await the next planting season. Meanwhile, motor vehicles will continue to operate through the construction zone, with occasional delays for ongoing work, as has been the case since the project began.

As of the end of July, new curbing aligned both sides of the roadway, leaving only a final layer of blacktop to smooth the ride between Green Bay Road and the overpass across Route 41. Already completed are an enlarged bridge across the Skokie River, a new sewer system beneath the roadway, and the realignment of fire hydrants on the north side of the roadway.



Final blacktopping, scheduled for completion in September, will feature a safety island for pedestrians crossing Clavey between Hillside Dr. and Hastings Ave. (Photo by Jeff Stern)



Sod is to be provided later this summer around the pedestrian/bicycle path. (Photo by Jeff Stern)

The new pedestrian/bike path parallel and just south of the roadway also appears all but complete and awaits only the laying of new sod on either side.

It's all still a work in progress, but the improvements in roadway, pedestrian and cyclist comfort and safety will be enhanced and enjoyed by all who use Clavey for years to come. ■

## A Love Letter to Roger Williams, Ravinia (Cont'd)

*(Continued from page 4)*

Oh yeah! Our namesake! That place actually named Ravinia Festival! On any given night from Memorial Day past Labor Day, you can hear music from the likes of Santana, Sting, Carrie Underwood, Kenny Loggins, and even the Philharmonic in a state-of-the-art outdoor amphitheater right in our backyard. I can always hear it from mine, just as most homeowners in the area.

This town within a town is an incredibly unique microcosm of the Midwest. Sure, it's partly due to the concentration of wealth, but maybe it's just the absolute awe-inspiring strength and resilience Highland Park has shown the world since tragedy struck our town last Summer. We're still standing and we're still patriotic AF.

And yeah, I grew up here. My late Grandma Didi went to HPHS. But, now, as a "not quite 40-year-old" I choose to be here. I feel more connected than ever and I'm excited to invest more of myself into in this community.

Cheers to all that's left in our "100 days of summer...and, please join me in this little ditty...

"We're from Highland Park... and we couldn't be prouder...if ya can't hear us.... we'll shout a little louder." ■

## An Intriguing New Shop on Roger Williams Avenue (Cont'd)

*(Continued from page 9)*

Tastes in literature change over time, however, so we recently acquired several other book collections that became available. One included a large number of titles in science fiction and fantasy from the estate of a retired Northwestern University physics professor. We have added books from our personal collections of literature and children's games, puzzles, and collectable books, ephemera, even a vintage dollhouse. We also have a strong, moderately priced Judaica collection of books and objects, and have just added a number of items and store fixtures following the closure of Arthur Feldman's Gallery.

We are especially proud of our "Weird and Wonderful" section. Books on such esoteric topics as "The Dimwit's Dictionary," "Sin in the Second City," "A Lexicon of Stupidity," "Medical Curiosities," and "Amulets and Talismans," can be found. We also feature a dramatic display of Vaseline Glass (also known as Uranium

Glass), which glows an eerie green under ultraviolet (black) light. The effect is really weird and wonderful.

Carol's collection of rescued textiles – intricately-made doilies, table linens and bedspreads are available, as well as silver and marcasite jewelry, mechanical pencils, fountain and other pens, and a variety of camping gear, supplies, and pocketknives.

Come see us and let us know what YOU are looking for. Ask to add to our "wish list" book, where you can log items of interest to you that we may come across during our "hunting expeditions." In any event, do stop by and say hello! ■

## Ruffwood: A Post Mortem for 980 Dean Avenue

By Elliott Miller

In a previous issue of this newsletter we discussed Ruffwood, the house of William R. Ruffner, which was located at the corner of Dean and Cedar. Ruffwood was built by William Rogers Ruffner in 1906, the same year he became the president of his firm, on five acres of land along the north side of the Cary Avenue Ravine at Dean Avenue. He owned the entire corner of Dean and Cedar. Ruffner built himself a resort, complete with tennis court, swimming pool, skating rink in winter, and gardens.

A study of the Ruffwood architecture indicates the architect was Lawrence Buck, who lived at the south-east corner of Marshman and Baldwin. His house is still there. Buck, who designed a number of houses in Highland Park and East Rogers Park in Chicago, was heavily influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement of the early 1900s. He was active in Highland Park from 1906 until his death in 1929.

Over the years, additions were built on the house, and garages were added. Recently, Ruffwood was on the market for sale for several years without a buyer. Over that time, the house deteriorated.

A neighbor purchased 980 Dean earlier this year, and the house was demolished in four days. The new owner will build a swimming pool to replace the house. The detached garage is being kept to become a pool house.



So ironically, parts of the original Ruffwood property have been rejoined and a new swimming pool is being built. Ruffner's resort is being resurrected in a sense, even if it has a few modifications. ■



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## Chunky Scone Finds Warm Welcome and Early Following in Ravinia

By Amanda McBee

Oscar Narváez opened the Chunky Scone in Ravinia on April 17, delighting residents and passersby with his vegan-baked confections. Since opening, Chunky Scone has entertained Ravinia residents, cyclists, day trippers from the city – even opera singers. All love the vegan treats at this delightful storefront!

Recently, Ravinia residents Amanda and Freddy McBee sat down with Oscar to learn more about his vegan baking journey and his path to opening the Chunky Scone in their community.

In welcoming Oscar to Ravinia, they asked about what led him to start a vegan bakery, and how long he had been baking vegan. He said, “I started out of necessity. When I became vegan in 2011, not much was available. I started doing tons of tests in my kitchen, scones were the first recipe I tried, and I was able to get it down to a science.

“From there I started making scones every Sunday for myself and my family. During a family dinner, one of the ladies shared that she was doing a holiday market in the Pilsen neighborhood in Chicago and asked if I would like to be a pastry vendor there. She wanted to know if I was interested in selling my scones. I hesitated at the beginning but said I would give it a try.

The holiday market in Pilsen was at St. Paul’s Church, on West 22nd Place. “I brought 100 scones to the market, and quickly sold out,” Oscar said. “I was shocked at first, since the scones were vegan, and I was in a Mexican community where scones were less familiar. This is how my journey began. From there, people kept asking me to bake for events, and I experienced more organic growth. I didn’t necessarily want to go this route, but one market led to another and another, and I started having a following.

“I did tons of markets, pop ups, farmers markets,” Oscar added. “All this success pushed me towards this [the bakery]. People at the markets kept asking me if I had a storefront. I found this location in Ravinia, and that was it.” As to why he chose Ravinia for his bakery, Oscar said, “The space was available, and I liked the rent. It was a bakery before, and some things were already here,

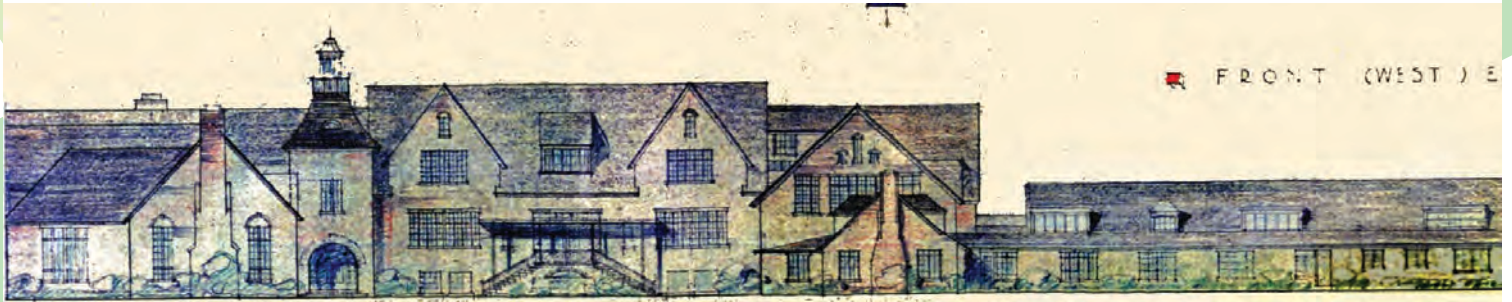
especially the type of floor, which is a specific requirement for bakeries.”

Commenting on his success since opening the Chunky Scone, Oscar said, “We are building a following in Ravinia with the locals. For example, Manuel makes coffee. He lives in Highland Park, follows me on social media, and came in asking if we would sell his coffee. Ros is another customer who also lives nearby. I would say my customer mix is 60% Ravinia or other Highland Park locals, and 40% people from other suburbs or Chicago, who have been coming for a while and are now loyal customers.

“We also see Ravinia concertgoers, cyclists, even a baritone who performed in Don Giovanni at Ravinia and is vegan. He brought his wife and loved that there was a vegan option in the neighborhood.” Asked for his hopes for the bakery in the years ahead, he said, “I would love to grow the bakery more, and hopefully expand to additional locations. I’ve expanded my product set and am selling items in the front. These items have to be made with love and care. If you love what you make, and people like it, it will sell on its own. That’s my philosophy.”

In regard to his decision to choose Ravinia as a place to open his bakery, Oscar said, “I’d like to give a big thank you to the Ravinia neighborhood for the welcoming arms. It’s been really nice to feel the love.” ■





*This expansive view of Ravinia School was rendered by Walter Sobol working under architect John Van Bergen in 1937.*

## **Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes**

*By Elliott Miller*

Not very long ago Ravinia School was destined for closure. In 2015 there was even an appraisal done of the property in preparation for sale to developers. Thanks to concerns expressed by the neighborhood, that didn't happen. Now, since the 2022 School District 112 referendum has passed, Ravinia School is about to undergo some major changes that will bring our beloved school into the 21st century. This article is an overview of these changes.

Since Ravinia School will undergo major architectural changes, and the school is eligible to be in the National Register of historic places due to its historical and architectural significance, it is necessary to conduct a Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) as mandated by the state. This involves documenting the current state of the building before construction, which is called a recordation. Because of my knowledge of Ravinia School's history, I was invited to participate in the HABS recordation process. The HABS project is headed by Susan Benjamin, of Benjamin Historic Certifications, LLC, along with Deb Marie Carey. As a part of the recordation process the school district will be creating projects that will involve members of the Ravinia School community--the students, teachers, and alumni. These projects may include historical and architectural presentations, poster exhibits, and murals.

We have met with Dr. Michael Lubelfeld, Superintendent of District 112, and Courtney Nordstrom, Ravinia School Principal. They are very enthusiastic about the project and excited about the future of the school and are working hard to make the renovation project a success.

### **A Brief Architectural History of Ravinia School**

Long before there was a Ravinia School, a log cabin served as a school. It was located a short distance south of what is now Lincoln Avenue in the neighborhood of Glencoe Avenue. This seems to be the first school in the area before the School District was organized.

The school district, which was to become District 108, was organized about 1860, and a new school house was built at Green Bay Road and Roger Williams Avenue. It was a one-room frame building called South School, with one teacher for the whole school.

*(Continued on page 19)*



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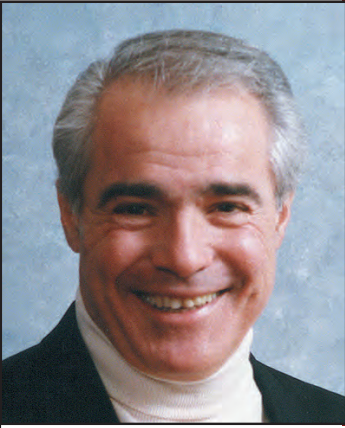
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## Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 16)*

As the population of Ravinia grew, a larger schoolhouse was needed. So at the corner of Dean and Baldwin a two-room schoolhouse was built in 1897. The construction of Ravinia School is complicated because it was built over a long period of time. The original Ravinia School was a two-room school house at the corner of Dean and Baldwin superseding the one-room school at the corner of Roger Williams and Green Bay Road.

In 1913, an addition was constructed by the noted Chicago architectural firm Pond and Pond to accommodate the growing population of Ravinia. The 1897 building was remodeled into the Ravinia Community House. Community activities such as plays, dances, etc. were held there.

In the 1920s, continued population growth warranted more additions by Pond and Pond, and Prairie-school architect and associate of Frank Lloyd Wright and Highland Park resident John Van Bergen. The 1897 building was demolished and the present Ravinia School Auditorium/gym was built by Van Bergen.



*Irving Pond of Pond & Pond*



*John Van Beraen*



*A 1920s Ravinia School classroom by Pond and Pond, who thought school rooms should be made comfortable by including fireplaces like the living rooms in most houses had at that time.*

The architects, all noted for their fine work, made great effort to continue the Arts and Crafts style of the early 1900s. In the end, a sweeping vista can be seen when viewed from the front of the building. The interior layout of the building, such as the multiple floor levels, present challenges, especially in regard to accessibility. If we want to keep the school, some changes like this are needed.

*(Continued on page 20)*

## Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 19)*

### Upcoming Renovations Planned for Ravinia School

- Out of concern for security, the main entrance will be moved to the tower door with a security vestibule and adjacent administration offices. The double stairs will be replaced with a conference room. It is unfortunate to lose such a defining element of Ravinia's architecture but security concerns are paramount.
- A new kindergarten/first grade wing will be added to the south-west front of the school
- A new kitchen and serving area will be added to the east of Millennium Hall.
- Some changes will make the school compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which protects the right to access of individuals with disabilities. Under Title II of this law, public schools are covered as one of America's prominent public entities. Since they are covered by the ADA, schools must adhere to basic ADA requirements. Ramps will be installed and an elevator will be added to the northeast corner of the building.
- Three stories will be combined into two. Remarkably, the third story floor in the core (center) of the school will be removed and the second and third floors will be combined into one two-story level.



- The current library will be moved from its current location to the new two-story central core of the school, and the original "Tree House" library will become an "Art/Maker Loft." The beams and trusses that characterize the original architectural style will be retained.
- Corridors will be color-coded to help students identify the grades.

*Proposed front elevation and existing front façade (inset). The front door will be moved to the tower entrance. The existing front door and the double main entrance stairs are going away to be replaced by a conference room.*

*(Continued on page 21)*

# Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes (cont'd)

(Continued from page 20)



(Continued on page 22)

## Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 21)*

### Additional Changes in Store for Ravinia School

- The Park District has ceded the property behind the school, including May Watts nature preserve, to the school district. This opens new opportunities for school nature and environmental studies.
- A new accessible playground with security fencing will be installed behind the school.

- There will be a number of exterior lighting fixtures installed that will comply with height and foot candle limits. Discussions have been held about dimming the lights to 30% after hours, and turning them on when motion detectors detect movement on school grounds. This is similar to the exterior lighting around the high school on Vine Street.

- 100 new students will be gradually added to the school. Ravinia School will become the central school for disabled students from all over the district. The school will go from two to three grade sections. Classes currently held in the basement will be moved upstairs.



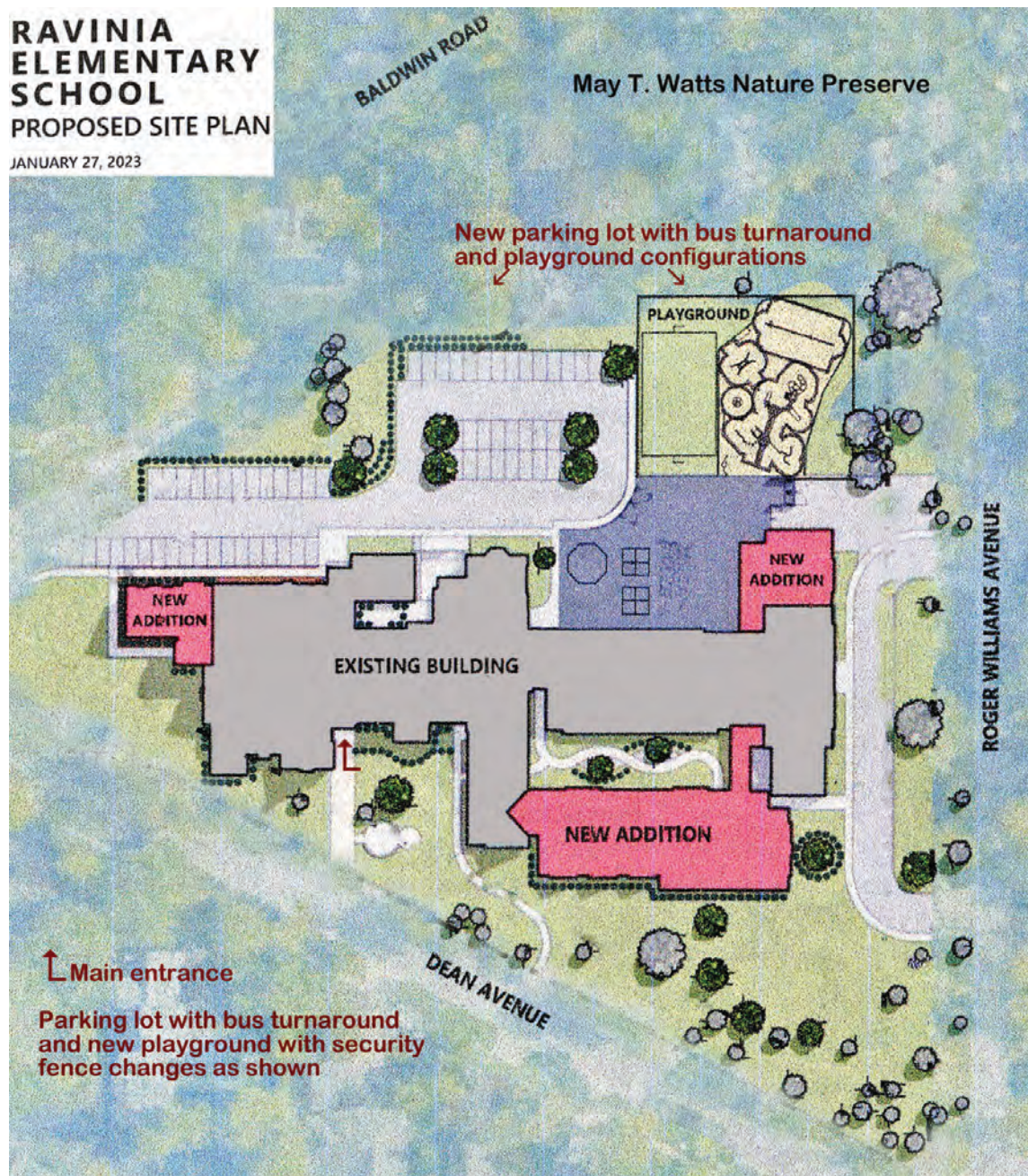
*The new Kindergarten & First Grade Addition Elevation*

- The new kitchen and servery will be used to warm and serve the food cooked and flash frozen at the school district's central kitchen and brought to the schools.
- Attempts are being made to match the color of bricks and mortar. Roof shingles will be totally replaced from cedar shake to shingles with irregular shapes that simulate shakes.
- Project completion is expected by October 2024, with move-in two months later.

*(Continued on page 23)*

## Ravinia School is About to Undergo Big Changes (cont'd)

(Continued from page 22)



The school parking lot capacity will be doubled from 31 spaces to 63. The parking lot will be expanded behind the school into the current playground. A bus turnaround will be created in the expanded parking lot for loading and unloading of school buses. The school district has pledged to use permeable paving and create a water retention area to mitigate rain water runoff.

(Reprinted in its entirety from the Spring 2023 newsletter) ■



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If you have questions, please contact Doug Purington: [doug.purington@att.net](mailto:doug.purington@att.net).

Regular RNA meetings are normally held on the second Tuesday of every month.

**Our next meeting is to be in-person on Tuesday, September 12th**