

From Budget

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A Message from The President

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The mission of the Parkside Community Association is to advocate, communicate and act on behalf of the Parkside neighborhood to preserve and enhance the quality of life.

Crime Alert

The Parkside Community Association has established a Crime Alert e-mail list to notify neighbors should an incident occur. Please e-mail the PCA at: pca2318main@verizon.net, or call 838-1240 if you would like to add your e-mail to this list. Please include your name, address, phone number.

Wanted: Saviors to rescue a Parkside architectural gem.

The former Fairfield Library at 1659 Amherst Street is endangered. Two and a half years after it closed as a branch library of the Buffalo & Erie County Library, the building has fallen into disrepair. An architect has said that the building will not last another Winter unless stabilized now.

The building was designed by well-known Buffalo architect and Parksider, William Sydney Wicks for the Unitarian Universalist Church. Dedicated on June 11, 1897, the church features a beautiful green and yellow stained glass Palladian window across from the entrance above where the altar once stood. A choir loft is tucked over the main entrance. Graceful arches abound on the interior and exterior of the grey clapboard, Colonial revival style building. The church was built close to the Amherst station of the Belt Line Railroad to serve parishioners in the growing communities north of downtown at a time when residents were dependent on trolley and rail. By 1912, the Unitarian congregation disbanded and Parkside Lutheran took up residence for the next dozen years before building a new church at Wallace and Depew in Central Park. In 1924, the City of Buffalo became the owner and has owned it ever since. Fairfield branch library opened that year. In 2003 and 2004, \$20,000 in County and City funds were used to repaint inside and out. Despite heavy use and high circulation, the branch closed on October 14, 2005.

A tour of the library on May 8, 2008 was sobering. The window to the left of the front door has been partially boarded up because would-be thieves broke in on a quest for copper pipes. Foundation masonry needs tuck pointing at the entry porch. Water has entered through the flat roof over the 1961 addition that housed the children's reading room; floor tiles are warped and dislodged. A telltale line at the base of the children's bookcases bears testimony to how high the water rose. Mold is growing on the wall going downstairs to the basement community room. Many more floor tiles, believed to be asbestos, are dislodged there as a result of a broken drain pipe outside. The condition of the sub-floor is unclear. A dank odor hangs in the air. Books and computers still wait for patrons. The children's reading tables and chairs stand vigil. Dishes remain in the staff kitchen, and the small plastic basket with a pencil and rubber bands is on the check-out desk.

The building needs rescue now. The Parkside Community Association considered possible use of the building in 2005, but we already own a mortgaged office building with two apartments on Main Street near School 54. A photographer considered the building for a home and studio. Proponents of a Grover Cleveland Library also have eyed it.

Central Park Homeowners Association to our north, and Parkside are activist communities. We cannot let a building in our midst fall because of disrepair. Too many architectural treasures already have been lost in Buffalo. Is there a savior or group of saviors in our midst who have the ideas and money to rescue Fairfield? Let us hope so.

Movies in The Meadow play again this Summer

Join the Parkside Community Association this summer for another Parkside event. "Movies in the Meadow" will be held on Saturday, July 12, 19 and 26th at 9:00 pm in Delaware Park, next to the Parkside Lodge. Bring your blankets and popcorn for a fun family night at the movies! The PCA gratefully acknowledges the support of the M&T Charitable Foundation for their underwriting of this event. For information call the PCA office at 838-1240.

Scheduled movies are:

July 12-The Natural

July 19-The Golden Compass

July 26-The Water Horse

RECEIVED

SEP 25 2008

DEPUTY DIRECTOR, C.