



**NORTH  
MAYFAIR,  
U.S.A.**

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

October 27, 1986

I am pleased to extend warm greetings to all the members of The North Mayfair Improvement Association as you mark the 50th anniversary of your publication "The North Mayfair Improver."

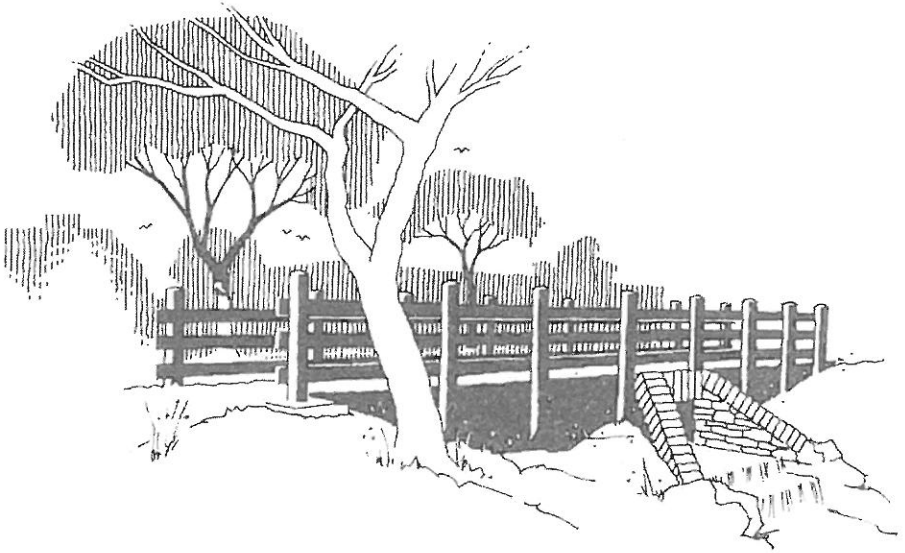
Americans know that only when the people have access to the facts and a robust discussion of the issues facing their community or their nation can they participate fully in the democratic process. For 50 years the "North Mayfair Improver" has provided a medium through which the citizens of North Mayfair can address the needs of their community, and I offer my congratulations to all involved on a job well done.

Nancy joins me in sending our best wishes for many more years of progress and success. God bless you.



Ronald Reagan

*"THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT"*



## **NORTH MAYFAIR, U.S.A.**

North Mayfair is part of the beautiful, world class city of Chicago with its Magnificent Mile, Water Tower, world renowned architecture, theatres, museums and beautiful Lake Michigan. Local color and diversity, we have in abundance.

Generally, we do not suffer from tornadoes, floods, water shortages or earthquakes. The four seasons, with their variety and change, move the year past with relatively little stress. Lake Michigan gives us free air-conditioning. LaBagh Wood with 600 areas of trees and open land, Gompers Park with 39 acres of greenery, the three cemeteries on Pulaski and North Park Village with 160 acres of openness, all add up to a cooling effect in summer heat.

A short bus ride brings us to the Jefferson Park Terminal. From there the train takes seventeen minutes to downtown Chicago.



We are at the foot of Edens Highway, and all points north are easily accessible. The Kennedy Expressway provides a diagonal connection to other areas of the city and to interstate highways. O'Hare Field is fifteen minutes away.

North Mayfair is within walking distance of North Park College and Northeastern Illinois University. Many other institutions of higher learning are in the Chicago area. Palmer School recently received an \$800,000 renovation and can be reached without the children crossing busy streets.

Gompers Park has an attractive clean fieldhouse, ball fields, an outdoor swimming pool and seven tennis courts. The Park District offers drama classes, sewing and handicraft classes, square dancing, gym, wrestling, chess, volleyball and basketball. A walk or jog around the lagoon is available to young and old alike. The lagoon is stocked with fish. Ducks have made it their home and migrating Canada geese visit the lagoon adding to the natural setting.

Across the years, countless individuals have given their time and efforts to our neighborhood organization, directing change with planning and citizen involvement. The heart of North Mayfair and the engine that drives it is the North Mayfair Improvement Association. The voice of North Mayfair is the "Improver."

In 1986, on the Fourth of July, we rededicated the Statue of Liberty. Most of us are grandchildren or children of immigrants or perhaps immigrants ourselves. By one path or another we found our way to North Mayfair. Let us continue to accept the responsibility to keep our neighborhood viable, our Association strong, and to care about the continued vitality of our city and our country.

*Dale Bolling, President*

## **Early History**

Today, North Mayfair is a fully-packed corner in the urban area of metropolitan Chicago, and it lies under the skyways of the busiest airport in the world, O'Hare Field. North Mayfair is six

thousand people. It is homes, streets, and alleys laced together with telephone and electrical wires. It is cars, buses, stores, businesses, sidewalks, lawns, backyards and kids. But once it was an open prairie, full of natural beauty, untouched by development. Fifty eight species of wildlife nibbled the foliage, and the river that edged its northern boundary was clear and clean.

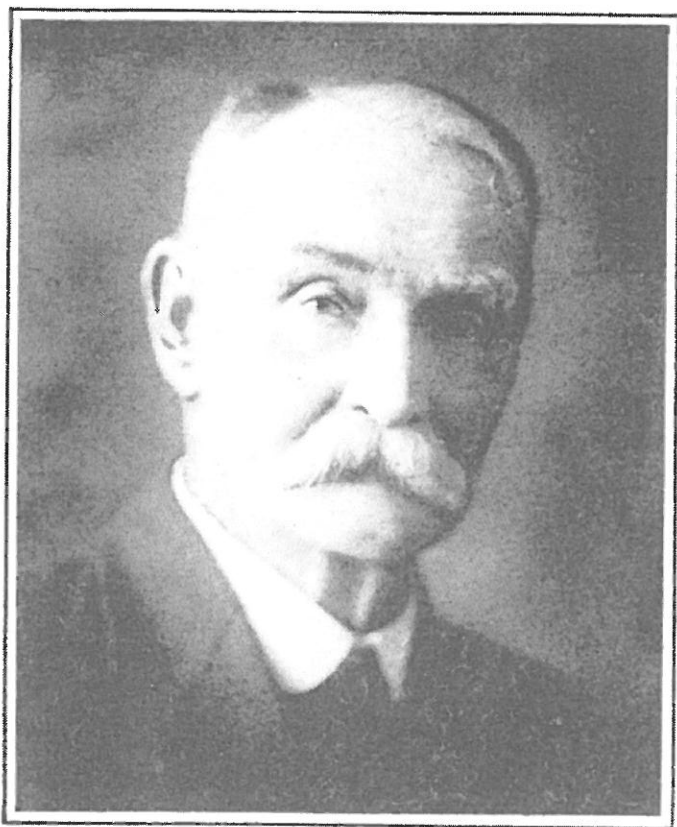
North Mayfair belonged to the Pottawatomie Indians. As the United States developed, the settlers came west with their wagon trains. Soon, the stronger culture of the white man pushed aside the simple life style of the Indians, and the winds of change blew the prairies into truck farms, and the truck farms into subdivisions and bungalows, and the river that still edges the northern boundary of North Mayfair became polluted.

When we look back, we find that the earliest history of North Mayfair is necessarily intertwined with that of adjoining areas. North Mayfair was not defined as a neighborhood until the North Mayfair Improvement Association was formed in 1929.

Among the first white men in this general area were Joliet and Marquette, who were here in 1673. One hundred and thirty years later, in 1803, Fort Dearborn was built, and thirty years after that, in September of 1833, the United States signed an important treaty with the Pottawatomie Indians. However, there must have been earlier negotiations with the Indians because, from 1816 to 1835, there was an Indian reservation in nearby Edgebrook.

In the treaty of 1833, special grants were given to some Indians. Billy Caldwell (also known as Chief Sauganash) was among them. There is a stone and plaque commemorating these treaties with the Indians at Caldwell and Rogers Avenues in Sauganash, where a huge elm tree once stood. This plaque was placed there by the Chicago Historical Society. (The plaque was stolen by vandals, but the stone is intact.)

Chief Sauganash was an important person in that bygone era. He was the son of an Irish officer in the British Service, and his mother was a Pottawatomie princess. He acted as an intermediary between the Indians and the Government. Later, in payment for this service, the Government built a house for him on Wabash Avenue, on the land now occupied by the Holy Name Cathedral. Caldwell Avenue and the community of Sauganash were named after him.

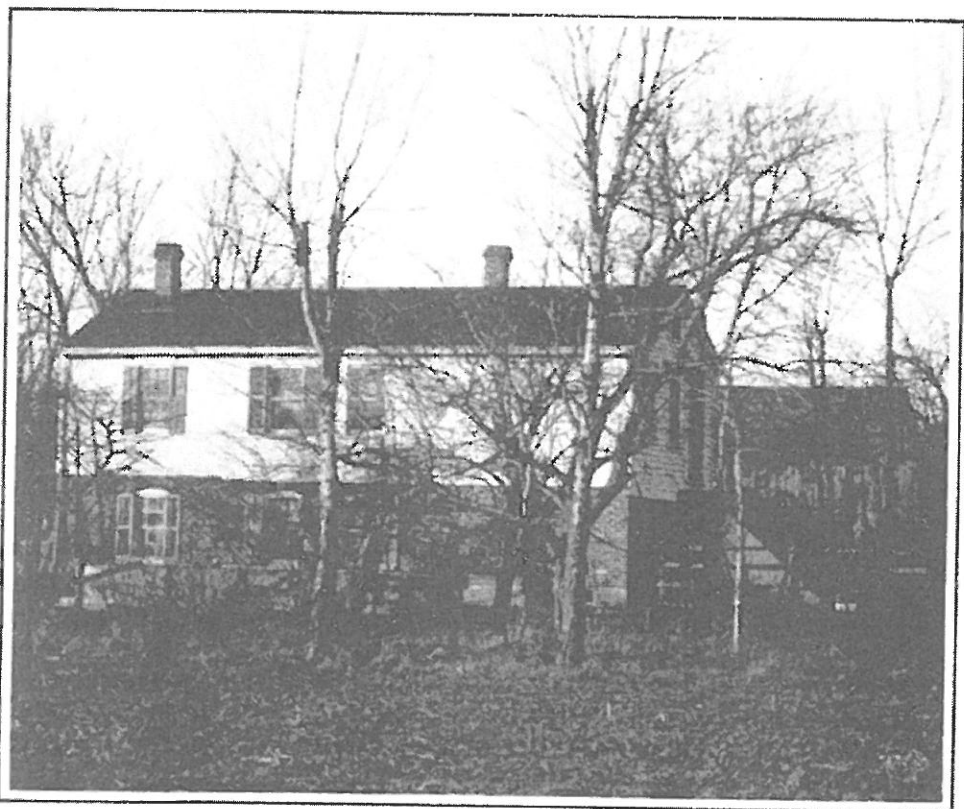


*WM. H. SPIKINGS*

Among the early settlers in our area was William Harding, who was given a land grant in 1800. He was the grandfather of W. H. Spikings who was the first white person to be born in this general area, in a home that stood about where the Eugene Fieldhouse is today. He was born in 1848. Later, this W. H. Spikings built a sixteen room mansion that looked like a southern mansion from "Gone With the Wind" at Ainslie Street and Pulaski Road. The house was set back from the street with a spacious lawn around it, and the whole area was enclosed by an iron picket fence. Every brick in this huge house was kilned by Mr. Spikings. The Spiking family was active in civic affairs and helped to establish the Mayfair Presbyterian Church.

Other early settlers in the area were James McGrane who opened a tavern in 1842 at the intersection of Lawrence and Elston Avenues. Mr. Peter Erickson had a homestead from the year 1850 on Kostner Avenue near Foster Avenue. He was a prosperous farmer, and his daughter Jennie became a teacher at the "Little Red School House" located for many years at Kostner and Lawrence Avenues.

In 1889, North Mayfair, then a part of Jefferson Township, was annexed to the City of Chicago. After the era of the early settlers and the truck farms, subdividers bought tracts of land. Streets, sidewalks and bungalows appeared and North Mayfair took on its present day appearance.



*Erickson Farmhouse Located in the  
5100 Block of North Kostner Avenue*



*Gypsy camp in LaBagh Woods, early 1900's—notice chained bear in foreground.*



*Winter scene from Erickson Farm. Figure probably one of the Ericksons.*

# North Mayfair Improvement Association

In 1929, Gustave Reich and twenty-three of his neighbors founded the North Mayfair Improvement Association. In 1932, they combined with the Albany Park West End Improvement Association. The first meetings of the Association were held in the old band shell which was the first building in Gompers Park. It stood in the valley where the football field is now. Later, meetings were held in the Park District bungalows at Kolmar and Carmen Avenues. When the Gompers Park fieldhouse was built, the meetings were moved there.

In April of 1936, when Mr. Alex Rochow was president, the first issue of the "Improver" was published. For thirty-eight years, Mr. Rochow served as its Editor; this is an unparalleled contribution to the community when it is realized that behind each and every issue there was the pulling together of information, countless telephone calls, printing and mailing details, and doubtlessly other untold problems.

Mr. Rochow was a staunch supporter of the now disbanded Garden Club of Mayfair for more than twenty-five years. In April of 1960, his name was placed on the Gompers Park Honor Roll for his contributions to our community, and he continued to contribute his interest, talents, and time for an additional fifteen years.

When the Association started a snow plowing service, Mr. Rochow was on the committee. Many times this elderly gentleman could be seen guiding the snow plow up and down the streets with his white Studebaker. In the summer he was often on his knees tending the flowers on the grounds of the beautiful Presbyterian Church.



*A. C. ROCHOW  
Civic Leader and Editor  
of the Improver for  
Thirty-eight Years.*

In reviewing back copies of the "Improver" for the preparation of our 1976 history book, it was apparent that Mr. Rochow, had preserved a valuable record of community life. These "Improvers" span the years from the Great Depression and show the social attitudes, the patriotism and life-style of a middle class American community. Community life as it was affected by larger social concerns such as the Depression, WPA, World War II, the draft, and the housing shortage is recorded in a way that would otherwise have been lost.

The Chicago Historical Society has recognized the value of these "Improvers" and they officially became part of the permanent records of the City of Chicago when they were donated to the Society after the history book was completed.

North Mayfair also had a "Poet Laureate." Mr. Frank T. Rounds was a frequent contributor of homespun poetry to the "Improver." He was born in Rushville, Indiana, and he was a boyhood friend of James Whitcomb Riley.

Mr. Rounds was also a tireless worker for the Association and served as its delegate to the Northwest Federation of Improvement Clubs.

In an interview on his eighty-third birthday, he made this remarkable statement. "I must say that the past twenty years have been the happiest in my life. We have a happy home surrounded by many friends. My work these past years for our community and fellowmen has been interesting, and I hope the Good Lord will give me a few more years to live that I may continue to do good for all." He lived to be ninety-three.



*JEANNE and JOSEPH WALTZ—civic leaders.  
Joe was the President of the Association in 1959, and was  
Financial Secretary for many years.*

# PAST PRESIDENTS

The following is a list of the past presidents of our Association. All of these men and women have given outstanding service to our community. They have given unselfishly of their time, organizational abilities and efforts. The North Mayfair Improvement Association's continued success and continuity is the direct result of their efforts and of countless others who supported their work.

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| *1929 Gustav Reich       | 1958 Roy Lundin           |
| *1930 Benjamin A. Tolson | *1959 Joseph Waltz        |
| *1931 Earle J. Orther    | 1960 Russell E. Johnson   |
| *1932 Gustav Bjurnstrom  | 1961 Joseph Traum         |
| *1933 Edward L. Barr     | 1962 John Huska           |
| *1934 Irwin C. Reiff     | 1963 Stewart Archambault  |
| *1935 Arthur C. Bruns    | 1964 D. Victor Nuzzo      |
| *1936 Alex C. Rochow     | 1965 Rudolph Amrich       |
| 1937 Charles C. Porter   | *1966 Harry Sehlhorst     |
| *1938 John C. Benson     | *1967 Peter Auler         |
| *1939 Sidney S. Doe      | 1968 Edward Lawdan        |
| *1940 Samuel M. Sopocy   | 1969 William C. Jones     |
| *1941 Paul A. Pape       | 1970 Ronald Pryer         |
| *1942 George Dalacker    | 1971 Edward A. Klipo      |
| 1943 Walter C. Regard    | 1972 Nick Altintop        |
| 1944 R. Chase Phipps     | 1973 Joseph Cicero        |
| *1945 Henry G. Kelly     | 1974 Ruth Melson          |
| *1946 Karl Sauer         | 1975 Edward Kuhn          |
| *1947 Jack G. Dinschel   | 1976 James McCarthy       |
| 1948 Harry H. Larkner    | 1977 Harold Mishkin       |
| *1949 Harold V. Jacobs   | 1978 Andrew Weiszmann     |
| 1950 Arthur F. Krohn     | 1979 Bernard Trandel      |
| *1951 Arthur C. Schultz  | 1980 Robert der Avedisian |
| *1952 James R. Adkins    | 1981 Alex Wambach         |
| *1953 Max Haack          | 1982 Alex Wambach         |
| *1954 Matt Schiller      | 1983 Sylvester Quartana   |
| *1955 Ray Kirchwehm      | 1984 Vito Benigno         |
| *1956 Joseph E. Hammer   | 1985 Dale Bolling         |
| *1957 Herman Uding       | 1986 Dale Bolling         |

*\*deceased at time of print.*



A FEW WORDS FROM OUR ALDERMAN . . .



**ANTHONY C. LAURINO**  
Alderman, 39th Ward



Neighborhood stability was one of the founding reasons for the creation of the North Mayfair Improvement Association in 1929. This idea has endured and grown thru the years, and now our community is recognized thruout the city as a great place to live, work and play. History also played an important part in the continued success we enjoy today. In 1936, Alex Rochow began the "Improver," and this booklet commemorates fifty years of continuous publication. To really learn the history of the community, stories from past issues make wonderful reading.

In 1965 when I became alderman, Joe Waltz and I read many of the back issues which provided a real insight on the pulse of the community. I found the stories on the housing in Gompers Park and LaBagh Woods very interesting, as well as the expansion of the businesses, the new churches, the end of the little Red School House, all items that had an impact on the area. The concern for problems then, is equaled today by the current officers. And this is what makes a community become alive, active and worth caring about.

In the last 21 years, many notable events have happened in our community. Who can forget the two parades put together by the Mayfair Lions Club in 1965 and 1970. The week long events as

we celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Mayfair community, with art works, bake-offs, entertainment and a dinner dance. Or can we forget the two snow storms in 67 and 79. The community got together and opened the streets, made sure the sick and elderly were looked in upon, and on the 4800 block of Kildare the neighbors all pitched in with the help of Ray at the Sinclair Station to get the street and sidewalk open because one of the neighbors was a heart patient and had an ambulance coming to get him.

The dedication of the new pool at Gompers Park, the fire at the Mayfair Lutheran Church, the rapid expansion of Bankers Life, the impact of First Distributors, the new facilities of the Butler Company, the soon to be built Dominicks and Venture stores all had an effect on Mayfair. In each case the community became involved and let their feelings be known. This interaction is one of the reasons we are more than a neighborhood, we are a family, working together within a community.

The time, talent and treasure put forth by the many groups within the community cannot be counted, filed on a tax return or placed in a vault. For the last fifty-seven years, the North Mayfair Improvement Association has been the leading group, and its voice, the "Improver," has kept all of us informed. If we are to continue, we must involve ourselves and our families in our own community. It is not enough to "just belong," we have to keep the hands of help and friendship that have been extended over the past fifty plus years working and available.

This booklet will provide the insight as to what makes Mayfair work, and be as great as it is. It was not done alone, it was not done by a few, it is the efforts of many, and I am proud to be just one very small cog in a mechanism created in 1929, and better today than ever, North Mayfair.

*Anthony C. Laurino*

# FIRST ISSUE OF THE "Improver"

## THE NORTH MAYFAIR IMPROVER.

Published in the interests of the members of the North Mayfair Improvement Assn.

Volume I

Chicago, Ill., April 3, 1936

No. 1

### OUR CALENDAR.

Monday, April 6th is the date of our next regular meeting, which will be held in the East Club Room at Campers Park, Tripp and Foster Ave. As this is our first meeting for the new officers a large attendance will be appreciated. Show your interest in the Association by coming to this meeting and bringing your neighbor with you. All the new committee chairmen have been appointed. So bring in your complaints and suggestions and we will give them our prompt and careful attention.

### OFFICERS FOR 1936-37.

President, A. C. Rochow, 5059 N. Kilbourne Ave. Phone Kildare 8494.

Vice President, Chas. O. Porter, N. Kilpatrick Ave. Phone Palisade

Secretary, Sidney S. Doe, 4436 Lawrence Ave., Phone Kildare 8968.

Financial Secretary, L. E. Holmberg, 4616 N. Tripp Ave. Phone Pensacola 2731.

Treasurer, E. W. Schroeder, 5118 N. Kozner Ave. Phone Kildare 7659.

Sergeant-at-Arms, John Elphinstone, 4933 N. Kedvale Ave. Phone Palisade 7421.

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN.

- Streets and Alley, F. T. Rounds.
- Publicity & Public Relations, E.L. Barr
- Police & Protection, W. Michaelis
- Transportation, Paul Pape.
- Finance, S. W. Soboy.
- Membership, G. B. Sherman.
- Schools, John C. Benson.
- N. W. Federation, Karl Sauer, Jr.
- Public Health, E. J. Orther.
- Parks & Playgrounds, A. C. Bruns.
- Entertainment, Geo. Niclas.
- Custodian, Chas. Johnson.

Sidney S. Doe, our newly elected secretary became seriously ill on Wednesday of last week but we are happy to report that he is convalescent now and expects to be present at our meeting next Monday.

Paul Pape, chairman of our annual dance and card party, which was held on February 29th, has his report of this event ready and will read it to us Monday evening. It has some very interesting information that we all will want to hear.

### LET'S GET READY FOR SPRING.

Start now to tidy up the surroundings about your home. Rake your lawn and remove all the dead grass and leaves. Prune your bushes and trees if you have not already done so. Clean up any dead plants or rubbish that may be about your premises and burn them. You'll be surprised what a great improvement you can make about your home by an hour or two spent with a few garden tools and a desire to do something worthwhile. Do this for your sake, the sake of North Mayfair and the city in which you live because the more attractive your home and its surroundings are, the more enjoyment you will get from it and the neighborhood in which you live. Let's make North Mayfair the garden spot of Chicago, the most beautiful section in our city.

# 1936

with the best information for your garden. Write to Mr. John ... President of the Garden Club, 4306 Kinzie St., Phone Kildare 9501 and you will receive without charge expert advice. We hope in this way to increase the interest of our members in their gardens, which, after all, can do more than anything to beautify our community.

### THE FOSTER AVE. BUS CASE.

Since our last meeting, much has been done to get transportation on Foster Ave. and as this is written, we have what we believe is reliable information that an order will be entered by Illinois Commerce Commission within the next day or two authorizing service on Foster Ave. by one of the three companies that is seeking permission to operate there. While it is hoped that the Chicago Surface Lines will be the one selected, there is no positive information available at this time as to which company will be designated. Your association has fought bitterly for this improvement and has practically been the leader in it from the start. It was necessary for us to appeal to Gov. Hornor and we believe that our efforts will bear fruit very soon. Come to our meeting Monday for news of the latest developments of this fight.

A. C. Rochow,  
Editor.



# **Chronological Story of North Mayfair FROM PAGES OF THE "IMPROVER"**

compiled by Ruth Shouba

*(See Centennial Booklet for excerpts prior to 1976)*

**February, 1976**—"Involved citizens against Crosstown" a long-time battle. Gypsies again in our neighborhood. Senior citizens now pay half price for city vehicle licenses.

**May, 1976**—With assistance from NMIA and Alderman Laurino a steel guard rail installed at First Distributors. New traffic pattern specified by survey.

**September, 1976**—"Boston Tea Party" reenactment on May 22 in South Gompers Lagoon sponsored by Mayfair-Forest Glen Kiwanis. July 4th—Bicentennial parade by Pantry Pretties, kazoo band led by Marlene Brown, N.M.I.A. and Palmer School floats outstanding. \$60.00 profit from garage sale used to have pictures of both events framed and given to fieldhouse. Two Russian Olive trees planted in front of the fieldhouse.

**February, 1977**—Snow plowing or lack of, a big issue odd and even days parking. 17th District Police Neighborhood Relations Unit now supplying crime reports to Improver. Beat Representative Program established. Gompers Park basketball schedule published.

**April, 1977**—Several copies of Bicentennial History Book plus 40 years of Improver from 1936 to 1976 given to Chicago Historical Society. Alderman Laurino's Progress Report: 3/22/77. Mayor Bilandic toured Lawrence Avenue in Albany Park. Phase I of re-development will start soon, then progress west into Mayfair Area. Ground breaking at Municipal T.B. projects and Peterson Park.

**May, 1977**—Listing of block captains and phone numbers

**June, 1977**—Scholarship award committee reviewing and interviewing candidates. Senior citizens' real estate tax relief benefits. Gompers Park pool swimming schedule.

**September, 1977**—Ground breaking on Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium projects again. N.M.I.A. summer picnic at Gompers. Irving Federal Savings and Loan Association thanks everyone for making their first year on Lawrence a success.

**October, 1977**—Darby's Variety Store reopening after their fire. Mayfair Sub-Branch Library celebrates its 35th anniversary, 1942-1974 at 4750 N. Kenneth and since 1974 at Keeler and Lawrence. Dog Owners—"We love 'em—but?" Whistle Stop—safety campaign begins.

**November, 1977**—North River Commission published its Neighborhood Policy and Effort to desegregate Chicago Public Schools.

**December, 1977**—Seven new businesses have located in North Mayfair and have placed ads in the Improver, 97% N.M.I.A. dues paid in 1977.

**January, 1978**—Taxes! How to figure house's value and Jefferson Township quadrennial reassessment occupied a large part of issue.

**February, 1978**—Article by N.M.I.A. president, Andrew Weiszmann: "Our N.M.I.A. will soon reach its 50th anniversary of service to the community."

**March, 1979**—Year of the big snow. New members received our History Book. First Distributors opened their parking lot to 200 cars for overnight parking during the storm. This made it possible to plow some of our streets.

**June, 1979**—50th anniversary dinner, June 10 at Antoinettes Banquet Hall—4370 N. Elston. Pastor Paul L. Sealing of Mayfair Ev. Lutheran Congregation, died April 1, 1979 after serving the church for 35 years.

**November, 1979**—St. Lucas Cemetery Association appeared at our meeting with plans to build 216 condominiums at the corner of Foster and Pulaski. Six new houses have been built by the Salvation Army on the east side of the 5000 block of Kedvale, as houses for some of their officers.

**January, 1980**—Snow removal policy establishing Tow-Away signs on our major street. "NO PARKING—3 AM to 7 AM December 1st to April 1st."

**March, 1980**—Zoning change request by St. Lucas Cemetery Association, Northwest corner Pulaski and Foster for 336 condominiums. Zoning variation rejected by N.M.I.A. members—zoning variation for northeast corner of Argyle and Pulaski for Muslim church and community center—variation rejected by N.M.I.A. Mayor Byrne officiated at Grand Opening of North Park Village Health Center.

**May, 1980**—Gompers Park Pool to be staffed by 5 life guards. Capacity 150 patrons. Tennis instructions one day a week during summer. Six week Day Camp July and August. Baseball boys and girls 8 through 15 years.

**June, 1980**—Gompers Park lagoon—new valve installed. Edward Kuhn helped with installation. Deeper channel dredged in river. N.M.I.A. will help clean the lagoon. First annual Palmer School picnic scheduled at Gompers Park, Sunday, June 8th.

**October, 1980**—Update on news of planned construction of a Dominicks Food Store on northwest corner of Lawrence and Pulaski. 5000 N. Kedvale has newly paved concrete street and curbs replacing W.P.A. road. Request to mayor to allocate funds for a road to be built to the new senior citizens' home in North Park Village.

**November, 1980**—Complaints about deplorable condition of parking lot of former First Distributors. Dominick Food's letter to Alderman, expressing their regrets about Lawrence/Pulaski site due to legal technicalities needed to make their project work, was received.

**December, 1980**—Petitions sent to Dominicks by N.M.I.A. with signatures from our community encouraging them to renew their efforts to build in our community. Nature study classes to be held at North Park Village.

**January, 1981**—Mayfair Ev. Lutheran Congregation to celebrate its 50th anniversary on February 8, 1981. Open House for the community after the 10 A.M. services. N.M.I.A. again voted against zoning variation to enable condominium housing at St. Lucas Cemetery. Again density is our objection.

**March, 1981**—John's Flea Market housed in old First Distributor building has poor housekeeping and Dunkin Donuts also needs attention. North Park Village has developed into a beautiful recreation area. Without intervention by North River Commission and N.M.I.A. this 160 acres of land would have been another shopping center. Park areas, nature center, school for trainable mentally handicapped children and more senior citizens' housing is nearing completion. Kiwanis Club, Mayfair/Forest Glen will sponsor achievement award program for our community schools.

**April, 1981**—Chicken Unlimited corner of Lawrence and Elston will be acquired by Bankers and torn down for additional parking for their employees. Application for Urban Development Action Grant for demolition and redevelopment of 2.54 acres of commercial property at northwest corner of Lawrence and Pulaski—nothing passed yet, but we are hopeful.

**May, 1981**—Palmer School may be closed. 800 people attended meeting at Gompers Park to protest mandatory reassignment.

**September, 1981**—Representatives of Taxman Corporation developers present plans for Dominick's store.

**October, 1981**—Engineers have installed main water line for the drinking fountains in north Gompers park. They were not operating for three years. Butler Brush Co. has acquired Gazzola Drug property on Foster west of tracks. Temporary repairs on Foster Avenue bridge near Pulaski.

**November, 1981**—Park District and 17th District Police Commander pledged to have trouble areas in Gompers Park as well as LaBagh Woods watched.

**January, 1982**—Bankers Life and Casualty plans to build a small park on the southeast corner of Elston and Lawrence adjacent to their new parking area.



**February, 1982**—A memorial tribute to Joseph Waltz, former president and long time financial secretary of N.M.I.A. Joe died December 27, 1981.

**March, 1982**—The Chicago Board of Education has designated Von Steuben High School as a Metropolitan Science Center. Students interested in in-depth study of science may apply.

**April, 1982**—Booth Memorial Hospital of the Salvation Army for unwed mothers may be closing. Mayfair Presbyterian Church celebrated its 60th anniversary on Sunday, March 21. Its first building was located at Ainslie and Harding. Then they moved to Ainslie and Keeler where 23 charter members met on March 16, 1982 with the Presbytery of Chicago. The congregation later built the lower level of the present church at Ainslie and Kostner and completed the present sanctuary in April 1950.

**May, 1982**—Approval of the redevelopment of property at north-west corner of Lawrence and Pulaski will now allow the city to begin the acquisition process.

**November, 1982**—Tennis courts at South Gompers will be resurfaced and planting will be done in front of the fieldhouse.

**January, 1983**—A memorial service to dedicate a monument donated to St. Lucas Cemetery by the Joseph Waltz family was held on January 7, 1983.

**April, 1983**—Gompers Park recently was the setting for a television program on Channel 11, featuring John Callaway and Leo Buscaglia. They were sitting on one of the benches discussing "The Fall of Freddie, the Leaf."

**September, 1983**—Ladcor, Lawrence-Pulaski Committee met present owners of three corner buildings to encourage rehabilitation—assuming the northwest corner will soon be occupied by Dominicks.

**October, 1983**—President Sylvester Quartana met with other committee members to resolve neglectful maintenance of building and grounds of Palmer School.

**November, 1983**—North River Commission Block Watch Program has begun for some blocks surrounding Palmer School.

**March, 1984**—N.M.I.A. Improver changing. New format and hand delivery to all residents will be tried out. Lottery of names on application list for rental apartment at North Park Village will be held soon. The \$14 million rehabilitation of old infirmary building begun. The 180 units will be for senior citizens.

**May, 1984**—John O. Butler's landscaping and beautiful buildings are now an asset to our community. Mayfair School is to be sold.

**September, 1984**—Ladcor reports that 6 out of 8 parcels of land at the northwest corner of Lawrence and Pulaski have been acquired by the city.

**October, 1984**—Mayfair School sold to the Irish-American Heritage Group. Rehabilitation to begin soon. North Park Village's Halloween Haunted Trail to be held October 26 and 27.

**March 1985**—Robert Kreutzer, Supervisor of Gompers Park featured in the Improver this month. He is on the Executive Board of N.M.I.A. and is active in our community. Supercarts for garbage collection have been delivered to our residents. Irving Federal Savings and Loan's drive-in approved by N.M.I.A.

**April, 1985**—Skil Corp. intends to sell their Elston Avenue property to May Corp. for a Venture Store. Taxman Corp. will be the developer. Neighborhood input will be needed for zoning changes. Salvation Army will remain on Pulaski. Their hospital buildings will be redone to accommodate the Metropolitan division headquarters offices. Three bridges over the north branch of the Chicago River are being rebuilt with substantial railings. Wendys will soon be building at Pulaski and Ainslie on the site of the Spikings property.

**June, 1985**—Executive Board approved the Venture Store project after May Corporation promised that several conditions affecting residents on Keating Avenue will be taken care of. Mayfair Library has photo display of our area.

**September, 1985**—Palmer School repairs advancing satisfactorily. Fieldhouse being painted inside and out. North Park Village opens new recycling collection center for papers, bottles and metal cans.

**October, 1985**—Bud Graber of Keeler Pharmacy, was our “Merchant You Should Know.”

**November, 1985**—Palmer School's \$800,000 renovation completed. On October 7th Wendy's Restaurant had their ribbon cutting. First Distributor's and Princess Electra's buildings have been demolished. The annual interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration was held November 27 at Mayfair Methodist Church with the Mayfair Presbyterian, St. Edwards and the Salvation Army. Alyce Design's new addition and renovations and parking lot are completed. Great!

**December, 1985**—North River Commission and Ladcor helped with the renovation of the fruit store and the new stores on the northwest corner of Pulaski and Argyle. 60 to 80 (who counted) ducks are enjoying the south Gompers lagoon. Don Darby featured as “Merchant You Should Know.”

**January, 1986**—During the week of January 13 through 19, North Mayfair was featured as Community of the Week on radio station WBBM. Those who spoke on the radio regarding our community were Dale Bolling, Joseph Cicero, Edward Kuhn, James Shouba and Robert Kreutzer.

**February and March, 1986**—St. Lucas Cemetery Association tries again to sell 7½ acres of land at the northwest corner of Pulaski and Foster to be developed either as a group of retail stores or as a nursing home, a five story, 38,000 sq. ft. structure and a smaller group of stores. At our February meeting, Attorney, Theodore Novak and Patrick Burke presented two plans. In March after studying these projects N.M.I.A. voted against them and will notify Alderman Laurino of our objection.

**May, 1986**—“Appearance Committee” will be sending letters to the owners of property in our community that seems to need attention. We do have a few “eye-sores.” Detective Richard Clark was killed in the line of duty at a prolonged hostage situation on Lill Street. He was active in Gompers Park children's baseball teams. Memorial fund was established.



## **Advertising IN THE IMPROVER 44 YEARS OF SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY**

The April, 1942 issue of the Improver marked the beginning of advertising in the publication. The Improver has provided the merchants that advertise in it, an ideal way of reaching potential and current customers.

Patronizing our worthwhile businesses helps to create a strong local business community along Pulaski, Lawrence and Elston Avenues. In turn these businesses support our neighborhood through the taxes they pay and the jobs they provide right here in North Mayfair.

Our advertisers provide about 75% of the cost of the Improver's printing and distribution. This is a tangible support to our community.

*EDWARD KUHN  
Vice President  
in Charge of Advertising*



## **The following pages are letters from long-time residents of NORTH MAYFAIR**

Many families have lived in the neighborhood for years, some for several generations. The following letters are from residents who have reached back into their memories to tell us about North Mayfair in earlier years.



Grandfather Karl Kamradt immigrated from Germany in the 1880's, married my grandmother and raised eleven children on a truck farm that extended from what is now Keeler Avenue to Kostner and Carmen Avenue to the river. Foster Avenue did not exist. Gradually, as the city grew he sold parcels of the land but I remember as a child the cow and chickens, picking and pitting cherries for canning, skating on the river in winter and the fantastic hill for sledding just across Keeler which was not paved and thus served as a good ballfield as well.

Grandpa was a friend and supporter of Samuel Gompers and when I was older I wondered why a farmer would have an interest in the labor movement and vice versa. He was gone before I knew enough to ask him the question. He was a stern gentleman on whose lap we never sat who believed children should be seen but not heard and enforced it. However old albums have many pictures of him with groups of men in white shirts and suspenders sitting around a picnic table under the old pear tree with beer steins in their hands and smiles on their faces.

Tales oft told by mother: the long hike home from the end of the street car line—Elston and Crawford (later extended to the Bohemian National Cemetery), cousins from the city (Hoyne and Division) visiting all summer as this area was "fresh air in the country" in those days. Mother, Martha Kannberg, was the only offspring to marry and have children. One brother Reinhard was a streetcar motorman on Crawford Avenue all his life, long before it became the CTA.

The house at 5138, much remodeled, remains in the family. Owned by Robert Kannberg, it is occupied by his daughter Gail and her husband making the fourth generation to live in this modest homestead.

**Ruth Kannberg Tracy**



*I was born on August 1, 1904 in the house at 4837 N. Pulaski which then was 40th Street, attended by a neighborhood midwife. My parents were Bohemian immigrants.*

*I attended school at Lawrence and Pulaski where the Fannie May store stands. We had two grades, first and second in portable schools—no kindergarten. Teachers, Miss Enright and Mrs. Hoskins. By the time it was time for our third grade our new school was built (H. A. Haugan), third grade teacher, Mrs. Farr. I graduated in June, 1918. I also have two older sisters who went to the Little Brick School on Lawrence and Kostner. Later my oldest sister was in the first graduation class at Haugan.*

*In 1916 my Dad bought the home on Keystone, one block west of where we lived, and I still reside there. We had no paved streets, only cinder walks and lots of ditches, prairies, and farms. My father was foreman and later superintendent of the Bohemian National Cemetery. He worked there over forty years. After grade school I went to Carl Schurz High and then finished at Columbia Business College and then work.*

*I met my husband at the Bohemian Hall on Pulaski and at 19 years of age I married him and we have continued living here since. We will be married 62 years on April 26th, 1986.*

*We have three children, 60 - 58 - 50, five grandchildren and one great grandchild. Our health is not the best, but we're still here.*

### **Mrs. William Gardner**

*Just another note—40th Street had one set of car tracks and went only to the bridge and then made a return trip. One thing I'll always remember when the Eastland Boat sank in the Chicago River, I sat in our front window and watched and marked down all the trucks and hearses that went by to the cemetery where they had to open a new section and buried over 600 people of Bohemian origin.*



*I have lived all of my life in North Mayfair. I was born on October 5, 1911, delivered by a neighborhood midwife at 4926 N. Pulaski. The building is still there. About a year later my folks bought property on Keeler Avenue where I now live.*

*I started school at the Little Red School House on Kostner and Lawrence, but when the Mayfair School was built on Knox Avenue, south of Lawrence, I was transferred there.*

*A boyhood in North Mayfair at that time was a time of open spaces and fresh air. We swam in the river, roamed in the woods, picked wild strawberries and went rabbit hunting.*

*There was a golf course at Keeler and Argyle, going west, I don't remember how far, but the club house is now a home in North Mayfair.*

*What do I remember? The former Parental School property and the land where Northeastern Illinois University is, was all prairie. On certain nights we were able to see free movies at the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium auditorium. Lawrence Avenue was paved with red bricks. There was a fire house on Knox, just south of Lawrence. The fire apparatus was pulled by horses. There were farms on Foster where Continental Can and John O. Butler are now. We used to hunt there and one time the woman sicked her dogs on us. When my folks moved to Keeler, there were only four houses in the 5000 block, and one house, the Kannbergs in the 5100 block. In the summer, neighborhood boys were caddies at Bryn Mawr Country Club.*

*I remember too, an accident by the railroad tracks, a kid whose last name was Porter had his leg cut off. Another kid from the Bell family drowned in the river. I myself had a close call. On the grounds where the Salvation Army is now, there was a prairie fire one hot summer day. The kids were trying to stamp it out. My foot got caught in a fence post hole, and I couldn't get it out. My clothes started to burn, but fortunately a big kid pulled me out. In the 1920's four young people were killed in a car crash at Lawrence and Knox. They hit a steel post.*

*There was a picnic grove at Argyle and Pulaski on the east side of the street going to about Springfield. I think it was rented out to different groups by a tavern owner on Pulaski. My friend, Joe Novotny and I had the Monday morning job of cleaning up the grove.*

Another place that was important in the neighborhood was Hardings Field. It was the area on the 5000 block of Kedvale where the single family Salvation Army homes now stand. It was the baseball diamond and many softball games were played there. How it got the name Hardings Field, I am not sure. In World War II, it became a victory garden area and many neighbors grew vegetables there.

Many neighborhood men and women worked at the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium when it had a lot of patients.

Later, I was in the United States Army and served four years in the Pacific Area.

When Investor Savings was started by George and Ed Gregor, I was on their Board of Directors for about ten years. Joseph Waltz, a former President of the North Mayfair Improvement Association was also on their Board of Directors.

### **Joseph Tichy**



In 1924 my mother and father bought our house at 5107 N. Lowell. I was born in 1925, and I have lived here all my life. Foster Avenue was a dirt road. Gompers Park was called Matson Park.

Erickson's farm was at Foster and Kostner Avenue. The clubhouse for the area was on Kildare near Carmen.

My brother Mickey McAuley played football on the Matson Park Red Devils in 1930. I have a picture of the team. My brothers Bud and Mickey played on the softball and basketball teams at Gompers Park. In 1933 my brother Frank had his wedding reception at the Gompers Park Fieldhouse.

I remember when they moved a frame house in 1934 from Kostner and Lawrence Avenue to the 5100 block of Lowell. It was parked on the street in front of my house for a week.

During World War II, the army reserves had a training center and barracks off of Foster Avenue, just west of Gompers Park. The Day Camp at Gompers Park had bicycle parades thru the neighborhood. There were fireworks in the park on the Fourth of July and in some years there were band concerts.

I have many wonderful memories of this North Mayfair area.

### **Mary Lou McAuley Nolan**





I lived in North Mayfair since 1924, and I would like to say a few things about North Mayfair at that time. A party that lived about a block away from us had a cow in their back yard. The cow used to moo every once in awhile. Their building is still there. It's pretty old. There are a couple of old farm buildings in North Mayfair. I think they were built before the turn of the century. They probably are the oldest buildings in North Mayfair. Of course the buildings have been remodelled and still look pretty good. One is on Kolmar in the 5000 block and the other is on Kimberly in the 5000 block.

The Elston Avenue street car used to run as far as Lawrence Avenue only. That was the end of the line. If you wanted to go farther north on Elston Avenue, you would have to take an extension bus that did not belong to the street car line. It was a private bus and you had to pay to ride it. Elston Avenue used to be a two lane road that ran to Milwaukee Avenue. There was no viaduct at Elston and Kimberly. The railroad used to come in there and ran on the ground, and when a freight train came through it would stop there for a while and traffic used to back up for a long way. That is where Skil Corp. is now. They used to be at Elston and Sacramento. Then they built the building near the railroad and changed their name from Skilsaw to Skil. North Mayfair Improvement Association used to hold their meetings in later years at Kolmar and Kennison next to the playlot.

At that time there was no Gompers Park. A man by the name of Matson was instrumental in having a park built. They called it Matson Park. In later years the city changed the name to Gompers Park. I used to play tennis at the old tennis courts down by the river. A lot of my friends used to go swimming in the river at that part of the river. They used to call it Bare Ass Beach.

After the stock crash in 1929 and the depression set in, people were out of work and many banks folded up and closed. Most people lost their life savings, but there was a bank that stayed open. I think its name was Mayfair State Bank. It was located at Lawrence and Kenneth. It remained solvent, but later on they decided to go out of business, but they did not close. They just told their customers to come and get their money because they were going to close up. This bank paid its customers 100 cents on the dollar. This bank was the only bank in the United States that paid its customers 100 cents on the dollar at that time. The building is still there at Kenneth and Lawrence and is being used today by Bankers Life.

**Henry Kiecal**



MAYFAIR STATE SAVINGS BANK



*I was interested in your 50th anniversary announcement. I, too, have a 50th anniversary. We bought this house in July of 1936, and I have lived here continuously since then. After renting another bungalow on Ainslie for two and one half years—we were so satisfied with the neighborhood, that we didn't wish to live anywhere else.*

*My two children went to Palmer School from kindergarten through eighth grade, and Gompers Park was the source of most of the family recreation. Mayfair Presbyterian Church was ideal for our religious affiliations and they both were married there to neighborhood friends. I am still active at church.*

*I have belonged to Mayfair Improvement most of that time, I believe. And will be eternally grateful for a perfect neighborhood news that kept me in touch and also always was there to help solve problems when they came up.*

*Keep up the good work.*

**Alma C. Ries**



*My family moved to the North Mayfair community in 1961. I was four years old and my brother was two. Our brood has doubled in size since then!*

*Kindergarten through eighth grade, I attended John Palmer School. There were impressive Science Fairs in the fall in which upper grade students were required to participate. My project in eighth grade was selected to represent John Palmer at the District Science Fair along with a fellow classmate's. Other special events included the inspiring Christmas programs, enlightening spring productions and bustling annual Fun Fairs. I can't forget our principal, Mr. Walschlaeger, standing upon a chair outside his office in the first floor corridor to be seen and heard by the entire school during an air raid drill! "Remember, if you ever see a light in the sky, brighter than the sun, don't look up." His wise words yet echo in my mind.*

*Early neighborhood memories include Darby's original store with the slanted wooden floors. The candy counter boasted penny licorice whips and "flying saucers." Sandy, the horse, remains an affordable nickel ride. "Let's go to Darby's" is still heard among us today!*

*An elderly shoemaker's shop was next to Darby's. As a young child, it seemed so dark in there. I always felt reassured by his wife's friendly manner and a tinge of compassion for this frail man devoted to his trade.*

*Many of my grammar school dresses were purchased at Lawrence Apparel, adjacent to the shoemaker. Girls had to wear dresses to school at that time. This shop later became Bella Rosa. "Cheeseburger, fries!" was the familiar logo bellowed out frequently as Matthew, the Greek proprietor, struggled to keep pace with Bankers employees during their lunch rushes!*

*Bankers Life and Casualty at 4444 W. Lawrence Avenue has been here as long as I remember. Its white cross shines no more after heavy winds knocked it over and it was deemed unsafe. I am a previous employee of Bankers. Many people from North Mayfair have been or are associated with the company. Helen Hayes, sister-in-law to the late founder and president, John D. Mc Arthur,*

was here to film a documentary for PBS Television (Channel 11) in 1978. Bankers "adopted" Palmer School in 1981.

There are several more defunct businesses in our area. The list can go on and on. Among a few are the Candy Cabin, formerly the Public Library which relocated; presently an Antique Shop, Chicken Unlimited, Jewel Food and National Tea Company. Butera's Finer Foods was a Dutch Maid and Wally's Market. I waited patiently one dreary weekday afternoon with a crowd of other children and anxious mothers in their parking lot for the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile! First Distributors, the demolished Flea Market building, will soon become a Dominick's Finer Foods. An ice cream stand is the site of Irving Federal Savings. Cookies were a quarter for 1/4 pound at Weber's Bakery when we went Sunday mornings following church. Mayfair College is an Irish American Heritage Center to date.

A parade down Kenneth Avenue in 1965 made the evening news! Among the pretty floats and banners were Harry Volkman, television weather forecaster, and Alderman Anthony C. Laurino. Neighbors basked in the gorgeous sunshine and the glory of it all. The festivities culminated in Little Joe's parking lot (formerly Top Drawer) with a mini-carnival. I loved riding the tiny kiddie train!

Another colorful parade was in commemoration of the American Bi-Centennial in 1976. Many of us marched and/or watched that one!

I miss the St. Edward's Church Fall Festival in November. Sunnyside and Lowell swarmed with activity during this weekend. There were games, nice prizes and good food. All enjoyed themselves!

North Mayfair has changed physically in the past twenty-five years. The people remain proud of their community. It shows through excellent property upkeep. Gompers Park is a place our children can "take their passion and make it happen." Yes, North Mayfair is still a great residential district.

**Ann Marie Gara (Villella)**



Abrom W. Thornton, along with his wife Joan and small son Warren, moved from 4210 North Irving Avenue (now Bell Avenue) into their new brick home located on North Kostner Avenue, during the month of August in the year 1923. Mr. Thornton was employed at Bowman Dairy and later worked for the Beloit Dairy. Warren attended, and graduated from Palmer School and the Von Steuben High School. He was active in the youth program of the Ainslie Baptist Church, for many years located at Ainslie and Kildare Avenues. After many years of army service, at home and abroad, Warren retired with the rank of colonel and now resides in the Washington, D.C. area. Mr. Thornton passed away in 1968. In 1981 Mrs. Thornton became the wife of the Reverend C. S. Rosborough, former pastor of the Ainslie/Forest Glen Baptist Church now located at the corner of Foster and Elston Avenues. North Mayfair Association dues have been paid regularly through the years. Congratulations on the anniversary.

#### **The Rosboroughs**



Sixty years on Lowell Avenue.

My husband, Herbert C. Seyferlich joined the Mayfair Improvement when it was just beginning. He passed away in 1948. When we moved here with 9 year old twin boys, it was an ideal place for children. Foster Avenue was a dirt road. Gompers Park was a forest. There was no transportation or stores. We had to go to Lawrence to get to the streetcars and to the grocery store. I still love our neighborhood. I have a good next door neighbor, George Voss, who has lived here one year longer than me. I think he and I are real old timers on our block. I hate to see these punks drop beer cans and bottles all over the front lawns. They are here always at night.

**Clara B. Seyferlich**



*I have lived in the 39th Ward at the same address on Keystone for over forty years and have enjoyed every year—with good neighbors.*

*Am now enjoying my retirement and as for myself and other senior citizens in our area, we are looking forward to having a Dominicks store, so we can walk and shop.*

*“A word of thanks to Alderman Laurino—keep up the good work.”*

**Violet Chobot**



*Thirty seven years ago, Eleanor, my wife and I had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with North Mayfair by living in the veterans temporary housing at Foster and Kostner Avenues. During that time of our lives, we decided that we wanted to live and raise our children in North Mayfair.*

*Why did we make that decision? The answer was simple, North Mayfair has all the advantages of the city plus its parks, playgrounds and forest preserve within walking distance. However our main reason was PRIDE. North Mayfair residents have PRIDE. It shows in their homes which are well maintained, pride in their lawns, gardens and the overall appearance of the neighborhood. If it were not for the pride of the residents of North Mayfair, the Improvement Association would not be the viable organization that it has been for over fifty years.*

*Let's continue to show PRIDE and keep North Mayfair one of the best neighborhoods in Chicago by putting something back into the area. Attend Improvement Association meetings, take an active part, or participate in local Lions club or church organizations or other local civic groups.*

*Don't be a taker all your life, be a giver, give some of your time and energy to North Mayfair, as North Mayfair has given you a wonderful area in which to live.*

**Stewart Archambault**

★ *The booklet committee wishes to thank our very fine neighbors who took the time to send us their remembrances of years ago. They have added a personal touch and an in-depth dimension to North Mayfair's history.*

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## North River Commission

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4745 North Kedzie Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60625  
(312) 478-0202

To all our Friends in North Mayfair:

Congratulations!

Publishing ten newsletters per year for 50 years means that 500 times, past and present leaders in the community have written and collected articles and announcements, sold ads, typed, edited, met deadlines, printed, folded, stamped, delivered and performed all the other myriad of chores that go with the publication of a first rate newsletter.

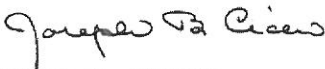
Hundreds of you put in thousands of hours to put the "Improver" on the doorstep. Our congratulations are not only for the high quality of the "Improver," but especially for all the volunteers, alive or dead, who gave of themselves for their neighbors and their neighborhood.

The North Mayfair Improvement Association has always been a model for the other civics in the North River community. The reason is apparent. The spirit of volunteerism is alive in the community. The dedication of the volunteers who publish the "Improver" is the best evidence of the fact that neighbors care about North Mayfair and are willing to work hard to keep it a good place to live.

Yours very truly,



Luis E. Cuevas  
President



Joseph B. Cicero  
Executive Director




**BOOKLET COMMITTEE: Dale Bolling  
Ruth Shouba  
Joseph B. Cicero**

Written text and research by Dale Bolling, unless otherwise noted.

ART & ASSEMBLY: Hans Bolling

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GOOD NEIGHBORS MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORHOODS

