



RLVHA *Review*

Newsletter of the Ravenswood Lake View Historical Association



Engine 78 at 1052 W. Waveland Ave.

MEMORIES OF ENGINE 78

BY KAREN KRUSE

Chicagoans know the “Friendly Confines” is just another name for our beloved Wrigley Field, home of our Chicago Cubs. Even outsiders understand our love of this quaint old ballpark, built in 1914, with its ivy-covered walls. Just beyond those walls, down the left-field foul line sits the Chicago Fire Department’s Engine 78, 1052 W. Waveland Ave. My dad became a firefighter in 1956 and was assigned here for the first 14 ½

ENGINE 78 SEE P. 4

SPRING PROGRAMS 2019

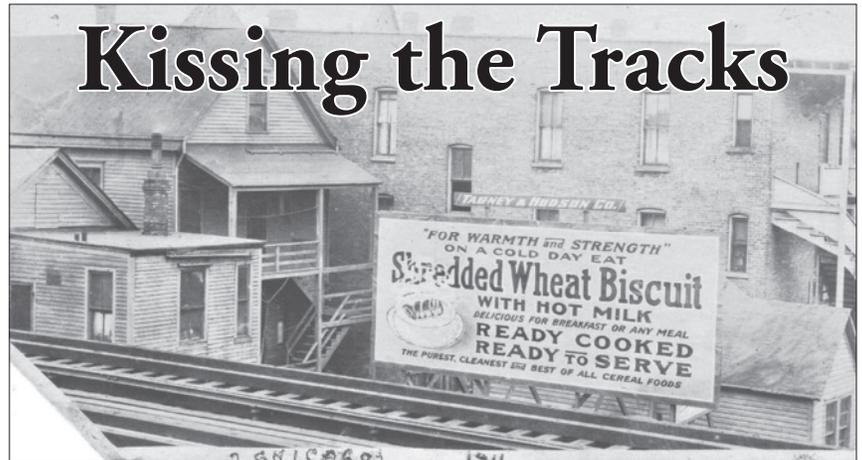
Happy New Year everyone. We hope your holidays were filled with peace, joy and family.

On March 7, 2019 at 7:00 we will kick off our Spring Programs with Julia Bachrach, retired Chicago Park District historian. She will speak on the topic of women and the Chicago Parks.

April - Karin Ambercrombie, Executive Director of the Swedish American Museum, will speak on the topic of the Swedes in Chicago.

May - Patrick Butler, author and historian, will talk about the hidden history of the Uptown neighborhood.

Dates and times for April and May will be posted on the Website when confirmed.



Arlene Nybakken Chase, the granddaughter of Nels Anderson, indicated the sign in the photo above would make her feel hungry when viewed out one of the bedroom windows.

BY GARRY ALBRECHT

Public transportation in the 19th and early 20th centuries were not owned and operated by local municipalities but by privately owned companies. One such company was the Chicago-based Northwestern Elevated Railroad. This company was granted a 50-year lease to build and operate transportation rails and sta-

tions for the citizens of Chicago in 1893. The first elevated structure was laid at Fullerton and Sheffield avenues in 1896. The construction and operation of the elevated train line had a rocky start, according to ChicagoL.org. In the winter month of January 1900, the Chicago Public Works claimed the structure unsound and ordered the company to

TRACKS SEE P. 6

Riverview Roller Rink

BY DAYLE MURPHY

I grew up in Lake View and absolutely loved my neighborhood. When I became a teenager my friends and I discovered the wonderful world of roller skating at Riverview Roller Rink. We spent many magical hours there every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, skating to beautiful, live organ music. There were all kinds of music, but our favorite was a waltz. We always hoped to be

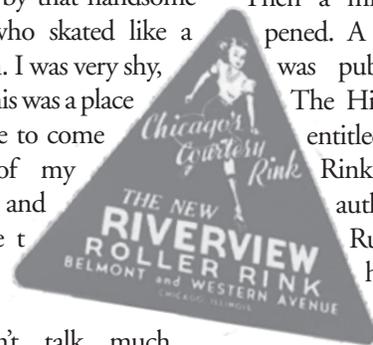
asked by that handsome boy who skated like a dream. I was very shy, and this was a place for me to come out of my shell and meet boys. You couldn't talk much when you were skating, perfect for me.

For a long time, I tried to find out about the history of my “favorite place” but no one seemed to have any information.

Then a miracle happened. A new book was published by The History Press entitled Chicago Rink Rats, by author Tom Russo. They have kindly consented to let me share the history with you.

In 1904, Paddy Harmon opened Riverview Roller Rink on the

RINK SEE P. 2



The many lives of 3212 N. Broadway

BY PATRICK BUTLER

Over more than a century, the four-story building at 3212 N. Broadway has been the Butler Settlement House, home to the Women's Civic League, an American Legion Post, a neighborhood gym, housed a rooftop pool, and was home to the Lake View Pantry, now nearly 50-years-old, doing business in its own storefront at 3945 N. Sheridan Rd.

Originally built by Herman Beardsley Butler, vice president and treasurer of the Ryerson Iron and Steel company, who used it as a soup kitchen and community center, the building was deeded to St. Peter's Episcopal Church which Hull House took over in 1962 at the urging of the Lake View Citizens Council (LVCC) Executive Director John Kahlert.

"It's the first new service to come to this community in many years, and we expect all of Lake View to welcome it enthusiastically," Kahlert said.

One of the reasons the LVCC was founded in the first place was to curb what many considered to be a proliferation of "problem bars," gangs and "four-plus-one apartment buildings some community activists considered to be



Butler Settlement House, 3212 N. Broadway, became a theater where Gary Sinise and John Malkovich got their starts toward stardom.

the "tomorrow's slums." Some neighbors were even uncomfortable with the introduction of what was being billed as "the first-ever" women's wrestling matches at Marigold Arena at 817 W. Grace St., which eventually ended up as a Pentecostal church!

The Broadway Hull House branch soon became one of the city's most-important off-Loop theater venues like Steppenwolf and Bailiwick Repertory where future drama giants like David

Mamet and Bob Sickinger honed their craft. Chicagoans like Jack Gelber were hammering out works like "The Connection," promoted as "a look at jazz, junkies and hipsters in the Windy City."

Among those who got their start toward stardom were Gary Sinise and John Malkovich, appearing in Sam Shepherd's "True West."

The Hull House Theater's first production, "Who'll Save the Plowboy?," opened in November, 1963, as part of Sickinger's plan to "create a theater that was something more than just an activity for the artists."

By all accounts, that first play was "the most exciting, significant and promising Chicago theatrical event in years," according to Richard Christiansen, then the Chicago Sun-Times' top critic.

During the turbulent '60s, Hull House Theater even became a voice for nihilists like anarchist Geoffrey Stewart – once believed to be the "most arrested man in Chicago" who produced his one and only play, "St. Out."

Herman Beardsley Butler wouldn't have recognized the place.

RINK FROM P. 1

North Side. It had the largest rink floor in the world, close to 30,000 square feet. Paddy Harmon enticed people to skate by his sponsorship of "the World Roller Skate Championship." In 1929, he opened the Chicago Stadium and again, hosted championship races on an eighteen-foot track built with eight laps to a mile. He set the prize money at \$3,000, which attracted skaters from all over the United States and Canada.

White City Roller Rink, the North Side rival, bragged that it had the largest rink with 33,500 square feet when it was built in 1905. The rink was one-of-a-kind, shaped like an ellipse and

constructed of ribbon maple wood strips which accommodated 3,500 skaters. The roller rink was overshadowed by Riverview Amusement Park which promoted many themed events during the summer season.

Riverview Speed Club hosted many speed skating events for decades, capitalizing on the skating craze which began at the turn of century. In 1922, it hosted the Illinois Amateur Rolling Skating Championship.

Riverview Rink returned to prominence in the late 1940s when roller skating became the rage and, according to the Chicago Tribune, became "Chicago's Courtesy Rink." The outbreak of World War II triggered more events at the roller rink to

raise funds for the war effort; tickets were 50¢ and donations were often matched by the management.

June 16, 1971 looms large in my memory for that was the day the Riverview Roller Rink was destroyed by fire.

The roller rink created memories for not only me but for the thousands of people who visited over the decades; at least one couple was married there wearing roller skates. Children celebrated birthdays and shy teenagers found their way to happiness.

June 16, 1971 looms large in my memory for that was the day

the Riverview Roller Rink was destroyed by fire. No damage estimate was possible; the fire was fueled by hardwood floors covered with decades of accumulated resin. It burned so hot that it scorched a snorkel truck, but thankfully no firemen were injured. I was on my way to Fullerton and Western to visit family and saw the place where I spent many happy years, making friends and creating memories, go up in flames. More than 3,000 people lined the streets to watch as black smoke soared hundreds of feet in the air. Needless to say, it was a very sad day in my life and an end to a glorious era of skating in Chicago.



In 1916, the city opened the Clarendon Municipal Beach, featuring this impressive brick building with two stately towers. Remnants of those towers can still be found today in the community center.

Visions colliding on future of Clarendon Park

What will kids do if building closes?

BY RONALD ROENIGK

Two divergent visions for the future of Clarendon Park and its Community Center are on a collision course, and seeing as how the building houses the Garfield-Clarendon Model Railroad Club, somebody will need to flip a switch before there is a full on train wreck.

This facility “has a long history as a community hub and there are some pretty tough decision that will have to be made,” admitted Ald. James Cappleman [46th] before an audience of 50 or so interested guests at a public meeting in the park Sept. 26.

Much of the challenge, says Heather Gleason, director of planning and construction for the Chicago Park District [CPD], is that most of the currently available \$6.1 million in funds will need to go toward things like roof repairs, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and making the building water tight and ADA compliant. But she reminded the audience that “Nothing today is final. The focus today is what we’ve discovered by

analyzing the current building and grounds.”

The CPD team then went through three versions of an entirely new building that they titled “Traditional; Progressive Twist, and Axial.” Due to buried underground infrastructure affiliated with a

before the construction of LSD and Montrose Point to the east. In fact, one of the North Side’s oldest remaining man-made structures - an original seawall - is located here. A keen eye will note a portion of the distinctive towers that once graced the large

suits, towels, and lockers for the charge of .10¢ per adult.

Part of that old beach complex is today the foundation and walls of the park’s Community Center.

In the late 1930s, when the CPD expanded Lincoln Park north to Foster Ave., the park lost its lake frontage. The city then converted the facility into a community center, adding gymnasiums, club rooms, a playground, and an athletic field.

Unfortunately a major renovation project in 1972 resulted in the removal of the building’s most distinguishing features: the tile roof and towers. The building now sits at the door step of a community in transition, one similar to that experienced in other communities up and down the North Lakefront: gentrification. A giant new luxury high-rise is being built directly south of the site. Yet, there are many poverty-level, at-risk families nearby who use the Community Center almost daily.

At the meeting, it took a teacher from Uplift High School and youth volunteer to remind the CPD just who is utilizing the building these



Dept. of Water Management pumping station next door, options are limited. At the end of the meeting, attendees were able to place stickers on posters that gave varying opinions of each of the three options offered.

Located between Montrose and Wilson avenues west of Lake Shore Dr. [LSD], the Clarendon Park Community Center sits on over eight acres of historic land. The 100-year old facility used to front a giant lakefront municipal beach

house still standing guard today over the indoor basketball court.

In 1916, the city opened the Clarendon Municipal Beach, featuring an impressive brick building with two stately towers, separate open-air locker areas for men and women, and two smaller buildings housing a laundry and a children’s playroom. Accommodating more than 9,000 swimmers and a promenade for thousands of spectators, the facility provided bathing

VISIONS SEE P. 4

VISIONS FROM P. 3

days.

“Most of what I’ve heard here today focussed on building design and layout,” said Christopher “Maddog” Thomas, program manager for Kuumba Lynx, a popular urban arts youth development organization housed in the building. “But there [were] 150 young people in the building today. Where are they going to go [if] the building closes? This is there safe space.”

His comments drew applause from the audience as most of the locals realize that there are safety and violence issues in the neighborhood, and gang turf lines that the youths are aware of and must pass through each day to reach the park... lines that are mostly invisible to adults and CPD officials.

There is no doubt that the poorly maintained building is badly in need of repair, and due to a nearby TIF windfall, the community now has a pot of money at its disposal.

How that money is spent and what the community ends up with is what is in

play now and where the collision of needs, wants and visions may occur. Some of those who attended the meeting were clearly disappointed with the bland vision offered by CPD.

The Community Center is also the home to the Garfield-Clarendon Model Railroad Club, which has a long history and beautifully crafted railroad layout that is almost too complex to relocate.

“The entire presentation was a disappointment,” said Ward Miller, executive director of Preservation Chicago. “None of their plans take into account the historic building. There is more of it there than they admitted. They are offering three versions of the same building when they should be re-imagining it in the spirit of the original building. They’re biased in favor of a new building. It’s all very contrived and unclear.”

Miller also says that the CPD is now “wasting hundreds of thousands of dollars on third rate plans,” and says that the CPD’s own delayed maintenance is why the building has degraded so severely. “They’ve made poor decisions over the last 50 years.”

The field house contains a fitness center, a gymnasium, and several clubrooms available for rental. Outside are two junior baseball and two softball fields, a two-hoop basketball court, new dog-friend-

ly area, and a playground with a water play area.

The park staff offers a variety of recreation opportunities for tots, youth, teens and adults. The Kuumba Lynx is the Arts Partner In Residence and provides poetry, graffiti art, Hip Hop, and skateboarding.

The Community Center is also the home to the Garfield-Clarendon Model Railroad Club, which has a long history and beautifully crafted railroad layout that is almost too complex to relocate. Still club members at the meeting said that they may be able to muster the knowhow and energy to take it on... if they had to. But anyone who has seen the track infrastructure and layout may silently fear that if

it had to be taken apart and stored for three years while the property is demolished, a future rebuilt may be too monumental a task for club members to undertake.

And thus the crux of the present divide. “Demolishing the whole Clarendon Park community center building would be madness,” said Katharine Boyda, a neighbor and local community organizer. “This goes beyond architecture—our community center is already a special place that has all the “ingredients” [that] even the Obama Center is now trying to establish in Jackson Park. This rich tapestry of programming, events and arts partners evolved organically, often with very limited resources. If the building is demolished, we will say good-bye to the railroad club, the Kuumba Lynx and the strong ties they have made in our community.”

Boyda and others remain committed to fully renovating the community center with imagination through a fully engaged public process.

ENGINE 78 FROM P. 1

years of his 30-year firefighting career.

Once a year we had the privilege of attending a baseball game at Wrigley Field, but we would always stop at the firehouse on our way. As we stepped inside, my eyes got as big as saucers. I was proud to be a firefighter’s daughter, but Engine 78 held magic of its own. I would always sit on the engine’s front bumper (a spot I still enjoy today) and would have a delicious Frosty Malt. The vendors from Wrig-

ley often dropped off leftover treats after the game to the boys at the firehouse in the 60s. I’d always climb up into the officer’s side of the engine and perch on that old, cracked bench seat. The cab had the unique aroma of a musty, old attic crossed with a locker room, with a healthy dose of smoke thrown in. I would be allowed to ring the bell once, pulling on the string, then would push the button to make the siren scream. When I was two, one of the firemen



even took me to the second floor and while in his arms, we slid the firepole. This firehouse and everything in it is a very special place for me.

At game time, we walked across the street to the ballpark, its massive walls inviting us to enter. We hiked the

shadowy concrete ramps leading to the seats and emerged into the sunlight seeing that beautiful emerald field for the first time. My heart always skipped a beat when I saw the perfectly groomed ivy, planted in 1937. We always sat in the same spot, against the outer wall in left-field foul territory, where I could see the firehouse. When the boys in blue got a run, the engine would pull out on Waveland as I

119-YEAR-OLD RAVENSWOOD CLUB BUILDING MAY FACE WRECKING BALL

BY PETER VON BUOL

A prominent 119-year-old building at the corner Wilson and Ashland Ave. may soon be demolished as the property's current owner, a congregation of Buddhist monks, has reached an agreement to sell the property.

Located on a large corner lot, the stately wood-frame building at 1521 W. Wilson Ave. was built in the architectural style known as Classical Revival. Originally designed by architect John E.O. Pridmore for the long-defunct Ravenswood Club, its design was meant to project permanence.

The building's unique features include a full-width front porch with classical columns and pilasters and a wide front-facing gable roof with a smaller secondary intersecting gable roof on the north side of the building. The building's front entrance is also set back far from the sidewalk on Ashland Avenue and has an unusually large front yard. A two-story addition, designed by architect Niels Buck (who was also a prominent Chicago architect), was added to the rear of the building in 1902. Buck's addition also used the Classical Revival style.

This is not the first time the property has been threatened with demolition. In 2004, its then-owner, the Paul Revere Masonic Lodge, had informed the community it could no longer afford maintenance costs and that they would be selling the building.

Faced with losing a noteworthy building in the 47th



The Ravenswood Club, 1521 W. Wilson Ave., was a private social club similar to a country club. The building also hosted its affiliated organizations such as the Ravenswood Women's Club and the Ravenswood Improvement Association.

Ward, the ward's then-alderman Gene Schuler, and Preservation Chicago, a non-profit organization dedicated to architectural preservation, asked the city of Chicago's commission on landmarks to research the history and the condition of the building.

Months later, the commission's report confirmed the building was worthy of preservation.

The authors of the report described the building as possessing "fine physical integrity" and it was recommended that "all exterior elevations of the building, including rooflines" should be preserved. The authors also recognized the building's historic relationship to the surrounding community.

Soon after the report was published, the property was sold to a congregation of Vietnamese Buddhists who notified the community they were dedicated to the preservation of the building and its grounds. Among the first improvements made to the

property was a decorative wrought-iron fence with Buddhist scrollwork. Early on, however, the congregation announced its plan to alter the building's roofline to a pagoda design. Such an alteration would have directly affected the building's architectural integrity and was discouraged by its neighbors. Not being able to alter the building's roofline, however, may have been a contributing factor in the congregation's decision to move to Elmwood Park and the property quickly acquired a forlorn appearance.

According to Ward Miller, the executive director of Preservation Chicago, while the city's report was compiled in 2004, the Ravenswood Club building would still merit preservation.

"It would still qualify for Chicago Landmark Designation, if restored, with a responsible buyer, dedicated to the community and its historic fabric. We really need more sensitive developers in Chicago, working to reinvest,

re-use, and to redevelop these historic properties. Wholesale demolition is not the answer, and we need to encourage more preservation and re-investment in these historic resources across Chicago," Miller said.

Pridmore's prolific career spanned from 1883 to 1940. He designed the Bush Temple of Music, 100 W. Chicago, a Chicago landmark. In addition, many of Pridmore's designs have been recognized for their architectural and historical significance and are listed on the city's official historic resources survey.

The Ravenswood Club was a private social club similar to a country club. The building also hosted its affiliated organizations such as the Ravenswood Women's Club and the Ravenswood Improvement Association. In 1920, the club sold the building to a pair of Masonic organizations. By 1927, the Paul Revere Masonic Lodge took over full ownership.

For more than 80 years, the fraternal organization operated the building and it served as a beacon to the community. In 2004, lodge officials decided they could no longer afford the building's maintenance costs and announced the lodge would be selling the property.

Interestingly, there is some discrepancy as to the age of the building. While city records indicate it had originally been constructed in 1899 for the Ravenswood Club, lodge records seem to indicate it had actually been built around 1885 as a private home.



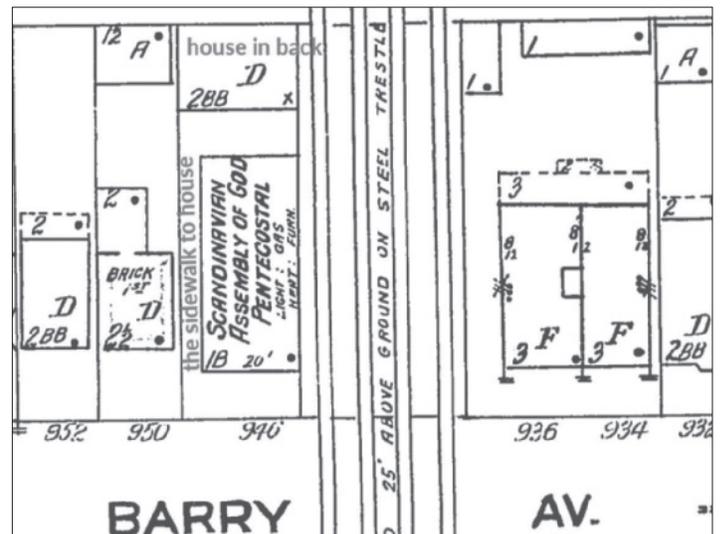
Painting of 1414 Noble Avenue, "the house in front" by Arlene Nybakken Chase.



3 generations on the porch at 1412 Noble.



The sidewalk entrance to Anderson's home at 1412 and the house in front at 1414. Notice the house in front at 1414 is situated a few yards east of 1412 due to the sidewalk entrance to his home at 1412 Noble [946 Barry Ave.], hence 1414 was built more toward the newly constructed "El."



The photo below shows The 1414 Noble house was the building the Northwestern folks had an issue with – pieces of it obstructed the proper use of the elevate; an apparent safety issue.

TRACKS FROM P. 1 end operations.

After some apparent negotiations the Northwestern Elevated Co. was allowed to begin operations again in May of the same year.

At that time, the stations along the elevated tracks north of '2400 North' included the Fullerton, Wrightwood, Diversey, Wellington, Belmont, Clark, Addison, Grace, Sheridan, Buena Park and Wilson stations.

The City of Chicago approved the Ravenswood line

Anderson received a letter from the Northwestern Elevated Railroad Co. in February 1906 to 'surrender' part of his property at 1414 Noble.

in 1905, which was extended to Kimball by 1907.

In 1911 the first (voluntary) consolidation of all privately-owned elevated companies began.

By 1947, the Chicago Transportation Authority (CTA), as we know it, was established.

A company must operate at a profit or cease to exist – and the more profits the better -

while keeping expenses at an operational and acceptable minimum. Companies like the Northwestern Elevated Railroad were granted city-owned alleyways to reduce costs. If private property got in the way of the elevated, the municipalities would allow some latitude on the line's 'right of way.'

So was the case with the property and buildings owned

by Nels Anderson, grandfather of Arlene Nybakken Chase, located at 1412 Noble, or 946 W. Barry Ave. (post 1909 address) as of 1906.

Anderson owned a city lot at that address that would have two houses on it prior to 1906; one in front of the other. One of these houses apparently caused problems for the newly constructed elevated line. Anderson received a letter from the Northwestern Elevated Railroad Co. in Feb-

Good Shepherd aiding North Side women for 111 years

BY PATRICK BUTLER

One of Chicago's oldest continuously-operating charitable institutions, Lake View's own House of the Good Shepherd, held its 111th annual "Glow of Hope Gala" benefit Nov. 2 at the Ritz Carlton's Grand Ballroom, 160 E. Pearson St.

Before the Civil War, a ministry of four Good Shepherd nuns founded the House of the Good Shepherd in 1859 when they began caring for Chicago's troubled and "abandoned women," girls and children. The sisters did their best to help these marginalized families - including those accused of prostitution or disorderly conduct, or those suffering from addictions. The nuns provided an education and eventually became a shelter for at-risk women and their children. They helped women reclaim their dignity and prepared them to find

employment through vocational education.

The organization was incorporated in 1867.

Among the volunteer social workers in the 1950s was Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who served as a volunteer social worker.

In 2015, management of the convent's program was taken over by Chicago's Catholic Charities, with a new focus on victims of domestic violence.

Good Shepherd now offers a broad spectrum of personalized programs ranging from basic education, literacy and life-skills training, wellness, and financial literacy to violence prevention seminars and connection to outside resources such as safe housing, food, medical assistance and childcare. Their target population is economically and educationally deprived persons from the poorest neighborhoods in Chicagoland.

During a visit to a Lake View Kiwanis luncheon last year, development director Nancy Haws estimated more

"There is no way I could have ever moved forward, and neither could my daughters, without the trust and counseling we received from the loving staff at the House of the Good Shepherd," said Francisca Ayala.

than 5,900 abuse survivors have since been helped.

One of them, Francisca Ayala, credits the counseling offered at Good Shepherd with changing her life and that of her children.

"My two young daughters and I were paralyzed by years of traumatic physical, emotional and psychological abuse by my former husband and their father. We had lost

all hope when we arrived (at the convent) in 1994."

Ayala said she found a factory job where she "worked a lot of overtime to support herself and her daughters while continuing in Good Shepherd's aftercare program for emotional support.

She added she was also able to access the clothing room and other basic necessities when times were tough.

"There is no way I could have ever moved forward, and neither could my daughters, without the trust and counseling we received from the loving staff at the House of the Good Shepherd," Ayala said, noting that one of her two daughters has since graduated from the Univ. of Illinois while the other has graduated from DePaul.

"Both are teachers. I am retired now and I am helping to raise my niece," Ayala said.

TRACKS FROM P. 6

ruary 1906 to 'surrender' part of his property - and other attributes of his property - with the building address of 1414 Noble, the building located in front of his family home at 1412 Noble Ave.

Apparently, all generations learned to sleep soundly during the periodic noises of the "El" until 1947 when the family moved from Lake View. Today, Arlene resides in Scottsdale, Arizona.

All the photos are owned by Arlene Nybakken Chase. She indicated that all the photos may have been lost forever if not for her grandmother who retrieved them from a trash can.

ENGINE 78 FROM P. 4

jumped up to look down at my heroes. I'd get a wave from the guys on the backstep. I felt so proud! It's how a little girl falls in love with firemen, the Chicago Fire Department, and of course, Dad.

Has Wrigley ever had a fire that required our guys to respond? Yes! Mom used to like to do her housework when Dad was at the firehouse. She put the game on to watch while ironing. During the game, the WGN camera swung over to the right-field grandstand to show viewers a gas-powered hot dog stand on fire, while Dad was trying to put it out! Needless to say, Mom was a bit surprised. The

next day, the Chicago Tribune carried a picture of my dad in perfect silhouette extinguishing the fire. The caption read, "Hot time at Wrigley, but it couldn't spark a Cubs win." I was three at the time, and still have that yellowed newspaper clipping from more than 55 years ago.

Even now, watching a Cubs home game, I am always aware of "my" boys across the street protecting the neighborhood.

If you listen closely, you'll even hear our heroes go out on a run in the background.

Karen Kruse is the author of "A Chicago Firehouse: Stories of Wrigleyville's Engine 78," (www.achicagofirehouse.com), is a member of Mensa, the Association for Gravestone Studies, and has written for both organizations nationally and locally. Kruse is also a regular contributor to "Working Writer."



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