



Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter January 2019

Number XXIX

Growing up in Bucktown

This edition of the Northwest Chicago Historical Society newsletter brings us the memories of Peter Huntowski (1929-2011). Peter grew up in the Polish neighborhood of Bucktown in the 1930's and 1940's. These stories are told in his own words, and they wonderfully capture the history of the neighborhood during and after the Depression, up through WW2. The "Gorals," or "highlanders," were an ethnic group from the mountains of Southern Poland. This was the ethnicity of Peter and his family, who lived on Hoyne near Armitage. The family all lived proximate to one another, and they formed lifelong bonds with neighbors and friends who lived near that location. At that time, there were still wide swaths of prairie in the area, where Peter and his friends would play as children.

The name of Bucktown was derived from the goat farming that was popular in that area. Peter's grandfather did have goats, and the children would ride the goats around on Sundays; it's amazing to think of this happening now in an area that is so thoroughly urban. His wonderful anecdotes are sprinkled with references to local businesses, homes, taverns, parks, and churches; we try to elaborate about their status or function today where we can. We hope that you enjoy the experiences of a young boy growing up during and after the Depression in an area today that is known for its beautiful buildings and affluence. Most of all, we hope you feel a connection to him and his Chicago immigrant family. Thanks to NWCHS member Christine Wasilewski for sharing her relative's story.

Do you have a historic tale to tell? Do you have friends or family that have passed down cherished memories of their time growing up on the Northwest Side? Reach out to us – we may be able to publish to the community.

We look forward to a wonderful 2019! - *Susanna Ernst*

Mission Statement:

As the Northwest Chicago Historical Society, our mission is to educate others about the history of the Northwest neighborhoods of Chicago. We will accomplish this through discussion at meetings, public tours and events, and dissemination of historical documents and photos through publications. Additionally, we desire to collaborate with others in the community to continue to maintain and preserve the history of our collective neighborhoods. By linking the past with the present and the future, we will provide awareness and create appreciation for our place in Chicago's and Illinois' history.



Keep track of what is happening at the Northwest Chicago Historical Society
Join our Meet-up Group (It's FREE)
www.meetup.com/The-Northwest-Chicago-History-Meetup-Group/

NW Chicago Historical Society
P. O. Box 30067
Chicago, IL 60630
e-mail: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net

Membership:
\$15.00 per calendar year
\$10.00 for 65 years old and over
Phone: 773-736-4974

© 2019 Northwest Chicago Historical Society - All rights reserved

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Hi Neighbors! Does anyone have pictures of Bella Rose Pizza (or any advertising), which was at Irving and Long in the late 70's and 80's? I've named my tattoo shop after it! Bella Rose was my first job, and it will be my last job. I'd love to have a photo of the original in my shop. Thanks in advance for any possible leads.

Dawn Grace – Bella Rose Tattoo
3757 N Kedzie Ave.
Chicago, IL 60618

Unfortunately we do not have any photos or advertisements of this pizza place. Maybe one of our readers will have something.. - NWCHS

Hello! My wife and I are trying to find any records/permits/photos that may exist of the house we purchased in Jefferson Park. It is a worker cottage that was supposedly built in 1881 which would predate the annexation of Jefferson Park by Chicago, making it difficult if not impossible to find at the UIC Library. Would the NW Chicago Historical Society have any records that may exist for this? We appreciate any advice/insight you can offer. Thanks for your time! PS - I love your facebook page's posts. So many gems!

Elliot Rudmann – Jefferson Park

Thanks for following us on Facebook! The Northwest Chicago Historical Society does not have any house records. You could download the pdf, "Your House has a History - City of Chicago" from the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. There are lots of helpful hints in this publication. Also try the basement of the Cook County side of City Hall. They have all the county land records going back to 1871. You should be able to find out the names of everyone who owned your house. - NWCHS



Kathy Heraty

773-774-3400
heritagettravel.net

HERITAGE TRAVEL AGENCY

kathy@heritagettravel.net

For All Your Travel Needs



111 Windsor Dr.
Oak Brook, IL 60523

Security Alarm Systems
Home • Business • Health

DORY AHEARN

Residential Account Manager

773-558-5789

dahearn@adt.com

Casey Smagala

— ★ ★ ★ ★ | ★ —
for 39th Ward Alderman



"I want to work for you!"

312.806.1052

SmagalaCasey@gmail.com

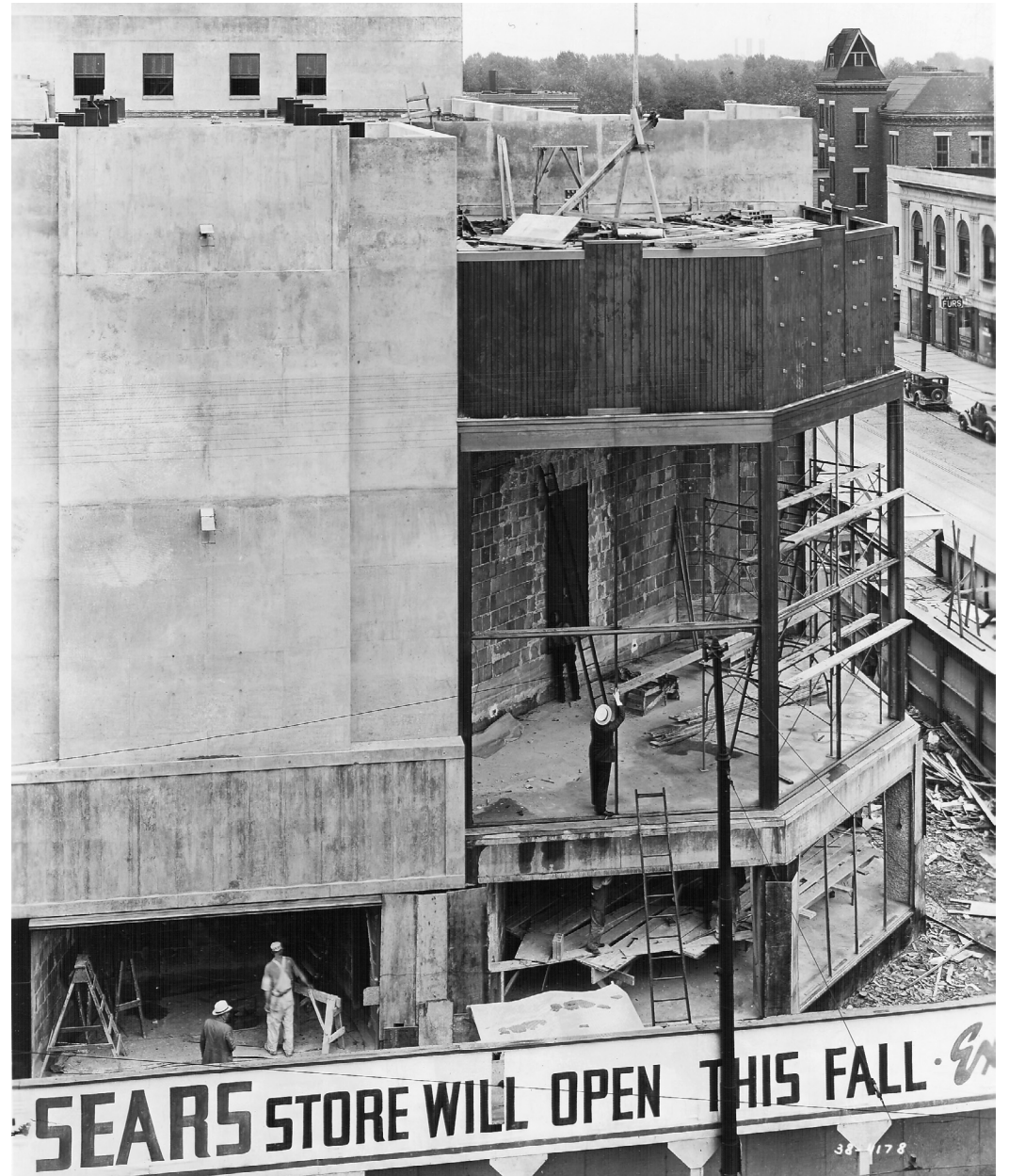
CaseyforAlderman.com

Paid for by Friends of Casey Smagala

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

I'm looking for an old black & white photo of a Sears Roebuck store. I think it was at Six Corners being built with a crane on the roof and someone dressed in white crossing the street in the foreground. I can't find it anywhere. Please help. – Michael Golas – Facebook



Growing up in the early 1930's & 1940's in

Bucktown

By Peter Richard Huntowski

It was a name given to a small patch of property on the Northwest side of Chicago. On the east, Ashland ave, on the west, Western ave, on the North Fullerton ave, on the South Armitage ave. This was Bucktown the name was given the area by the immigrants who settled there, which were called GORALS (roll the R), mountain people from Poland. Most all of them had gardens, and raised goats, and so the name Bucktown was born.

I can remember things that happened there from the time of the Depression. I can remember my father working for the W.P.A. and trying to feed his family, which consisted of my Mother, two sisters and me, on his meager earnings of 12 to 15 dollars a week. He was a proud man and didn't want me to know how hard he worked or that he was digging sewer ditches. He always brought me at the end of his working day some licorice candy. At that time you could get a bagful for a penny. A penny is a word that has vanished from our monetary vocabulary.

One day I wondered a few blocks from home when I was five or six, to watch some men work. That is when I saw my Father in a ditch using a shovel. When he looked up and saw me I noticed his face get a pale look as a boy who got caught telling a lie. I know now as I reflect on the situation, I made him lose the one thing he had left as the head of our house, his pride. Things started get better after a while, the depression was over, and he was able to go back to his regular profession as an upholsterer. A job he held for 42 years. The depression was a time or era to remember. My kids ask me today why I don't eat peanut butter. Well at that time I ate so much peanut butter, you could take all that sticky food I ate and caulk a battleship with it. There was always some home baked bread on the table, and a pastry called paczki (Bismarck) and the ever popular peanut butter. There was more of a family closeness than compared to now. There was the unquestionable understanding that pop was the boss, ma was his interpreter, and we were always careful not to do what we shouldn't or else. They were good parents and weren't mean by any standards, but household law was law. We all had certain chores to do, and after a while it wasn't necessary to be told what to do, we just did it. My two sisters Loretta and Dorothy always set the table, and washed the dishes with lots of singing and joking around. As a young boy I helped dad bring in the coal and wood. As I became older my Mother taught me how to cook, bake, and sew, the same time as she taught my sisters.

I had a lot of friends as a boy, and still have the same friends as a man. There was my good friend Chester Larek, Roman Godlewski, The Cholewczynski brothers, Bill and Floyd, Frank Rog who is now a priest in Chicago, and Franny. Franny is a girl we hung around with and went to school with. All of us to become close friends.

As I said earlier Bucktown was predominately all Polish, as was the school I attended, St. Hedwigs located at Hoyne and Webster. Polish language was one of the subjects taught there and no matter how hard I tried I couldn't speak it. I did manage to speak some of it in order to play and visit with Chester. His Father told him unless I spoke Polish I couldn't play with him. So I learned to speak just enough to get into the house, it became my 2nd home. Mama Larek was a jovial woman, more liberal than Papa. She spoke to me always in English, and prepared food as well as my mother did. Especially Czarnina (duck soup) and Pierogi.

Growing up there was a pure joy, I'm sorry I can't take my children back for just for a moment, back to the warmth and serenity of what a neighborhood was like.



Peter Huntowski with his two sisters

Photo Courtesy of Christine Blum-Wasilewski

As I grew older like ten or eleven, we made friends with a family by the name of Malinowski. There were 12 boys, 1 girl, and their mother. We figured now that we were strong in numbers (18 boys and Franny) we could take on anybody for playing baseball, swimming skate races (both street and ice) and shooting marbles. Sometimes it became a little rough when some of the older gangs appeared. It would start with name calling and get into fist fights, providing you didn't get caught by the cop walking his beat. Yes, at that time Policemen walked around the blocks keeping order. Although we were never reprimanded, at the same time we were far from being angels. Even though on Saturdays and Sundays we would all go to church, Some as Choir Boys, and some as Altar Boys. Girls didn't interest us then; we knew for some of us it was to be the end of our boyhood days. Those that succumbed at an early age of going steady, found they couldn't play ball, or go out without their girls. The fun we had, had to be made by us, there was no one to hand us ready-made games. Games like "kick the can", "Let her fly", etc. Kick the can was a similar game to hide and seek. One guy was it, he placed a can on a man hole cover, and everyone went to hide. The guy that was it had to find you, if he did you raced back to home base, which was the man hole cover, if you got there before him, you kicked the can and he had to go get it while you went to hide again. Let her fly was a messy game, which the people didn't like at all. The object was to have a footrace in the alleys, while you were running you grabbed on to the garbage cans that were there and tip them over in such a fashion that all the refuse went flying all over the alley. None of these games were any fun unless they were played during summer vacation and usually late at night.

**ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUES
OF INDIANAPOLIS
(COLONIAL ANTIQUES)**

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS AS
INDIANA'S PREMIER SOURCE FOR
QUALITY AMERICAN
ARCHITECTURAL
ANTIQUES!

OPEN MON-SAT 10-5 OR BY APPT
CLOSED SUN

5000 W 96TH ST.
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46268

317-873-2727 800-916-6777

WWW.ANTIQUEARCHITECTURAL.COM

Since 1980 we have delighted thousands of Customers with some of the highest quality and most Unique Architectural Salvage and other fine antiques to be found in the Midwest. We maintain an impeccable reputation by making sure that your satisfaction is our top priority.

Our inventory is vast and ever changing. Our specialties include Antique Lighting, restored and unrestored, a huge collection of antique hardware, doors, mantels, stained glass and Architectural Elements. Over an acre of items for you to see!

Let us know your specific needs and we will work with you to find the items you need. Easy access from I-65.



*We carry thousands of Lights,
Cabinets, Fire Places, Doors/
Hardware, & Unique Archi-
tectural Inventory.*



Another thing we enjoyed doing, which wasn't destructive at all, was to roast potatoes in the prairie behind my house, which by the way was at 2010 N. Hoyne Ave. The spuds didn't taste right unless they were stolen, whether you swiped them from your house, providing you didn't get caught, or from the market place. It was easier from the market place, because we could go there as a large body, some of us to distract the vendor while the rest of us would go into the storeroom and swipe 100 lbs. of spuds at a time, so that we could have a spud roast at least 3 times a week. We did the same thing with all kinds of fruit too. At times there was no money to be had at home for fruit, and sometimes I think the merchant knew this, for as much as we antagonized him, he never chased us or called the cops. He knew who we were because when we would go to the marketplace with our mothers he would ask "How was the fruit"? My Mother would reply "I didn't buy any fruit from you". He would look at me and smile and say "Oh, I got you mixed up with someone else Mrs. Helen". He never called anyone by their last names but he always included a Mrs. Before their first name.

Now let me tell you about Franny as I said before we weren't interested in girls but Fran was like one of the guys, she played ball with us, had a large collection of marbles, and could swim like a fish.

Franny was an unusual girl; you see she had only one good arm. She had a stub a little past her elbow on her right arm, and no natural legs they were wood up to her hips. Her legs were manipulated by her shoulders, and as she grew so did her legs. When we went swimming at Whealan Pool we would hold her up at the water's edge, two of us would untie the straps and let her into the water. At the beginning they wouldn't let her in because they thought she would drown, but when she showed them what she could do, they always admitted her. As she got older (during WWII), the government would send her to hospitals that had paraplegics and she would show them just what can be done without her legs, Fran could run, jump, dance, and do anything anyone else could. Today she is happily married and the mother of several children.

To reflect for a moment, on the neighbors we had living next door to us on Hoyne Ave. Mrs. K. and her son lived in the house on our right, they owned a tavern a block away from us on Leavitt and Armitage and during prohibition they sold bootleg whiskey and gin referred to as bathtub gin, which they made in their home. One Saturday morning as I was in my backyard with my dog Patsy, their handy man named Jeff came up the back stairs very quietly, and knocked very loudly on the door and said, "Open this door right away". He said that because he had two cases of bottles in his hands for the gin they were making in the bathtub that morning. Somehow Mrs. K. forgot about him being there and shouted to her son "Pull the plug the cops are here!" When she finally opened the door and saw poor Jeff standing there, the look of anger on her face was beyond words, but she did manage to grab a broom and swat Jeff so hard he fell backwards down the stairs, spilling the bottles all over. He moved very fast after that cause Mrs. K. was right after him with the broom, and I swear she chased him for about three blocks.

SYNEGRY

Real Estate & Business Consulting Corp.

"Be Greater
Than The Sum Of Each Independent Part"

Damon Stewart, Esq.
Attorney

tel: (312) 857-8223

fax: (312) 561-6474

Damon@StewartLawGroup.Com

The most unforgettable man on the block was my Grandfather, Mr. John Olinski, ex policeman, and often called "Potato Dziadzia" (Grandpa). He served with the Chicago Police Department for 33 years before retiring in his little cottage (2006 N. Hoyne) just two doors away from my house, the same house where he and my Grandmother raised 10 children, 2 boys and 8 girls. He was blessed with 30 Grandchildren, and many Great Grandchildren which meant he was loved by all the children including those on our block, and loved all of us the same. He got the name "Potato Dziadzia" because he would play with us and scoop us up and put us on his shoulder hawking like a vegetable vendor, "Potatoes, carrots, cabbage, etc." He also had two goats and a goat cart that he would bring out on a Saturday morning letting us ride to our hearts content, all around the block. He was the Master and head of the entire clan. Our teacher, our counselor, the giver of candy, ice cream and pop. Our Parents objected to a few things that Grandpa did and one of them was giving us beer. There was a tavern next door to him a kind of rowdy place; it reminded me of some of the saloons we saw in the westerns at the movie house. A big hand carved bar, a huge mirror on the wall behind the bar, brass foot rail and brass spittoons, with a lot of sawdust on the floor, and smelled like a brewery. Grandpa would go in there and buy a bucket of beer for a dime, then sit on the front stairs of his house with all us kids right alongside of him. He would take a long swallow of the brew, and then pass it to the kids. He used to say to our parents "It's good for them; it has malt, yeast and a lot of good things in there for growing up". That kind of growing up we didn't mind at all.

He would take my cousin Norbert Janusz and me on Sunday afternoons to the South side of Chicago on Maxwell St. or Blue Island IL. There would be vendors all over the place, selling housewares, vegetables, homemade sausage, and even livestock, especially chickens and ducks.



Peter Huntowski with his 4th grade class picture at St. Hedwig School. The school was affiliated with St. Hedwig Catholic Church located at 2226 N. Hoyne Ave. in Bucktown. The church was organized in 1888 to serve the Polish families who lived in the area and still has a Polish language Mass on Sundays.

He would buy a few chunks of goose liver sausage for us to munch on while we would look around, and then he would get some sugarcane for our sweet tooth. He would end up buying a few ducks because he always had the taste for Duck Soup. As gory as it might seem to some, the main ingredient for the soup was the blood of a freshly killed duck, adding some beef hearts, prunes, raisins and the meat from the duck. On Maxwell St. he would show us the Gypsy colony that lived there, they would get some person interested in what they had to sell, keep him distracted, while someone, usually a boy of their own clan to steal his wallet, take whatever money they found and then put it back. They never bothered my grandfather because most of them knew him from the early days when he was a policeman. Towards evening we would be invited to have supper with them, and we always enjoyed the music, singing and dancing. The ride home on the streetcar made us (Norbie and me) fall fast asleep.

As we became older he would tell of his experiences as a policeman on the Paddy Wagon, or as they referred to by some as the "Black Maria". The only ones that I can recall are the St. Valentine's Day Massacre and when he went to the scrape that involved John Dillinger. He and his partner's morbid job were to haul the cadavers to the morgue.

As I became older and I myself a married man and father, he too became older and tired. It was my duty to see that he was fed; I bathed him and shaved him, as well as some of my other cousins, but more from me because we lived near him, and my cousin Joe who lived with him.

My cousin Joe Kubica, his brother, sisters, and mother Henrietta, who was Grandpa's youngest Daughter lived with him after her husband was killed at an early age in a car accident. Grandpa was a necessity to them in their early life. A few days before Grandpa left us forever he gave me the only material memento I have of him. His diamond stickpin, and a treasure of many fond memories. The last 3 months of his life I really got to understand him and what his purpose was here on earth. He spread love no matter where he went, togetherness was his purpose to all of us. His family mark reaches well over 100 with his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. Possibly more now, for I haven't seen many of my cousins for a long time. Many of his family traits are still with us today. Some of us still make homemade sausage the way he did, uphold the traditions at Eastertime and Christmas, taking the blessed chalk and marking above our doorways, entering the house with the initials of the 3 kings, to bring peace and love into our homes. Yes Grandpa was quite a man.

I can also remember the hardships families had to endure in the 30's. Welfare was the biggest hang-up for any man. Like my Father, they had an awful lot of pride, regretted every time they had to ask for help. They always felt they were being ridiculed, especially because they were Polish. Yes, the discrimination was as it is now, about the sick Polish jokes, or being referred to as a dumb Polacks. Something my Grandfather as well as my Father would tell me was to never forget who you are. Be proud of your heritage as a Pole,

even though we are 3rd 4th and 5th generation we should never forget, but always remember that the Polish Calvary came to the aid of this new country to help Geo. Washington in the Revolutionary War. The brave Poles who followed Ko_ciuszko and Pulaski in Battle fought for freedom, some of them to decide to stay on and make a new life for themselves. These were your Forefathers, be proud of them as you should be proud of yourselves.

NADIG Newspapers	PRESS
	REPORTER
	JOURNAL
<i>Serving Northwest Chicago & Suburbs Since 1940</i>	
	773-286-6100
Brian Nadig	4937 N. Milwaukee Avenue
Publisher	Chicago, Illinois 60630-2191
	Fax 773-286-8151
www.nadignewspapers.com	

I also remember Mayor J. Kelly's aid to families on relief. We would go to a department store; the name eludes me now and line up for winter and summer clothes for all. I got a mackinaw, long johns, long woolen stockings, a shirt, 1 pair of high-top boots with a little pocket knife on the side of one of the boots, 1 pair of mittens and an ace cap. That was a cap that was made out of wool (one piece) with ear flaps. My sisters got the usual fare (that's the name of the store The Fair store on Milwaukee ave.) for girls, a dress, slippers, woolen stockings, shoes, and a bra if needed, coat, mittens, and a scarf and hat.

I remember one day in particular I went with my Father early in the morning to stand in line for our Thanksgiving Basket, we took sandwiches and a bottle of coffee to wait out the day. My Father was a small man in stature, but powerful for his size. As it came to our turn to receive our basket, the man behind the counter put up a wire screen, the same kind the stores would use to block their windows from theft, and said to my Dad "I'm sorry but I'm going home we're closed for the Holiday". My Dad was furious after waiting almost all day, and tore the cage off, jumped over the counter, took his basket and wished the man a happy holiday. He then turned to the other men and said "help yourselves it's free." That was the first time we had turkey at our house.

Christmas was a family affair with real closeness, decorating the tree with ornaments as old as the hills, xmas lights, strings of popcorn, and my school paper ornaments. The gifts were not as luxurious as they are now. I remember getting a couple of 10 cent novels, big thick story books of Dick Tracy, and Little Orphan Annie, a bag of nuts and candy, an apple and a tangerine, a pair of stockings and the usual long johns. We used to celebrate the holiday (xmas eve) with my Aunt Agnes and Uncle Burke and my cousins. We always had Santa Claus there (someone dressed up) to make the event unforgettable. We as children were always frightened, because we thought we would never get anything for being bad throughout the year. One year I wrote a letter to Santa asking for an electric train. When the gifts were passed out there was no train. After doing some crying my Dad said "Let's go look in the hallway, maybe Santa forgot some gifts". There it was a Lionel Electric Train. I played with that train until it was time to go serve the midnight mass at St. Hedwigs Church. Christmas eve Day was always a day of fast for us, and all other Catholics in Chicago, but we knew what was waiting for us after the midnight mass. It was a feast fit for a King. (This naturally took place after my Dad started work for Emil J. Paider & son manufacturer of Barber Chairs). The table was set by my Mother and Aunt Aggie while we were in church. We had ham, sausage, homemade bread, cakes, cookies, homemade horseradish, wine, coffee, and milk, and we ate as much as we could. After which we would sing Happy Birthday for the little babe born in Bethlehem. The train I received that Christmas is still running some 32 years later and still brings joy to me and my 2 sons. The period of time now is when we (the fellas and I were 12 and 13 yrs. old) still in the 8th grade and full of the devil.)

There were 3 nuns teaching the 8th grade at St. Hedwigs School, Sr. Synesia, Sr. Amanda, and a tiny one named Sr. Amia (my nun). Sr. Synesia was nicknamed "Sneezy". Chester Larek was in her room and a particular boy named Richard Koza (Goat). He (Richard) was a thorn in Sneezy's side. When she would try to scold the Goat he would run around the classroom, and she would be right behind him. When it looked like he would be caught, he would stop by her prize Ferns, grab one and threaten to throw it out the window. She would stop in her tracks and plead with him not to do it, he would laugh and put the Fern down and return to his seat. In a few years Ritchie would be dead a victim of an automobile accident, and for Sr. Sneezy a deep loss of a close friend. She cried at the wake as if she lost her only friend. Sr. Amia on the other hand was soft spoken and as the jargon goes today, she kept her cool, but not for long. We had a boy in class by the name of Frank Rylko. He was only 14 yrs. old but stood about as tall as a tree, and was as strong as an ox. One day in class Sister asked him to spit his gum out (he was chewing on a chunk of Spark Plug Chewing Tobacco). After refusing her and completely ignoring her, she went up to him and asked him to stand up. Which he did and towered way above her (she stood about as tall as a tree stump about 4 ft.) She then asked him to bend forward which he did, and she laced him across his face. He stood upright and slapped her back. She then

went out of the classroom crying, as was Frank. When she returned Frank went up to her, knelt before her, and asked her to forgive him. When at that time all of us that felt remorse, began to cry with them. I guess the old saying that crying is good for the soul is true, because we then became a unified body of class A students. Upon Graduation some of us went up to the old classroom to say goodbye to each other, shaking hands, and kissing. Surprisingly some of the best kissing girls followed in Sr. Amia's footsteps to devote their lives and love to our lord Jesus.

Vacation time was upon us before starting High School, and believe me this vacation was very boring. We were in that stage of growing up where we thought about girls but wouldn't admit it to the rest of the gang, or else they would laugh at us, and call us "girl suckers".

For kicks we would go to the Wiebolts Department Store on Milwaukee avenue and see how far we could go without getting caught, by down and out stealing. Lipsticks, Jewelry (junk type) hankies etc. We got caught once in the store by the floorwalker, and were taken to the manager's office. Believe me we cried like anything, and pleaded for mercy, which the manager gave us without calling our parents.

Another incident that summer which turned out to be pretty painful was when we found out that we could get money from the Junker for iron. There was a railroad viaduct crossing Hoyne near Churchill St. One of the tracks was the spur line for the Churchill Cabinet Co. On the line was a car loaded down with scrap iron. One night we decided we would collect some of the iron, and sell it the next day to the Junker. At that time we had no way of knowing that the railroad had their own police known as railroad Dicks. Two guys went up on the tracks and the rest of us stayed below in a little alleyway behind a Tavern. The first piece to be thrown down was a part of a wheel which came from a railroad car. That alone should have told us to leave now, but we wanted more. I hollered to Floyd to find some smaller pieces so that we could pick them up and put in our wagon. That's what's funny now when I think about it. Here we were big crooks stealing iron and using a coaster wagon to haul it in. Well we were so involved in what we were doing it was impossible to hear anyone coming. The anyone was a railroad Dick, that's when some of us found out they don't only use bullets to shoot out of guns, they use salt. Salt that smarts if it is administered in the right places, if his aim was correct it was your bottom.

It was also the period of learning how to smoke, that's what all the big guys did so why not us? We had a clubhouse built behind the signboards on Armitage Ave., which was in the prairie behind my house. We split up in pairs to look for cigarette butts. Mostly we hung around the streetcar stops, because the men would light up and take a few puffs when the car would come, then they would just pitch it out and we would grab them. That was quite a day when we met again at the clubhouse. Can you imagine about 16 of us sitting in a circle puffing on weeds? There was enough smoke coming out of the cracks in the wall to make it look like the place was on fire. My Dad was in the backyard when he noticed the smoke pouring out, he ran to the shack and opened the door, and started laughing hard. He called to my Uncle Burke and to Grandpa to come over there. What they found were 16 boys all different colors, green, yellow and pale. I as well as some of the others barfed and crapped at the same time for 2 days. Believe me we didn't even think of smoking for quite a while. That same summer on the 4th of July we had some fun with the local drinkers who drove their cars to the Taverns. We would take a potato and stick it in the exhaust pipe, then wait for the guy to come out. When he would start his car it would take about 30 seconds for the pressure to build up, and then "WHAM" she would blow. The poor guy would think his engine had blown up, but the damage it did do was usually to blow the muffler out. Another thing to do was to wait for the Armitage Streetcar to come by. We would run out to pull down the trolley from the cable, shutting off the power. While the motorman went to replace the trolley, we would run around the opposite side and sneak on the car for a ride.

Some things will never return and my mouth just waters thinking about some of them. There was a man I believe he was Italian. He had a wagon that was drawn by a horse. He sold delectable things such as roasted peanuts, and fresh made popcorn, both plain and caramel, and sandwich wafers, paper thin. There was also the watermelon man. He had the biggest and juiciest melons you ever saw. He would slice a melon in half, and for 15 cents you got a quarter slice, for 30 cents the whole half. As the T.V. commercial says “ I can’t believe we ate the whole thing”.

As the summer vacation wore on things really became boring. We were too young to go swimming by ourselves to Whealan Pool on Devon and Milwaukee so we would go swimming at Holstein Park, which was in the area of Oakley and Lyndale. That was some pool, I didn’t go there to often because of the dirty water. I think it was built during the W.P.A. era and didn’t have much of a filtering system. I can’t remember the first time I went there, but I can remember the last time. I went to the locker room to change clothes, (the locker room was a wooden stall with nails in the walls for hanging up your clothes) Took my shower, and went into the water. They had 2 pools, one for the little kids (or Chickens) and one for the big guys (of show offs) (by the way. Boys and girls never swam together there, they were afraid of hanky panky.) I was doing fine until one of my friends said “Jump in let’s play a game”. I jumped in and when I came up, lo and behold, before my eyes there was a piece of human excrement or if you prefer “turd” floating around in front of me. I guess someone didn’t know that they had bathrooms at the pool. That was the last time. In later years funds were collected for the park, and in place of the old pool and tennis courts, now is erected an Olympic style pool, a real pleasure for all to use it.

School time coming up now, some of us went to Lane Tech H.S., some to Weber, a Parochial H.S., Tuley, Washburne, and some didn’t go at all. My entrance in Lane was postponed for a while because of some surgery done in late August. By the time I got there all my pals like Chester, and Roman were pretty well situated and had met knew friends. It was hard for me in the beginning of my freshman year at Lane. I didn’t know my math too well, or English Lit. I did a lot of class cutting the first half of the year, but I wised up after getting expelled from school, and disappointing my parents. I knuckled down to do some serious work, and with the help of Chester and Roman, I beat the math problem, only because I was interested in Mechanical Drafting, which took some knowledge of math.

Peter Huntowski with his Dad.



That Fall around the neighborhood we were up to mischief again. There was an old grouch who always chased us off his sidewalk when we skated passed, by throwing water on us. That Halloween we got even with him, We waited till nightfall and found a batch of fresh dog droppings, we put it in a brown bag and sneaked up to his front porch, rang his front door bell (making sure he was sleeping before we did it) and set the bag on fire. It was a lot of fun watching him stomp on the bag to put the fire out, not caring what was in the bag, and I’ll bet we had 5 lbs. of crap in there. His house must have smelled for a week.

Some of the other people in our neighborhood was Mr. Walter Maday, hardware store owner. A small man in stature but a heart as big as a tree. He had 3 daughters, Loretta, Shirley (who was our age) and Joan. He never objected to fella like me, Chester or Roman being over at the house, as long as we were in grammar school, but when we started H.S. we were always chaperoned, either by Loretta, or little Joan. Little did he know that Chester and Shirley were in the holding hand stage and smooching whenever they got a chance, like on school days they would meet in the basement by the washrooms, or during winter when we would go ice skating at the park Chester and Shirley would be in the Hot House, and I would bet there were other kids with the same thing on their minds too. My great passion at that time was to master the use of my racing skates with the 16 inch blades. Both Floyd and I had an obsession to win the Amateur Silver Skates Award at Holstein Park and Humboldt Park. Girls were still not our cup of tea. Both Floyd and I swore that we would stay away from girls as long as possible. There was too much enjoyment to be had with going fishing, playing ball, hiking and just goofing around together. Floyd and I became closer than brothers, even though he was much younger than I was. Now the younger brothers started to hang around with us. Floyd was Bill’s brother, than there was Billy Drozak, Donny Borowiak, and my cousin Ritchie Janusz, he was Norbie’s brother. Also some new guys in the neighborhood John Przybylo, and John Janowski, and his brothers Mike, Joe and Eddie. We had to separate the 2 Johns so Johnnie P. we called crazy John and Johnnie J. we called Polish John

There was a candy store we hung out in on Hoyne and Mclean, the same block where I lived. It was called Rompalas. That was a place we would go to for our snacks just before supper. Snacks like a 25 cent bag of Yo-Ho Potato Chips, or Twinkies, washed down with a Pepsi or a Kayo Chocolate drink, or the real big favorite Green River. My parents as well as the other parents would get angry because we sat down to eat and we were to full. My Mom would say “ If nobody likes what I made to eat I won’t cook here anymore”. Well it came time for supper and my Mom, Laurie, and Dorothy set the table and we all sat down to eat, the food was served and it happened to be some leftovers, that’s when my Dad said rather harshly, “are we having this again?” My Mother got up from the table, said not a word to anyone, picked up the 4 corners of the oilcloth tablecloth and threw it all out in the alley. That day nobody ate, but after that incident no one ever complained about the food that was served. *(Continued on page 18)*

 MOODY <i>Plumbing Inc.</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESIDENTIAL • INDUSTRIAL • INSURED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMMERCIAL • LICENSED • BONDED
Jim Moody	
Bus. Ph. (773) 777-1614	Fax (773) 777-6614
4018 NORTH CICERO AVENUE CHICAGO, IL 60641 OPEN 7 AM TIL 11 PM 7 DAYS A WEEK 773-545-7377 www.citynewsstand.com	



Peter's grandfather is shown sitting in the police patrol car. He drove one of the first motorized wagons and drove a horse-drawn wagon before that. *Photo Courtesy of Christine Wasilewski*

Speaking of food also reminds me about the time my cousin Virginia Janusz and I had to stay home while my Mother and Aunt Aggie went shopping to Goldblatt Bros. Dept. store on Chicago and Ashland Avenues. We didn't have a car then so the usually walked there, a distance of about 3 or 4 miles give or take a few. Our job was to take care of her brothers Norbie and Ritchie besides the house. (don't let strangers in) . Around lunch time we got hungry. (Before I go any further, our house was at 2010 Hoyne a small 2 story bungalow. Uncle Burke and Aunt Aggie and their family lived upstairs and we lived downstairs). As I said, around lunch time we got hungry, so Virg went to the icebox and found a plate of meat. We thought that it was some hamburger so we made patties and fried them, put them on a bun, and they tasted pretty good. Around 2 O'clock our folks came home, and the first thing Aunt Aggie asked was "Did you kids feed the dog?" and Virg replied "Where's the dog food?" Aunt Aggie said "look in the icebox it's on a plate". We didn't get sick, but at the same time, we didn't eat burgers for a long time. I must tell you that Virg was the oldest then; she was about ten yrs. old.

We were also a musical family. My Dad, as well as his brothers and sisters sang on the choir of old St. Mary's church on Hermitage Ave. My Dad loved to play the violin, his brothers George and Sylvester played the piano. Sy wrote a few songs in his day, and Uncle George led a 14 piece band during the late 1920's. My Uncle Sy was a big influence on me in my younger days. He like to build model planes and ships, and in turn got me interested in doing the same thing. I looked to him more as an older brother than an Uncle. Today I still build models and so does my older son. Getting back to the music, my Mother used to as they say tickle the ivories. My older sister Loretta studied music at the Ochocki Accordion School. My younger sister Dorothy sang, and I played the saxophone. It was a gift from my Uncle George when I made my 1st Holy Communion, I was 10 yrs. old. By the time I was 13, I started to play with a couple of brothers by the name of Murovchik from Mclean Ave. and their cousin. We had an accordion, played by "Chik" our drummer was his brother Herbie, and myself and their cousin on saxes. We played for weddings mostly and occasionally in the local taverns on Saturdays and New Year's Eve. We played at 2 regular spots, one was Happyland Tavern on Oakley and Armitage, the other was the Rainbow Gardens on Damen and Armitage. One New Year's we played at Happyland and made quite a bundle, something like 50 bucks a piece, only because there was a drunk there who kept feeding the "kitty" with \$10 bills just to hear our rendition of "Rum and Coca-Cola" and "It's only a Paper Moon". After we played Auld Lang Syne a bunch of guys from the Rainbow gardens came in and said we were going with them to the Gardens because the band that was playing there walked out. So they picked up our instruments and walked them the 3 blocks to the Gardens with us right behind them. Well we started playing around 1 and ended playing around 5 am. So for us that was a long gig, around 8 hours, and about \$90 richer, this wasn't too bad for teenagers. The man that owned Rainbow liked our music so well that we played there steady on Friday and Saturday evenings, food included. The entire compound took in a restaurant, tavern and hall. Chick did all the bookings for the band. One day he got a call to play on a Thursday night at the hall. The money offered came to 25 bucks apiece for 2 hours of playing, so we booked it. We arrived at 7 pm and was told to go back stage for our cue instructions by the performers. We seemed sort of puzzled, but we went back there as we were told. A big buxom woman came to us and said we were to watch her when she was on stage for all her cues, what she meant was whenever she bumped, the drummer was to hit the bass drum real hard. We had an idea what was going on but we still weren't sure. The evening started about 8pm with us playing a few songs, all the while we thought it was going to be a dance, but when the curtain opened all we saw were men sitting on the chairs like they were waiting for a movie to start. Well I guarantee you we sure didn't do much playing when you know who came out on stage. A girl with a small bikini had more on than she did. What we were hired for was to play music for a strip show and a live stage show, consisting of 3 girls and a weirdo guy. Before things really started going on, or should I say coming off the cops raided the place. Everybody was running all around trying to get out, so as not to get pinched, for fear their families finding out. I saw a lot of men there I knew from the neighborhood.



**See why
millions trust
us for Home
& Auto.**

David A Wians, Agent
5870 N Milwaukee Avenue
Chicago, IL 60646
Bus: 773-774-1500
www.davidwians.com

I'm here to help life go right™,
by saving you time *and* money
when you combine your home
and auto insurance.
CALL ME TODAY.



State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
State Farm Indemnity Company
State Farm Fire and Casualty Company
State Farm General Insurance Company
Bloomington, IL

1601486

During the confusion we picked up our stuff and started to leave by the back door, when we got nabbed by the cops. We were brought back in and seated on the stage. The officer in charge came over to us and got our names and telephone numbers after that he called our parents to pick us up. When my Dad saw what was going on I got the licking of my life because he thought we knew all about it. When he found out the truth, he said to me "I'm sorry but you got a spanking because you looked at a naked girl. Now you have to go to confession." My musical career didn't end there, but I'll get to that later.

Our neighborhood was far from being free of all vices, there were floating crap games in the alleys or under the viaducts that surrounded our area. We never got too close to the games cause the guys had lookouts all over watching for the squad cars. We found that the words "jiggers the cops" was magic if you were convincing enough. We tried it a couple of times and we came out of the deal with a pretty good piece of change. We were chased a few times but never got caught. There also was the annual bazaar at the church. In the hall they had the gifts and all around the schoolyard were the booths. In the boiler room (only the men got in) were the slot machines, one of the booths that all the guys would try was the dice wheel. You placed your bet on the number combination you thought would show up on the wheel if you won, the prize was, for certain numbers a bottle of wine. Five or six of us would play the game, and win some wine before the priest came around. They used to walk around the grounds like patrol boys, and if they saw you at the gambling booths they would kick you out. E would then go with our winning to a dark spot (it was like an alcove leading into the hall) and proceed to drink our wine. Many times we got bombed on that cheap wine throwing up all over the place, hoping our folks wouldn't ask us too many questions.



Chik, on accordion, with his brother, Herbie Murovchik on drums and his cousin on the right with the Sax. Peter Huntowski on the other sax by the window.

Softball was the big summer sport there we had teams named , Roy- Dells, Chi-Dells, Buccaneers, Aces, Playboys, etc. Everybody turned out for the games especially when the teams would play against the Blacks from the south side. They always played for money or a barrel of beer, it never was for beer with the Blacks too much, because segregation was used then at most of the taverns so they played for money. After the games us kids would look around the base paths picking up the loose change that would fall out of the players pockets. One time a race riot started after one of the games a White girl who belonged to one of the players got in an argument with a Black girl who got slapped in the face. Her boyfriend came over and slapped the White girl back, with her boyfriend starting a fist fight with the Black boy. Naturally all the players got into it. After, they each went on their own way, with a lot of language to boot. The White team went to their hang out which was the Kutza Bros. Drug Store on the corner of Leavitt and Armitage. About 9 that night, the riot started, weapons were baseball bats, tire irons, chains, brass knuckles, and anything else that could, maim or disfigure. Every night for about a week the Blacks would come to our Northside and we would go the next night to their territory. Nothing much was gained by the riot, because within a few weeks they had another ball game, and the 2 girls apologized to each other and that was that.

I can also remember my sisters and I going to the theatres on Milwaukee ave. The Royal and the Wicker Park, both of them were 2 for a nickel shows. They showed about 3 westerns from the early talkies, and about 5 Mickey Mouse cartoons. Of course there were the smokers, drunks, and the regular customers, the rats, and the roaches. The only reason we went there was because we could all get in and get a box of popcorn for a quarter. A quarter was about all we would get for an allowance.

Back in H.S. now as a sophomore, the important thing was to try out for the football team at Lane. It was known as the school of champions. Such greats as Phil Cavaretta of the Chicago Cubs learned how to play baseball good enough to be farmed out for the big leagues when he left school. Also there was the great swimming champion Johnnie Weismuller who broke all the records in H.S. swim meets, swam in the Olympics, and became Hollywood's best Tarzan. I played football with the 1st string at Lane, with big Bill Fischer as our center, a super juaggernaut ball snap. I was small and fast on my feet, especially when being chased. So they made me a receiver for the long bombs of Chuck Koehler, a Quarterback. Being my Father's only son he kept me from participating in all sports where a person could get injured. I was my Mother who was sports minded and she knew I was playing football; My Dad didn't, until I got in a mix-up on the battlefield. We were playing against one of our rival schools Austin High, at our home stadium. The play that was called put 2 pass receivers out at the same time, only they had us covered like a book. I caught the pass without any trouble but didn't see how close the opponents were to me and I got hit from sides, leaving me unable to play ball anymore and wearing a full leg cast for 6 months That's when my Dad found out about it. He wasn't angry at all but after that we went to quite a few ball games and he became interested.

Roller skating was a big fad then too. Good old Riverview Rink. It was part of the Riverview Amusement Park on Western ave. and Belmont. When you went skating then you were sort of a big shot with your fancy skates with the pomp oms on the front of your skates and a fancy silk shirt, all in school colors. I never was able to master the fancy steps or dances but I had fun just the same. Polish John and his friend (later to become part of the gang) Frank Bellavia, really could dance on skates. Frank was also a crack mechanic too, seeing as how we all drove cars then he came in handy when our clunks ran down. Chester had a '37 Chevy, Frank drove a '39 Buick Roadster, Polish John had a classic '39 Ford, and I had a '36 Pontiac. With my car I never worried about getting a speeding ticket because I couldn't get the darn thing past 35 mph. But it was a fun car anyway, ask my wife. Whenever we wanted to go fishing Polish John's folks would always go with us to Fox Lake Channels. There were so many of us fishing that we would come home with enough fish to feed the entire block. As we became older we each started to go our own way. Floyd and I still hung around together sometimes going out with girls on double dates. The 2nd World War was still going on when I left school in my senior year to join the Navy.

(Continued on page 22)

Nothing too much to say about it except, I got hurt and received a medical discharge a few weeks after my 17th birthday. When I came home everything changed, new people moved on the block, some of the guys were going steady, work was next to impossible to get, so after a year I joined the Air Force. I concealed my medical discharge to the Sgt. at the desk and took my training at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. After about 6 months I was called into the Commander's office to face charges of a Court Martial for fraudulent entry in the service of the United States Air Force. He had asked me how I would plead and I said guilty of course. It was a Special Courts Martial, and I had a lot of support from everyone in my Squadron, from the Major down to my Sgt. Being as how I was a good soldier, I received an Honorable Discharge, a choice I made because if I decided to stay in, I would have had to serve time in hard labor for 6 months to a year. I truly regretted to leave the service, now when I think about it I know I made the wrong choice.

It's the summer now of 1948. The guys and I were just about settled down. I remember it was a Saturday and we decided to go to a picnic sponsored by the Alderman Rostenkowski, at the picnic grove in Niles IL. We stayed apart from the big crowd and drank our beer alongside the Des Plaines river, when Bill Cholewczynski saw something in the middle of the stream, Bill and I with a few others waded out and found it to be a casket, which probably came loose from the water erosion up stream. In any case we turned it over (in case there were some bones in there) and brought it shore. We dried it out with some grass, and lined it with the same. Now mind you there were 12 of us, and with just enough beer in us to do the unexpected. Bill got into the box, with 2 bottles of beer, we had 6 pallbearers, 2 boys carried huge sunflowers in front of the procession and away we went at the moment the Alderman was giving his political speech. Believe me. We had no intentions of capturing his audience but they followed us anyway.

Happy 2019!

from your Northwest side real estate expert

dreamtown | HAJDU REALTY GROUP
DEDICATED TO RESULTS

ROSEANNE MAGGIO
847.361.9806
rmaggio@dreamtown.com
HajduRealtyGroup.com

Things slowed down after a while, and towards the evening the polish music started. We were pretty even then and dancing with some girls from the old neighborhood. I had just been home for a week and didn't know that Polish John liked this girl from Seeley Ave. named Lillian or Lodzia. She was dancing with another girl and John wanted me to cut in with him so he could dance with Lodzia. I said O.K. The girl that I danced with looked like about 13. I didn't say much to her at that time at all. Little did I know then that I would be going out with her in a few more months. Roman Godlewski stopped hanging around with us because he tied in with a bunch of Polish Folk Dancers and was doing T.V. shows in the local area. Frank Rog was gone too, he was a student at Quigley Seminary studying for the priesthood. That left just a few of us hanging around together, Polish John, Crazy john, Chester, Frank, Bill, Floyd myself and a fella named Wally. During the week we all worked at different jobs, but the weekends belonged to us. On Friday nights we would all meet at Jolly Joe's a tavern we hung out in. We had the owner fooled with phony I.D.'s. We would leave there about 9pm and go to the dance at St. Hedwig. We would look up the girls that were our steady dance partners (at the beginning we would meet them there, it was cheaper). We danced to English music upstairs and during the breaks we would go in the basement hall to dance Polish. After the dance we would walk the girls home then meet at the pizza parlor till 2:30am when we would go to the 3am Mass at St. John Berchman. Crazy John's name fit him like a glove, one time at Mass he assisted with the collections. You had to go to the back of the altar in a little room for the collection basket, after a few moments all we heard was a loud bang and John came out and said loudly to the priest while he was saying Mass "sorry Father, I knocked your candles over" which brought a laugh from everyone. A little old lady was sitting by us. When John came around she was digging in her purse for some change when John said again "keep it Grandma you need the money more than he does". Mass was over about 4am, we would all go home, change our clothes and meet on the corner by the candy store. Off we would go to Fox Lake for a Saturday of fishing. We would return before nightfall, rest up awhile, get dressed again and go to another dance at either St. Hedwig or St. Mary's. Go again to the 3am Mass, and finally home to bed. Sunday's were kind of mild for us, generally we would meet at someone's house and start a card game, usually penny ante poker. Once we had a card game at crazy John's house, I think there was about 9 of us around the table. The game we were playing was called Red Dog, a game similar to beat the dealer, the object of the game is for everyone to ante up, which is usually \$1 apiece. The dealer turns down two cards to all players. Most times the player has a low and a high card. He makes his bet for either part of the pot or all of it. The player calls either high or low, the dealer turns over one card, and if you called high and the card is not over your high card you win. For instance, if you held a Queen, and a Jack turned up you win cause you hold the high card, but if a King was turned up, you lose, the dealer beat you so he wins. If you bet for half the pot and won, then you take half of the money, but if you lose you put in your half of the pot. If you call Red Dog that means the whole pot, and lost, you put in exactly what's in the pot, doubled. That means if there was \$9 in the pot when you called Red Dog, and lost, then you owe \$9. After about 8 hours of playing the pot was about \$500, it was Bill's turn to bet and he had Queens back to back, so he called high. He figured he was safe because high cards were coming up on the players just before him, so he thought he was due for a low card, he also called Red Dog. He was thrown a King, a loser, a \$500 loser. Bill was a fast talker, he couldn't cover his bet so he wanted to know if he could go home for some additional security, it was alright with most of us except Crazy's brother-in-law. He started an argument about it, said he was going to get cheated because it was his turn next and (a \$1000 pot is something to shoot for) he started a fist fight with Bill. All in all a free for all broke out in the flat. After that we limited ourselves to penny ante poker with a 5 cent limit.

Follow the Northwest Chicago Historical Society on Facebook

In the winter we had a lot of fun. We used to go with the girls to Palos Park on the southwest side of Chicago, for a day of tobogganing. The park has six slides for sled use, the 1st one was steeper than the last one. We always went on the 1st one, Norbie at that time must have weighed about 200 lbs. would always be in the front of the sled. That gave us more momentum going down the hill and the lightest always in the back. One trip was very hilarious for us, but it left a few Park Rangers very angry. Polish John wore false teeth, and on that particular trip down, the sled tipped over at the bottom of the run. John got up and hollered that he lost his teeth. Chester and I thought it was legit so we went for a Ranger and told him what had happened. He called up to the Ranger on the top and told him to stop the people from coming down. This left about 100 or more disgruntled sliders on the top of a slide with nowhere to go, while on the bottom, Ches and I besides the 2 Rangers and John were looking in the white snow for some white false teeth. After about 15 minutes of looking, John started to laugh real hard. Ches and I went by him and he showed us that he had the teeth in his pocket. He took them out just before we tipped over. The Rangers saw us laughing and found out what happened they took our sled away and ordered us out of the Park but reconsidered and let us stay in the lodge.

Our running around days were getting less and less as we got older. The years in between 18 and 20 were just about the same as before, drinking, fishing, card games, and dances. Norbie was in the Army now, so was Billy Drozek and Donny Borowiak. Chester was going steady with a girl named Mary, Bill's girls name was Dolores, Floyd went steady with Rosie, Polish John went with Josie (Chester's sister), and Frank was in the service too. About this time we met another friend of Polish Johns, his name was Chester Zajac (Rabbit). Bill was the 1st to get married, and as usual we had a ball at the wedding. We kept feeding Bill's sister-in-law with drinks, hoping that she would tell us where they would spend the 1st night. Well we got it out of her. The 1st night would be spent at his in-laws house. We left the party early and went to the house to booby trap the bedroom. We tied jingle bells to the bed springs and short sheeted the bed. Bill must have had the same idea of leaving early too, cause when we were ready to leave, his car pulled up in front of the house. We had no choice but to hide as best we could. Well let me tell you, it didn't take too long for the bells to start ringing. He didn't even bother to turn the lights on when they came in, and in a matter of minutes the bells of ecstasy were jingling. We got a few S.O.B.'s out of him when he ran out, laughing all the way.

We all had bachelor parties, but the best one was for Chester Zajac. The party was held in the basement hall of Jolly Joes, with everyone present. There was food, booze and beer. After we all got feeling pretty good we decided to pull a prank on the "Rabbit" We took his pants and shorts off and painted him with brown iodine from the belly to his knees, backside as well. This was done the day before he got married. After the wedding was over Ches and his wife left for their Honeymoon. We didn't see him for about 2 weeks but when we did you never saw anyone as angry as he was. He said he tried explaining things to his wife about the party and the iodine but she wouldn't believe him. She thought he had some kind of disease and he had to sleep by himself. He said he was never so sore in his life, not angry at us but sore from scrubbing. He said he took 4 showers a day and used a scrub brush each time, trying to get rid of the iodine. After the 1st week he was cured and made up for lost time.

There was a tragedy in our lives, it happened with Crazy John. He had a job as a window washer at a hospital on the south side of Chicago; St. Anne's I think was the name. He was cleaning windows on the 4th floor in the stairway part, at the rear of the hospital. Hoe got finished with the window and came in, when he noticed a smudge still on the glass. So instead of hooking up his safety belt again, he just stepped out on a shed roof between the stairwell and the main building. His left foot went through the roof and his body twisted with his head hitting the concrete apron around the roof. It was a Saturday I know, cause the guys and I were working on our cars getting ready for an outing we were going on the following day. John had my phone number in his wallet, and the hospital called me up around 11am. I gathered up all the guys and we rushed out there. When I walked into the room I got sick to my stomach. *(Continued on page 27)*



IRISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

4626 North Knox Avenue • Chicago, IL 60630
773-282-7035, ext.10 • www.irish-american.org

I saw a body of a man lying on the bed, but it sure didn't look like John. The doctors were bent over him massaging his heart; his left side was all broken up from his ankle to the top of his head. The left side of his face protruded about 4 or 5 inches out. There was no resemblance of an eye at all, just one big black splotch. His brain was jarred loose so much they (the Doctors) removed a part of his skull to allow room for the swelling. John was confined for a long time, and then they moved him to a hospital closer to home, but his mind reversed itself back to his childhood. He had 2 big scars on either side of his temples, and his left wrist was longer by about 3 inches, compared to his right. The fellas and I each took a day off of work and stayed with him at the hospital. We had to teach him his 1st grade reading all over again for a start. After about 6 months we got him to the time of his accident, but he couldn't remember falling. The doctors said the only thing that pulled him through was the fact that he was engaged to a girl, a girl none of us knew about, and he kept repeating her name, keeping the spark alive. When she heard about the accident she thought John would be a cripple so she left him, which we didn't tell him at the time, for he couldn't remember her too well. We waited till he was almost recovered and then we told him. Today John is no goofier then he was before, the skull scars are more visible now because he is losing his hair, but now it doesn't bother him if people stare, he tells them that's his war wounds, this keeps them from asking too many questions. He never married.



Two early photos of the neighborhood intersection of Hoyne and Armitage.

Photos Courtesy of Christine Blum-Wasilewski

The other tragedy was the death of my good friend Floyd. I was living in Addison IL at the time, recovering from a bout of probable T.B. The phone call came just towards supper time and the caller was Ches. He said "Pete you better brace yourself, I've got bad news for you", and then began to tell me of Floyd's death. It hit me like a ton of bricks, only because all the guys came to my house a couple of weeks before on a Sunday and Floyd was with them. They told me he was shaving in the bathroom and collapsed. The 1st one Rosie called was Norbie cause he lived a block away, she then called the Fire Dept. Inhalator Squad, thinking he suffered a heart attack. He laid in a coma for a few days at the hospital. He recovered enough later to talk to Rosie and his brother Bill, they said he was very alert; he died a short while later. The doctors said they were surprised he lived as long as he did because the cause of death was a ruptured artery in his head. It occurred at the time of his birth, and they said that the children who are afflicted don't live to the age of 10. Floyd died at the age of 33. *(Continued on page 28)*



John Olinski shown inside of S. Faikel's Hall & Tavern at Leavitt and Shakespeare. John worked as a bouncer at parties and weddings at this hall. This was the location of choice for many family weddings celebrations. *Photo Courtesy of Christine Blum-Wasilewski*

Some Catholics refer to that age as the Holy Year, (it was the age of our Lord Jesus when he died on the cross). Floyd left 4 Children and a wife. I couldn't bring myself to cry at the wake, because I didn't believe he was dead. It hit me on the day of the funeral. My self and 5 of the guys were the pallbearers, Chester Larek, Chester Zajac, Polish John, and my cousin Norbie. Floyd, even though he was in the casket, was still the victim of a saying from Crazy John. As we were walking up the stairs of the Church, Crazy John remarked "Christ Floyd, are you ever heavy". This cracked all of us up. I first felt the emptiness of losing my friend when the casket was right above the grave at the cemetery. I finally knelt down and wept. I miss him more every day as the years pass, and often think about him. He left me with many pleasant memories.

I realize I am by no means a professional writer, but I just wanted to express myself with words about my life, my family, and my friends, about the neighborhood I grew up in, about the hardships of my early life, but mostly to convey a message to my children and whoever else reads this that if there is trust and love among your family and friends your life will be rewarding, no matter what hardships you encounter.

My life has not been empty for I have been blessed with a good wife and 4 children. My only regret is that someday I will have to leave all of this behind, but I hope whatever memories I leave with them will be a real joy for them when they look back upon them, as my memories have brought happiness to me.



St. Hedwig Catholic Church on the corner of Hoyne and Webster Avenues

Senator John G. Mulroe

Illinois 10th District



District Office:
6232 N. Northwest Highway
Chicago, IL 60631
(773) 763-3810
(773) 763-3881 FAX

Springfield Office:
Senator 10th District
127 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-1035
(217) 782-2331 FAX

I am pleased to support the Northwest Chicago Historical Society in their efforts to preserve the history of the area. Their efforts to conduct research and educate the community bring us all together and help us to better understand our legacy.



The ornate interior of St. Hedwig Church where the Huntowski family attended.

The Congregational Church of Jefferson Park - Established 1861

CCJP Boiler Replacement Fund

Our Church's steam boiler has ruptured and is failing. The boiler cannot be repaired and must be replaced. The cost of replacing the boiler would exhaust the vast majority of our operating funds.

We are reaching out to the greater community to help defer the cost of replacing the boiler. Thank you and God Bless!

https://www.gofundme.com/boiler-replacement-fund?fbclid=IwAR3-bU3Hj7ME_UeBrJPOxycv-EHWDU8HesVYqjB-zruYaI857pTTJTBrXCs

**“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”**

-Gracie Allen



God is still speaking,



The Congregational Church of Jefferson Park

5320 W. Giddings St., Chicago, IL 60630 773-725-0121

Pastor: Reverend Gayle Tucker

We are your neighbors and we would like to meet you

Please join us and see our website for our upcoming events.

www.congregationalchurchofjeffersonpark.org

Our Lady of Victory Church

A Parish Community in the Roman Catholic Tradition



We welcome you!

Have you been away from the Church for a while? Do you feel like something is calling you back? Our parish family extends an invitation for you to join us as we celebrate Sunday Eucharist. As your brothers and sisters in our worldwide Catholic family, we want you to be part of our celebration. Our Church is not complete without you; you have been missed!

At Our Lady of Victory, you'll find an active congregation that encounters spirituality through many forms: clubs for all ages, continuing education, and music ministry with adult, teen, and chamber choirs.

Regardless of your situation, you can always return to experience the sacraments and the fullness of relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church. We hope you accept this as your invitation to rediscover the truth, wonder and mystery of the Catholic faith. We will always welcome you home at Our Lady of Victory.

Fr. Michael Wyrzykowski, Pastor

For more information about Mass schedules and specific programs at our historic church, visit us at: www.olvchicago.org

**Daily Eucharistic Adoration
from 8 am – 8 pm, Monday - Saturday**

5212 West Agatite Avenue, Chicago, IL 60630 • 773-286-2950