



# The Conference Reporter

Vol. 16, No. 2

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference

August 2010



*The Conference in Action:*

## Hyde Park Used Book Sale Is ON!

by Jane Ciacci

The annual Hyde Park Used Book Sale is coming on Columbus Day weekend, October 9-11, 2010, to the 55th and Lake Park shopping plaza.

The sale is a community service of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, which assumed responsibility for it in 2007 in order to maintain this Hyde Park tradition. It was previously run for about 30 years by the Hyde Park Co-op staff and volunteers. Once again this year, we are fortunate to enjoy the sponsorship and support of Treasure Island Foods, which provides us with a room for sorting, and a central collection point for books.

### Where do we get the books?

All our books are donated, and this year we will begin to accept donations at Treasure Island on Sunday, August 15. Many of our long-time loyal customers enjoy culling their books every summer to offer us donations, and then shopping the sale to fill the gaps. The sale typically offers 30,000+ books in over 50 subject areas, for sale at very affordable prices. In recent years, donations have been especially strong in areas such as fiction, mysteries, literary classics, religion, and drama. Our strengths each year depend on the donations we receive. In addition to books, we sell donated sheet music, CD and LP recordings, and DVDs.

Would you like to clean up your bookshelves and be one of our do-

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### Dreams of Spring— The Fall Garden Fair

The Garden Fair Committee's Fall Fair takes place this year on Saturday, October 2 at the Hyde Park Shopping Center, 55th and Lake Park. Shopping hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. This fair is offered as a service to the community, at just the time when you might be thinking how you would like your garden to look next spring!

The Fall Fair offers bulbs to plant before the first frost for spring color. Many exciting varieties of tulips, narcissus, and crocus are available. These spring staples are complemented by hyacinth, alliums, fritillaria, scilla, Dutch iris, dwarf iris, bearded iris, lilies, and specialty bulbs. This year, the committee plans to offer fall plants such as chrysanthemums, asters, and kale, depending on what is available,

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### HPKCC MISSION

The purpose of the Conference is to attend to the civic needs of the community; work toward an attractive, secure, diverse, and caring community; and to promote participation of residents, businesses, institutions, and organizations in programs and activities that advance the interests and concerns of the community. It serves the community as a watchdog, independent voice, and clearing house in the community's ongoing conversation and decisions about those matters which affect and define community life.

## From the President's Desk...

### *Harper Court Redevelopment— Boon or Boondoggle?*

After months of confidential negotiations among Alderman Preckwinkle's office, The City of Chicago, The University of Chicago, and the chosen developer, Vermilion, the Harper Court Redevelopment Project appears to be on the fast-track.

From the February 8, 2010 TIF Advisory Council Meeting (when Vermilion was announced as the chosen developer) to the July 12, 2010 TIF Advisory Council Meeting, limited information was disclosed to the community (due to the fact that the principals had apparently not concluded an actual deal). But on July 12, that dynamic changed.

TIF Advisory Council Chair, Howard Males, presided over the July 12, 2010 meeting. The first order of business was to approve an allocation of \$87,000 for an engineering study to open up Harper Avenue, between 51st and 53rd Streets. Then Vermilion representatives reported on a revised site plan for Phase I Development, estimated to cost \$114 million. The audience was advised that Vermilion planned to submit a TIF funding request for \$23.4 million, which amounts to 20.5% of the Phase I cost. Everyone was informed that this was well below the TIF funding requests for comparable development projects.

Several TIF Advisory Council members (and audience attendees) began to ask some probing questions:

- How would this TIF Funding Request impact other TIF funding priorities, such as schools and Clean Slate?
- How does this funding request square with the fact that the 53<sup>rd</sup> TIF Fund Account only has about \$2 million available?

- How does the redevelopment plan accomplish turning over the City of Chicago's public parking land to a private developer?
- How does Vermilion plan to meet a commitment to award 28% of contracts to minority and female owned businesses?

We were assured that it would all work out just fine. Besides, Alderman Preckwinkle announced that it was now time to move ahead and move ahead very quickly:

1. The TIF Planning Committee, Chaired by Chuck Thurow, planned to meet in one week's time, on July 19<sup>th</sup>.
2. The TIF Advisory Committee, Chaired by Howard Males, planned to have a follow-up Special Meeting in two week's time on July 26<sup>th</sup>.
3. Community residents are urged to attend a number of meetings with Vermilion during this two week interval.

It appears that the TIF Advisory Council is prepared to sign-off on all of these issues as a farewell present to Alderman Preckwinkle as she prepares for her new political opportunity. The Alderman's decisions will have a long-term impact on 53<sup>rd</sup> Street and Hyde Park. As a resident who lives one block west of Harper, I am hoping that the Alderman is correct in her assurance that it will all work out just fine. Only time will tell us whether the Alderman's Harper Court Redevelopment Present will be a "Boon or Boondoggle" for the community.

*Jay N. Ammerman, President  
August 3, 2010*

## Garden Fair Scheduled for October 2

*(continued from page 1)*

as well as houseplants and maybe a few perennials that prefer fall planting.

The bulbs are ordered and shipped from the Netherlands. At the fair, local gardeners offer advice about selection, planting and cultivation. Plants are selected for city gardening conditions by experienced members of the Garden Fair Committee from trusted Chicagoland growers and nurseries.

The Garden Fair Committee supports the beautification of the neighborhood with donations of plants to schools, houses of worship, and other institutions, as well as to parkways; hanging baskets for the 53<sup>rd</sup> St. business district. Committee members volunteer to maintain local park areas such as the Wildflower Meadow in Nichols Park.

If you have questions about the fall fair, please contact Joy Rosner, at 773-241-6943, or e-mail [joyrosner@aol.com](mailto:joyrosner@aol.com). For more information, visit the Fall Garden Fair's website at [www.hydeparkgardenfair.org](http://www.hydeparkgardenfair.org).





## *HPKCC Helps Club's Teens Learn City via Transit*

by Gary Ossewaarde, Schools Committee

For a second year, Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference was pleased to underwrite transit cards for teens in Hyde Park Neighborhood Club's Summer Teen camp.

In this program, one of several for children and youth at the Club, young teens learn self-reliance in using public transportation options, many through do-it-yourself finding, mapping, and research trips that lead to engaged citizenship. Each trip supported a variety of lesson topics that changed weekly, as well as exposure to new places and people, and to the environmental and personal advantages of making transit a first and primary choice.

Abigail Hymen, Director of Youth Programs, wrote regarding the 2010 program:

"This summer, our Teen Program will continue to educate on the importance of public transportation but we are also making certain our kids are school ready, college ready, and job ready. Learning will be fun, with en-

gaging research projects and trips to archives, museums, [and] historical sites. We have planned college visits for those who are considering their next step in higher education. To give our teens food for thought about career choices, they will be taking "behind the scenes" tours of sites such as NBC and the CTA [12 in all]. We will put their train and bus know-how to the test with two exciting, week-long events: *Where in the City?* and *The Amazing Race*."

The Conference is pleased to help the Neighborhood Club continue to grow its overall strength and relevance to the neighborhood, in this case by increasing out-of-school enrichment and learning options for youth. Such enrichment is also a major focus of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference Schools Committee. We believe organizations and centers such as the Neighborhood Club can bring flexibility and seek funds that the schools often cannot.

A large number of the teens in Neighborhood Club programs come from Canter Middle School and Kenwood Academy; the younger participants come from a variety of local public and private schools, and nearly all live within a two-mile radius. Teens in the programs are passing their classes, and 93 percent leave each day with their homework done. Some programs are free or have case-by-case access to assistance.

The Club's child and youth programs are high quality, varied, and include strong intergenerational experience. We believe that even in troubled times our community's suite of such special places and programs can and should flourish and can provide synergy to schools' programs. Of course we also believe that programs in the schools can and must be re-grown, expanded and enriched.

Our Transit and Access Task Force, whose chairman, James Withrow worked with Neighborhood Club Director Jennifer Bosch to initiate HPKCC's collaboration, is pleased to see young people learning to use their transportation options and getting around the city—a trend that has been noted citywide and nationally. Perhaps this program can inspire the rest of us to do likewise.

HPKCC is therefore pleased to join many others who are supporting Hyde Park Neighborhood Club as it continues to renew and grow its services as a center for all ages, and as it renews its facility at the start of its second 100 years.

*Elm Playlot Advisory Council members review historical architectural drawings of the park from 1964. The new Advisory Council, chaired by Timika Hoffman-Zoller, has worked with the Park District to budget for improvements in the park, located behind Kimbark Plaza. Elm PAC meets every fourth Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, at Nichols Park fieldhouse multi-purpose room.*



# HPKCC Schools Committee Plans Upcoming Activities

by Nancy Baum

The HPKCC Schools Committee is preparing for its annual networking dinner at Canter Middle School on Thursday September 30, 2010, from 6-9 PM. All the principals, assistant principals, LSC, PTA and PAC members will be invited to this event.

In pursuit of a way to implement the Assets Program for Hyde Park children, the Schools Committee has contacted Abby Hymen, director of Youth Activities at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club, who will begin her research of the Assets Program. Abby cites a need for more parental participation as a problem, and it seems that parental participation and attendance are both problems that need to be addressed in some of the schools.

The Schools Committee visited a very well-organized before and after school program conducted by Ravenswood School. We hope to set up a similar visit to Ray School's program.

The Schools Committee is planning August meetings with the principals of Shoemith, Canter, Ray, Harte, Murray, Kozminski, and Reavis to find out what programs are offered by the schools, if programs can be coordinated, and to ask how the Schools Committee can help.

Our mission is to make our local schools the kinds of schools any parent would be proud to send their children to.



*Volunteers for the "Hyde Park Village" prepare to picnic in Nichols Park on Sunday, August 1.*

## *Toward a Hyde Park Village*

by George Rumsey

There is a new local group in process of forming called the "Hyde Park Village." A "village" is a "community with its own 'concierge' which provides access to activities and to member suggested services so that members can live safely and comfortably in the home of their choice" (quoted from the working group's brochure). It is modeled on the Beacon Hill Village ([www.beaconhillvillage.org](http://www.beaconhillvillage.org)), and has formed working relationships with other Villages in the Chicago area, including in Lincoln Park and Evanston.

The organizing group, spearheaded by a wide variety of South Siders and pulled together by Susan Alitto, has been working steadily since February to frame how a Village might work in Hyde Park. Examples of possible services being examined include transportation, house cleaning, home and

personal security, caregiver support, exercising, medical advocacy and referrals, classes, day trips, dinner clubs, and a wide variety of volunteer opportunities.

The kinds of people who could benefit from a Village include those who need support to age in place, busy working professionals, those with unusual needs, and people who want to join others for shared interests.

Financing depends on fund-raising, obtaining grants, finding volunteers, size of the membership, and services to be provided. A yearly cost would be passed on to members.

For more information, visit the groups website at <http://groups.google.com/group/hyde-park-village>. You can also email [hydeparkvillage2010@gmail.com](mailto:hydeparkvillage2010@gmail.com) or call (773) 752-6587.



# Summertime at Blackstone Library

by Brenda P. Sawyer, Friends of Blackstone Library

While the end of the school year meant a slowdown in pace, it signaled that things were just heating up at Blackstone Library. June brought the final lecture of the Despres Family Memorial Lecture Series. Author Rebecca Janowitz reviewed her new book *Culture of Opportunity: Obama's Chicago—The People, Politics, and Ideas of Hyde Park* (Ivan R. Dee, June 2010). Written from an insider's perspective, Janowitz examined the makings of a community from urban renewal to the election of Chicago's first African-American mayor to the country's first African-American president and the role that Hyde Park played in those breakthroughs.

June also brought the start of the Chicago Public Library's "Reading is Art-RAGEOUS" Summer Reading Program for 2010. The program, sponsored city-wide each summer by CPL, encourages Chicago children to incorporate reading into their daily lives even when school is out! To promote Art in Everyday Life, CPL brought various programs to Blackstone including "Stories with Art & Soul" featuring Gwen Hilary and Enoch Williamson, "Every Day Music" with Sandy Lucas and "Art Through the Ages" featuring Kidworks Touring Theatre. In addition, Friends of Blackstone Library and the Blackstone Children's Librarian, Tina Carter, invited local artists to chime in on the subject by reading their favorite book to children and sharing the role art plays in their lives. Local musician/piano teacher Elaine Smith and artist Zena Smith both shared their art with the children.



*Elaine Smith, Music Teachers of Hyde Park*



*Zena Smith, artist*

**SAVE THE DATE**

**HPKCC Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, September 12, 2:30 p.m.**  
**Hyde Park Neighborhood Club**  
**5480 South Kenwood**

# Qumbya and Co-operative Living

by David Nekimken, HPKCC Board and Qumbya Resident

I live in Qumbya housing co-op in Hyde Park. The co-op has three houses. Bowers, in which I live, is on University; Concord is on Blackstone, and Haymarket is on Ridgewood. Each house creates its own community, with a board overseeing the overall co-op. Qumbya is a model of renting one's own room, rather than renting/owning one's apartment or house. What are the main features that make our co-op affordable, desirable and enticing? There are four:

## **Shared resources.**

It is not just about low room rental rates, with a range for small to larger rooms. We share the costs of utilities and food, making it a fraction of the cost if each of us had to buy our own food and pay for our own utilities. Money is saved by the members doing much of the work in the houses ourselves.

There are more intangible ways of sharing costs. The few who own cars share them with the rest of the house members. We share kitchen appliances, tools and computers. Beyond this, anyone can ask if anyone in the house has something that he/she needs in the moment, be it a postage stamp, hair dryer or poster board, directions to get to a North Side address, or a recommendation of a good club or restaurant in Lakeview, and so on. And when one of our members needs emotional support, the rest of us come to her/his aid. We are here to celebrate members' joys. Which brings me to an important point. The sharing is not only financial/material, it is about community, an extended family. A diverse group of unrelated adults, of varied backgrounds, create a sustain-

able, evolving community, like a large extended family.

## **Shared space.**

It should already be clear that we share the space in the house. We are not each paying for our own bathroom, kitchen, dining room, living room, workroom, laundry room, food storage, yard, etc. We don't each need our own set of dishes, glasses, silverware, kitchen utensils and cookware, cleaning supplies. I think you get the idea. More than that, we share the common spaces of the house socially. We are always meeting each other in the hallways, in the dining room and kitchen, in the living room, on the front porch. Conversations and both planned and spontaneous social events occur.

## **Shared time.**

We spend some of our time as co-op members doing assigned chores (some of us in elected positions) to maintain and improve the quality of life in the house and community, from cleaning to bookkeeping to food buying to recruiting new members. We take turns cooking dinner for each other. We participate in weekly meetings to discuss house issues and make collective decisions about our community.

## **Democratic process.**

Every house member has an equal say in how the house is run, maintained and improved, and in the very nature of the community. Mutual trust and cooperation, individual and collective accountability, and open lines of communication are the bulwarks that sustain the community. We have control of our organization, our living space; we make decisions to ensure current and future affordability. We all have a

sense of ownership, empowering each of us, the members, to practice sustainability in our daily lives.

I would like to see co-operative housing promoted as a viable option for creative affordable living in Hyde Park and the surrounding area. Qumbya is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity, with a mandate for affordable housing. We have an open membership policy, meaning we don't recruit for a particular interest or agenda. There are two considerations for achieving this goal. A co-op of apartments is less easily accomplished with existing buildings than with single rental rooms, as is Qumbya. This model of co-op living accomplishes density without overcrowding. The other point is that the creation of a co-op is different from the usual procedure. Apartment buildings, condos, townhouses are built and then are rented or sold. Creating a co-op requires founding a community of individuals first, and then finding a property. Both can be done at the same time. The individuals buying into the concept are crucial. With homes for sale or in foreclosure, an existing co-op or a new one could relatively easily find an affordable building. Identifying the community is the other important ingredient. Co-ops are in our future.

Want to know more? Visit [www.qumbya.com](http://www.qumbya.com).

Join the HPKCC email list! Send an email with your name to [hpkcc.chicago@gmail.com](mailto:hpkcc.chicago@gmail.com) to be kept up-to-date on Conference happenings and latest news.

# Hyde Park Used Book Sale Is ON!

(continued from page 1)

nors? We accept usable books in all subjects, with some exceptions. We do not sell multi-volume encyclopedias, magazines, or journals, except *National Geographic* and *Poetry* magazine. We sell travel and computer books from the last 5 years only, unless they are of historical interest.

We ask, urgently but respectfully, that donations be in readable condition. Please discard books that are already so damaged, or so moldy, that you don't want to touch them, because we won't want to either!

## What happens after the sale?

The HPKCC Book Sale Committee is always looking for ways to ensure that the books left over at the end of the sale can be donated for the benefit of others. Last year we had a great many mysteries and fiction titles of good quality left at the end of the Monday "bag & box" day. If you know of organizations such as churches, nursing homes, shelters, schools, hospitals, etc. that would be interested in receiving free books, (and would be able to have someone come and take them away on Monday, October 11) please call Jane Ciacci at 773-419-1384 well before the sale, so we can talk about it!

## Where does the money go?

The Book Sale is currently the major fundraising activity for HPKCC. Profits in recent years have enabled us to rent an office in the Hyde Park Bank Building, and to support the work of the Conference's numerous committees and task forces. In summer 2009 and 2010, we have supported the Neighborhood Club's summer teen program, described elsewhere in this issue.

## Get involved!

If you have questions about the sale, or suggestions of groups that could use leftover books, contact Jane Ciacci, 773-419-7932. If you would like to volunteer, either as part of the book collecting and sorting team between mid-August and mid-October, or at the sale itself, contact Jane Comiskey, at 773-324-0750. Call Jane Comiskey also if you would like to donate books, but need a pickup. We will be able to make a limited number of pickups, by prearrangement only, after September 1.

Look for our notices and ads beginning in mid-August. We look forward to seeing you at the sale!



Booksale coordinators Jane Ciacci (from left), Trish Morse, Amy Girst, and Jane Comiskey

## Why Not Join or Renew Your Membership TODAY?

### Membership Form

#### Level:

- Family ..... \$30
- Individual ..... \$20
- Senior..... \$15
- Nonprofit (501(c)(3)) .... \$75
- Business..... \$100
- Supporter ..... \$200
- Sponsor ..... \$500
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in the following programs:

- CAGL (Academic Games)
- Condos/Coops
- Development/Preservation
- Disabilities Task Force
- Environmental Sustainability
- Friends of Blackstone Library
- Hyde Park Garden Fair
- Hyde Park Used Book Sale
- Nichols Park Advisory Council
- Parks Committee
- Schools Committee
- Southside Preservation Task Force
- Transit Task Force
- Website and Reporter
- WhistleStop/Safety

A community issue that concerns me is:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Member Information:

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

HPKCC is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. Please send this form along with your check, made out to Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, to:

Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference  
1525 E. 53rd Street, Suite 907  
Chicago, IL 60615  
Telephone: (773) 288-8343  
E-mail: hpkcc@aol.com  
http://www.hydepark.org



# Board Nominees for 2010; Annual Meeting on September 12

by George Rumsey, Nominating Committee

The HPKCC Annual Meeting has been scheduled for Sunday afternoon, September 12, at 2:30. The meeting will take place at the Hyde Park Neighborhood Club, 5480 South Kenwood (corner of 55th and Kenwood).

This event is always important for the membership to attend. It gives you a chance to hear from local leaders about what has happened during the past year, and what is going to be forthcoming. It also reviews the state of the Conference and community.

Most important is the memberships' need to elect one-third of the board of directors of the Conference. This

year's eight nominees are expected to include:

Lenora Austin (\*)  
Peter Cassel (\*)  
Jane Comiskey  
Darryl Crawford  
Mike Doss (\*)  
Mark Granfors (\*)  
Timika Hoffman-Zoller  
Sophia King

(\*) indicates a director running for a second three-year term.

Leaving the board this year will be Nancy Baum, Richard Buchner, and Trish Morse. Join the rest of the Conference in electing the new board and thanking the current directors.

facebook



## Friend Us on Facebook!

Next time you visit the Conference website at [www.hydepark.org](http://www.hydepark.org), be sure to click on the Facebook link, which will take you to the HPKCC fanpage. If you're a Facebook regular, this is a great way to keep up with HPKCC events and news.



**HPKCC**

### Officers

*President:* Jay Ammerman  
*Vice President:* Jane Ciacchi  
*Vice President:* Brenda Sawyer  
*Secretary:* Patricia Morse  
*Treasurers:* Mark Granfors

### Directors

Lenora Austin, Nancy Baum, Amy Becker, Gwen Bonds, Richard Buchner, Peter Cassel, Michael Doss, Judy Dupont, Irene Freelain, Amy Girst, Camille Hamilton-Doyle, Anita Hollins, David Nekimken, Jack Snapper, Ismail Turay, James Withrow, George Cooley (emeritus)

### PROGRAMS

Chicago Academic Games League  
Condos/Co-ops+  
Development, Preservation, and Zoning  
Disabilities Task Force  
Friends of Blackstone Library  
Hyde Park Garden Fair  
Hyde Park Used Book Sale  
Nichols Park Advisory Council  
Parks Committee  
Schools Committee  
Southside Preservation Action Fund  
Transit Task Force  
WhistleStop/Safety

### CONFERENCE OFFICE

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