



# RLVHA *Review*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association



## WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

See page 3 for the answer

*Join the Tour!*  
**North Side school architecture to be spotlighted March 18**

*Also March 18:*

### BOOK SIGNING

7 p.m. at the Book Cellar  
 4736 N. Lincoln Ave.

Former 44th Ward Ald.  
 Dick Simpson and co-author  
 Thomas Gradel will sign copies  
 of their latest book,  
*"Corrupt Illinois; Patronage,  
 Cronyism and Criminality."*

## Local corruption took over a century to develop, will take decades to clean up, former Alderman Dick Simpson says

BY PATRICK BUTLER

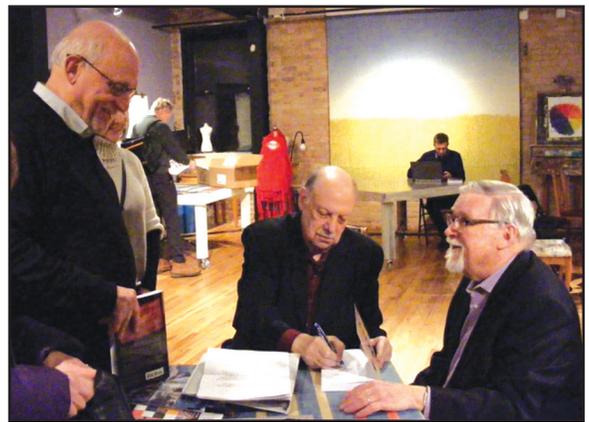
By now, University of Illinois political science professor, former Alderman and RLVA board member Dick Simpson could arguably rank as one of Chicago's foremost experts on political corruption.

After all, he not only researched the topic repeatedly for many of the 20 books he's written so far, but saw City Hall shenanigans firsthand as a two-term independent councilman in the 1970s when Boss Daley ruled the roost and dissenters risked having their microphones turned off in mid-sentence.

"Corruption's" co-author, Thomas Gradel, isn't exactly a political neophyte either. He's a former political media consultant and onetime aide to Gov. Dan Walker.

"Over the past century, both Democratic and Republican machines have fleeced Illinois taxpayers," Gradel said. "You can't have political machines without corrupt hiring practices, crony contracting and conflicts of interest."

Starting in 1833 with a rigged election of Chi-



Former Ald. Dick Simpson (center) and Tom Gradel at a recent signing of their book, "Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality" at the Lill Street gallery.

Photo by Patrick Butler

*"There's a famous story about an Indiana woman who wanted to be buried in Chicago so she could continue supporting the Democratic party."*

cago's first town council, Simpson and Gradel wade through the convictions of four of the last nine Illinois governors and the "blizzard of bribery, extortion, tax fraud and other crimes" that led to the conviction of 33 Chicago aldermen.

"To give you an idea how massive the problem is, there have been 1,976 federal convictions (more than 1,500 of them in the Chicago area) between 1976 to 2012 on public corruption charges.

"Not just elected of-

ficials, but Secretary of State employees taking bribes. They said they did it to afford to buy tickets for Gov. George Ryan's re-election fundraisers," said Simpson, adding there used to be a two percent "tax" on public employee salaries that went into campaign coffers.

And while it doesn't happen as much as it once did, the belief in life after death is legendary, said Simpson. "There's

**CORRUPTION**  
*see p. 2*

## DID YOU KNOW?

Who's the only foreign head of state turned U.S. congressman buried in Graceland Cemetery? During the 1848 uprisings in Germany, Baden-born Lorenz Brentano was a member of the Frankfurt Parliament and served as president of the Provisional Republic of Baden and fled to the U.S. after the revolution's collapse. He arrived in Chicago in 1859 where he ran the Illinois Staats-Zeitung, an important German-American newspaper. Brentano served in the Illinois General Assembly, was a member of the Chicago Board of Education, and was a delegate to the 1864 Republican National Convention. After a general amnesty was given to the 1848 revolutionaries, Brentano served as U.S. consul in Dresden. Returning to Chicago in 1876, Brentano served a term in the U.S. Congress. He died here in 1891. A school in Humboldt Park was dedicated in his honor two years later.

## So you think your high school courses were rough? Try getting into Lake View in 1878



Lake View High School

Remember when your parents or grandparents always told you how easy kids have it today? Well, they may not have had to walk five miles through snow and sleet to get to a one-room red schoolhouse, but school clearly wasn't a cakewalk – at least for early students at Lake View High School.

Just getting admitted was tougher than many of today's college entrance exams.

Students taking Lake View High School's first admissions exams had to draw a map of

*Just for good measure, aspiring Wildcats had to find the cubic root of 62,588,123, and explain how to figure out the time differences between two places once they knew the longitude of each of those places.*

South America, including the rivers and mountain ranges; list the exports of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Liverpool, England;

locate Marseilles, France, and Quito, Ecuador; Mount Aetna (Italy) and the Orange River (South Africa) on a map and give a "synopsis" of the verb "run" in the indicative and potential modes, interrogative form, and first person singular.

Just for good measure, aspiring Wildcats had to find the cubic root of 62,588,123, and explain how to figure out the time differences between two places once they knew the longitude of each of those places.

Aspiring Lake View High students had to know everything from the metric system to penmanship, along with the "elementary principles of prosody. Nobody got in the door without correctly answering at least 70 percent of all the exam questions. They also had to spell words like Pentetuch, colloquy, antipathy, and requisition.

According to the school's annual report, even non-college bound students had to take Latin prose composition at some point during Lake View's four-year course "designed to prepare a person for the ordinary vocations of life."

### CORRUPTION *from p. 1*

a famous story about an Indiana woman who wanted to be buried in Chicago so she could continue supporting the Democratic party."

Nevertheless, Simpson still believes things can be cleaned up.

It's just going to take a concentrated effort over decades, he added.

Part of the problem is that the cost of running for office – and staying there – has skyrocketed, said Simpson.

Simpson said won his first aldermanic race in 1971 with

### *Simpson said won his first aldermanic race in 1971 with \$25,000.*

\$25,000, and won again four years later with \$35,000. But by the time he ran for Congress a few years later, even the \$250,000 he raised wasn't enough.

"If I had \$100,000 more and 100 more volunteers, I could have defeated (longtime incumbent) Gov. Dan Rostenkowski, he said.

One way to begin real reform, Simpson added, is using public funding to match small

contributions.

And while it's not one of the possible remedies listed in the book, limits on the length of campaigns would also help.

"We hope the book's content and message will alert voters to look closely at political candidates. What's their ethical track record? Are they part of a corrupt machine or political organization? Who gives them their campaign money?," Simpson said.



The now-shuttered Trumbull School is one of a number of North Side school buildings to be featured in Julia Bachrach and Elizabeth Patterson's talk on the architectural history of local schools 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, at the Sulzer Library. The event is jointly sponsored by the Ravenswood/Lake View Historical Association, the Edgewater Historical Association and the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical societies.

*Photo by Patrick Butler*

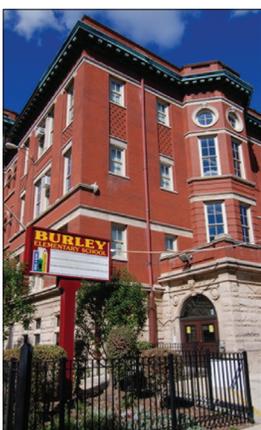
## BLAINE STUDENTS PLAN LOCAL HISTORY TOUR PROJECT



Teacher Natalie Nash goes over plans for an upcoming local history walking tour being organized by an American history social studies class at Blaine School. The students will focus on five neighborhood areas showing "where we've been and where we're going."

*Photo by Patrick Butler*

## North Side school architecture to be spotlighted March 18, same day and time as Simpson's signing



Burley School



Lane Tech High School

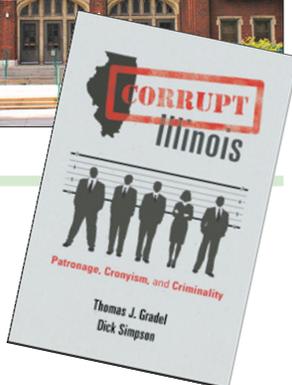
The wide-ranging architecture of North Side public schools will be the focus of a talk by historians Julia Bachrach and Elizabeth Patterson 7 p.m. March 18 at Sulzer Library, 4455 N. Lincoln Ave.

The program, sponsored by the Ravenswood/Lake View Historical Association, Edgewater Historical Society, and the Rogers Park/West Ridge Historical Society will

include Burley, Ravenswood, Trumbull, and Lake View and Lane Tech high schools.

Bachrach and Patterson have spent a decade documenting the history of Chicago school architecture and the wide range of styles that often reflect the social trends of the time.

Bachrach's previous works include a history of Chicago parks. Patterson is a lawyer and author of several novels.



At the same time that same day, former 44th Ward Ald. Dick Simpson and co-author Thomas Gradel will sign copies of their latest book, "Corrupt Illinois; Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality" at the Book Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln Ave.

## Answer to

### WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

The Dewes Mansion, 503 W. Wrightwood, built in 1896 for beer baron Francis Dewes and later rented out as a backdrop for pricey parties and weddings.



At one point it was owned by Chicago Gay and Lesbian Hall of Famer Chuck Renslow who reportedly rented it out as a location for gay porn films. Recently on the market for \$12 million, the three-story baroque landmark was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

*Look for more places in future issues*



# RLVHA *Review*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association

# Join Now!



## 2014-15 OFFICERS

*President*, Patrick Butler

*Vice President*, Carolyn Bull

*Treasurer*, Jack Lydon

*Secretary*, Leah Steele

<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	Patrick Boylan
Rev. David Abrahamson	Jason Kraus
Donna Beck	Ron Roenigk

Please make checks payable to:  
**the Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association**  
and mail with this form to:

**Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association**  
c/o Conrad Sulzer Regional Library  
4455 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago, Il. 60625

**Annual membership dues:**

- Individual \$20
- Senior \$10
- Family \$35
- Business \$50

**Interest Areas:**

- General Programs
- Author Series
- History Contest
- Tours

**Check One:**    New Membership    Renewal Membership

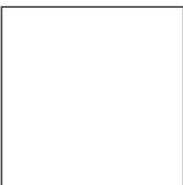
**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone: (312) 744-7616   E-mail: [rlvha@att.net](mailto:rlvha@att.net)   [www.ravenswoodhistorical.com](http://www.ravenswoodhistorical.com)**



RAVENSWOOD LAKE VIEW  
HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION  
c/o Conrad Sulzer Regional Library  
4455 N. Lincoln Ave.  
Chicago, Il. 60625