After months of skirmishes in courtrooms, op-ed columns, and private meeting rooms, the battle over the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art came to an end in late June when filmmaker George Lucas announced his decision to pursue building the museum in California rather than Chicago.

Friends of the Parks filed a federal lawsuit in November 2014 to block construction of the museum along the lakeshore and preserve Chicago’s public waterfront. Although Friends of the Parks supported the Lucas Museum coming to Chicago, we contended that the proposed lakefront location south of Soldier Field constituted a tragic misuse of public open space. The selection of that site to build a privately owned museum flew in the face of the Public Trust Doctrine, which requires the welfare of the public over the benefit of one or more individuals when it comes to the use of land created by the infill of Lake Michigan. Furthermore, construction of the museum east of Lake Shore Drive would have been in direct violation of the Lakefront Protection Ordinance. Alternate locations would have brought the same public benefits without permanently diminishing Chicago’s lakefront open space.

In 1990, as part of the McCormick Place expansion agreement, the City of Chicago promised to convert the area south of Soldier Field, which is currently a parking lot, into parkland. The Chicago Park District’s own underlying documents refer to that area as a park. However, the City reneged on its commitment to turn that space into parkland and reduce parking spaces on the east side of Lake Shore Drive. Rather than move some

DuSable Park Sits Unfinished Decades after Dedication

In 1987, Mayor Harold Washington dedicated DuSable Park in the name of the first non-native settler of Chicago. Three decades later, this site honoring our city’s black founder remains undeveloped. As a member of the DuSable Park Coalition, Friends of the Parks continues the fight to bring DuSable Park to fruition.

Jean Baptiste Point DuSable was born in Haiti of African and French descent. In the late 1700s, he made his way to the Great Lakes region and established a trading post on the north bank of the Chicago River near what is now Pioneer Court. In 1800, DuSable sold his homestead to Canadian trader William Burnett, who later sold the property to his partner, John Kinzie.

DuSable Park, an undeveloped 3-acre parcel of land at the convergence of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, is not currently open to the public. The fenced-off site is contaminated with radioactive thorium from a gas lamp factory that closed in the 1930s. The Chicago Park District received EPA

(continued on p. 8)
Maggie Martinez: A Park Hero on Earth Day and Every Day

If you’re looking for evidence of Maggie Martinez’s impact on the city of Chicago, look no further than the smiling faces of Earth Day volunteers as they clean up their local parks. For over two decades, Martinez has spearheaded Humboldt Park’s involvement in the annual Friends of the Parks’ Earth Day Celebration and Clean-up. This is no small feat given that Humboldt Park serves as the hub for more than 5,000 volunteers in nearly 100 parks across the city.

As a longtime member of the Humboldt Park Advisory Council, Martinez also manages the refreshments booth near the Little Cubs baseball field. This booth raises critical funds for year-round park activities. In addition, Martinez has been a leader in the Block Club Federation and a variety of other community organizations for more than 25 years. She regularly engages fellow Humboldt Park residents with the park itself and with anti-violence efforts in the broader neighborhood.

Martinez is so beloved by her neighbors that this past spring they honored her contributions to the community through a festive celebration in Humboldt Park, complete with a serenade by local children!

Humboldt Beach Reopening

The Humboldt Park Beach reopened in August with a week of celebrations. Community members advocated for the beach’s return after it was closed in 2015 due to high annual maintenance costs. The new design of the inland beach and lagoon will reduce these costs in the future.
A grand total of 900 students participated in Friends of the Parks’ Nature Along the Lake program during the 2015-2016 school year. This important environmental education program brings Chicago Public School students to the lakefront to learn about our city’s natural wonders. For some, it’s their first time seeing Lake Michigan.

Friends of the Parks works with schools across Chicago to develop customized fall, winter, and spring field trips that comply with the State of Illinois Science Learning Standards. FOTP’s Environmental Educator, Nicole Machuca, collaborates with teachers from the participating K-8th classes to develop practical outdoor field studies that are embellished with creative assignments back in the classroom.

The Nature Along the Lake program engages students with the Illinois Coast, specifically the ecologically rich 14-acre public nature preserve at Montrose Beach. Through this high-impact program, students come to understand the importance of science in their daily lives. The program is designed to inspire children to view their world a little differently, to encourage them to ask questions about their local environment, and to learn how they can take ownership of and make a positive contribution to the planet.

Thanks to Nature Along the Lake, hundreds of Chicago students obtain experiences not usually found in a city setting. They learn about complete habitat systems by studying the migratory patterns of birds, the diversity of Lake Michigan’s aquatic life, and the unique qualities of native plants. They also learn that our local setting is part of a larger ecosystem and that a clean environment does not happen by accident. Rather, it is the result of visionary people who care about leaving a healthy world for future generations to enjoy.

Friends of the Parks’ youth programming is helping to develop the next generation of ecological stewards while enhancing their exposure to fun, comprehensive science education.
PACs and FOTP: A Long History of Partnership

Friends of the Parks shares a long history of partnership with the Park Advisory Councils, voluntary groups of neighborhood residents who support the effective functioning of their local parks and provide community members with a democratic voice in the Chicago Park District’s operations. In fact, we played a lead role in establishing the majority of the existing 200+ PACs, starting with a grant from the City of Chicago in the early 1980s.

At the time, the federal government was promoting public participation in parks through grant programs. Chicago was specifically required to increase public participation as part of a Consent Decree that resulted from the U.S. Department of Justice’s lawsuit against the Chicago Park District for discrimination against minority communities. Friends of the Parks was part of the Consent Decree implementation team. Today, we continue to monitor the Park District’s activities and advocate for equity, fairness, and responsiveness to communities across the city.

Since the 2012 creation of the Chicago Parks Foundation, an independent entity that is housed at the Park District, more resources have been brought to support PACs. Furthermore, Maria Dmyterko Stone went to work for the Chicago Park District in 2015 after 4 years of working with PACs as a staff member at Friends of the Parks. Thanks to her expertise and strong commitment to supporting PACs, much of the work that Friends of the Parks piloted with community groups is now being scaled up by the Park District.

For example, in 2015, the Park District and the Parks Foundation decided to take charge of the Park Advocacy Conference, an event that Friends of the Parks dreamt up and brought to the Park District to co-found in 2010. The event is now called the Park Advisory Council Conference and the event leadership comes largely from the Chicago Parks Foundation. Friends of the Parks continues to serve on the planning team for the conference and helped implement the sixth annual PAC Conference on March 5, 2016. However, due to these leadership changes, we are retooling our PAC programming to be more focused on advocacy while encouraging PACs to take advantage of the fundraising workshops offered by the Park District and the Parks Foundation.

Friends of the Parks provides technical assistance to any of the 200+ PACs that desire our help, as well as fiscal sponsorship services to 57 PACs and park partners. Our regular support includes a monthly newsletter updating PACs and other park partners on important park issues. In addition, we recently created a new webinar series to complement our long-standing workshop series aimed at empowering PAC members and other park leaders with the tools they need to be effective advocates for their communities.

In 2000, Friends of the Parks launched the Seed Grant Program to encourage Chicago residents to take ownership of their parks by engaging in grassroots-initiated improvements in park amenities or programming. Since then, we have awarded over $150,000 in small grants for cultural and arts programs, garden development, sports equipment, and other park improvements. In the spring of 2016, we presented $5,000 in Seed Grants to seven PACs and park partners who are investing in their local parks (see list on p. 5).

Earlier this year, we supported the development of the Park Advisory Council Leadership Alliance, a group of PAC leaders who meet monthly to coordinate their efforts and cultivate the leadership of less-experienced PACs. In collaboration with a number of key PACs and other community groups, we are also studying the decision-making process around and impacts of concerts and festivals in parks. We plan to release a toolkit to help facilitate good communication and decision-making around such events.

For the past 40 years, Friends of the Parks has influenced Chicagoans to take ownership of their parks and promoted systemic change in the Chicago Park District. Going forward, we will continue to work closely with Park Advisory Councils and other grassroots organizations, listening to their concerns and providing technical, financial, material, advocacy, and educational support as necessary.
Furthermore, the Park District has failed to account for all of the funds donated to Grand Crossing Park by the PAC. “Some 37 receipts were missing from the first donated All-state grant since 2014,” said Edwards. The South Region Park District manager promised to send the missing receipts to the PAC. However, that manager was transferred soon after the promise was made and the receipts were never delivered. “We are still waiting,” said Edwards.

In the wake of this conflict, the Park District demanded that Edwards step down from her role as PAC president. Friends of the Parks is outraged by this overreach of authority on the part of the Park District. We remain committed to providing advocacy support to Edwards and the rest of the Greater Grand Crossing community as they fight for a safe, modern, and inclusive neighborhood park.

Grand Crossing Park: Heart of the Community

Grand Crossing Park, a 17-acre sanctuary of athletic fields, gymnasiums, and green space designed by the famous Olmsted Brothers, has been at the heart of the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood for more than a century. In 2005, a local Park Advisory Council was formed to preserve and improve the amenities of this community treasure.

In an interview with the Chicago Defender, Grand Crossing PAC President CeCe Edwards reported, “From 2006 through 2010, we raised $250,000 with the help of Friends of the Parks to rebuild a playground for the children in the community.” The funds came from both corporate donors, such as Kohl’s and Children’s Memorial Hospital, and local residents, who were approached through a door-knocking campaign.

The playground was completed well below budget thanks to the labor of dozens of volunteers and the expertise provided by the Chicago Park District. According to Edwards, in the Defender article, “They showed us how to rebuild the playground with our own hands under their Community Built Playgrounds program. Normally it costs $600,000 to build a playground, so we saved the park district $400,000 by building the playground ourselves.” Over the course of two days, a new playground took shape. “It was the most rewarding experience of my life,” said Edwards.

More recently, however, the Grand Crossing PAC has come into conflict with the Park District over the district’s use of donated funds. In particular, there has been controversy over a grant received from Allstate to cover the cost of park activities for children from low-income families. Edwards reported, “Some Section 8 children were turned away by the park’s supervisor and were told their parents had to pay even though the park already had the money [from the grant].”

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2016 Seed Grant Recipients

- McKinley Park: $700 for teen arts workshops
- Hearst Community Organization: $1,500 for their oral history documentary on Leclaire-Hearst Park
- Growing Power: $500 for sponsorship of the Shaffer Park Community Garden’s garden supplies
- Maplewood and Lucy Flower Park: $500 for the Lucy Flower Permaculture Garden
- Edgewater Beach Gardener’s Association: $500 for the Care for Real food pantry’s garden plots in Edgewater Meadows Community Garden
- Touhy Park Advisory Council: $500 for the “Welcoming Letters” beautification art project
- Cragin Park: $800 for the Reading Garden project
Edgewater Beachwalk: A New Ally in the Last 4 Miles Campaign

Friends of the Parks has long advocated for the establishment of complete, uninterrupted public access to Chicago’s lakefront. Our Last 4 Miles initiative aims to create public spaces along the four miles of privately controlled land that currently disrupt our city’s chain of lakefront paths, parks, and beaches. A group of Edgewater residents is now helping to bring that dream of continuous lake access one step closer to reality. The group’s plans, dubbed the Edgewater Beachwalk, include extending the existing lakefront bike path that stops at Ardmore Avenue to Devon Avenue. This would effectively connect many of the small beaches in the Edgewater and Rogers Park neighborhoods to the rest of the city.

In recent months, the group conducted public outreach and collected enough signatures for a nonbinding referendum in Edgewater’s precincts. However, the petition signatures were challenged and the referendum question was removed from the November ballot. Despite this setback, we are excited more community members now know about Edgewater Beachwalk’s vision and have expressed interest in the project. Watch for further developments in the coming months.

Northerly Island Park Suffers Storm Damage

Friends of the Parks was a key player in advocating for Miegs Field to be converted into Northerly Island Park (though we disagreed with Mayor Daley’s approach, including his famous carving of an "X" into the runway in the middle of the night). The $9.5 million project was a great success, creating more green space for Chicago’s residents while providing a sanctuary for birds, fish, and other wildlife. Only a few months after the opening of the park, however, a large section along the eastern edge was closed for repairs. Fall and winter storms had tossed stones and other debris onto the walking path, and waves had topped a rock wall, eroding soil around the artificial lagoon and under the path. The Army Corps of Engineers is working to resolve these hazards, but the cost and timeline for repairs is unknown.

Clarendon Park Threatened by Cuneo Development

Clarendon Park in Uptown is losing its longtime neighbor, the historic Cuneo Hospital designed by Chicago architect Edo Belli. Opened in 1957, the hospital was closed thirty years later and is now being torn down to make room for a high-rise development despite numerous concerns from the community. These concerns include the need for affordable housing in the area, the shadow the high-rise will cast on Clarendon Park, and the safety impacts of increased traffic, especially on children who visit the heavily used park.

Furthermore, neighborhood residents have questioned why $15.88 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds are being given to the developers when the historic Clarendon Park fieldhouse, previously the first public beach house in Chicago, is in need of repairs and resides in the same TIF district. The developers have agreed to pay $4.6 million for renovation of the fieldhouse within six to eight months after the project begins, but this is only a fraction of the more than $14 million necessary to fully repair the structure. Finally, part of the Cuneo Hospital property is located on Public Trust land and it is unclear how the use of that land for private development with public funding is being justified.
**Jackson Park Selected for Obama Library**

The Obama Foundation announced in early August that the Obama Presidential Center, including the president’s library archives, will be built in Jackson Park.

Friends of the Parks has said since 2014, when Chicago was first mentioned as a potential site for the presidential library, that we are excited about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to host President Obama’s legacy on the city’s South Side, where the president and the first lady have a deep connection to the community. We have also said from the beginning that we object to the use of existing parkland for the library. We will continue to voice that concern.

In a press release following the site selection announcement, Friends of the Parks Executive Director Juanita Irizarry emphasized that the library’s design “should maximize the use of available vacant land and underground space, and be truly ‘park positive’ by adding parkland to the surrounding community.”

Friends of the Parks’ fall Netsch Lecture focused on the Obama Library and its potential impact on Jackson Park. Friends of the Parks co-founder and advisory board member, Vicky Ranney presented on the history and context of Jackson Park and implications for the Obama Library.

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**Save the Date!**

**Thursday, November 17**

6:00-10:00 p.m.

Annual Parks Gala

Mid-America Club

**Thursday, December 15**

12:15—1:00  p.m.

Quarterly Netsch Lecture

Cassidy Theater

Chicago Cultural Center

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**L.A.T.E. Ride Success**

Thousands of riders participated in Friends of the Parks’ annual L.A.T.E. Ride on August 13-14th.

These cyclists raised critical funds to help preserve, protect, improve, and promote Chicago’s parks—and got a rare opportunity to explore the city by night!
Lucas Museum (continued from p. 1)

of the Bears parking to the west side of the drive, the City found it more beneficial to take advantage of the revenue from that parking lot. As a result, the Bears were given temporary permission to use the lot.

When Lucas approached Mayor Rahm Emanuel about locating his museum in Chicago, the mayor offered the Bears parking lot as a possible building site, despite the fact that the area had long ago been designated as park space. The ground lease terms were $10 for 99 years, with two potential subsequent 99-year renewals, for a total of 297 years for $30. This decision to give away a public asset—prime lakefront property designated for public use—was not accompanied by an open public participation process. The City held public meetings during the day at times that were not convenient for residents. In addition, residents were told about the meetings at the last minute. Finally, the City refused to answer questions from the public on the basis that they were involved in the lawsuit brought by the Friends of the Parks.

The City and the Park District filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit. However, U.S. District Court Judge John Darrah refused to dismiss the case, noting that the Friends of the Parks had adequately stated their claim. The City’s repeated attempts to keep the case from going to trial actually slowed down the process. When they requested that the process be sped up before Lucas decided to leave Chicago, Judge Darrah reminded them that their legal maneuverings, including their reluctance to turn over discovery documents, had caused the delays. The trial date was originally set for March 2016, but the case never got that far because of all the delays emanating from the City’s tactics. After it became clear that the trial would be rescheduled for November 2016, at the earliest, Lucas announced he would no longer seek to build the museum along Chicago’s lakefront. In the wake of this success, Friends of the Parks is urging the City to honor its long overdue commitment to convert the proposed Lucas Museum site—the current Bears parking lot—into parkland.

The Friends of the Parks’ decision to fight for the preservation of Chicago’s public lakeshore was not an easy one, and it was not without significant financial and political costs. However, we remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting our city’s lakefront for the enjoyment of all. This commitment is rooted in a long history dating back to Daniel Burnham’s 1909 Plan of Chicago and A. Montgomery Ward’s tireless efforts to keep Grant Park “forever open, clear, and free.” Furthermore, we do not stand alone in carrying on Chicago’s rich tradition of public parks. In a letter to supporters in May 2016, Friends of the Parks Executive Director Juanita Irizarry wrote, “Every day we get calls, letters, and emails from people thanking us for our stand, volunteering to help, and encouraging us to stay strong. We’re clearly tapping into a movement of people who share Friends of the Parks’ commitment to Chicago’s parks and lakefront!”

“Friends of the Parks’ niche work to save our lakefront legacy remains indispensable.”

“Generations have known this Chicago jewel, but too many don’t comprehend the struggle that is necessary to ensure it for generations to come.”

~FOTP Annual Report, 2015

Friends of the Parks continues to urge the City to honor its 1990 promise to convert the proposed Lucas Museum site, a parking lot south of Soldier Field, into parkland.
funding in 2012 to remove contaminated soil from the site. However, further remediation is necessary, as well as fortification of the coastline.

The Park District has no dedicated funding for DuSable Park and Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s recent “Building on Burnham” plan, a strategy to invest in the city’s open spaces, included no mention of the undeveloped park. A July 2016 article in the Chicago Tribune reported that more than 70 proposals for DuSable Park have failed over the nearly 30 years since the site was formally dedicated by Mayor Washington.

The DuSable Park Coalition was formed in 2000 in response to plans to lease the parkland for a parking lot. The coalition has gained new allies in recent years, such as Alderman Brendan Reilly, who has expressed strong support for the park. He wants to ensure that any developer of the abandoned Chicago Spire project is held to the previous commitment to contribute funds for the development of the adjacent park. In addition, the Park District has identified funds from an EPA legal settlement that could be used to conduct further soil remediation at the site. The Park District is also pursuing permission to use the EPA funds for coastal revetment. Nevertheless, the hoped-for fall groundbreaking may not start until the spring.

Each year, Friends of the Parks joins with other members of the DuSable Park Coalition to commemorate DuSable’s death and advocate for the actualization of the park in his name. This year’s commemoration took place on September 7th and was a visible reminder that the coalition will publicize this issue for as long as necessary. Friends of the Parks also focused on this important topic at our June Netsch Lecture, which brought together local experts to discuss “DuSable Park: Chicago’s Past, Present & Future.” Through these efforts, we continue to grow our coalition and shine a light on the need to honor our city’s founder with the completion of DuSable Park.

“The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.”

~Jane Addams
2016 Annual Meeting Highlights

The 2016 Friends of the Parks Annual Meeting, entitled our “Lakefront Legacy Luncheon,” happened to be scheduled on the same day as an important court ruling in the Lucas Museum case. The City and Park District had filed a motion to dismiss our case, and Judge John Darrah was due to rule on the motion that morning.

As we headed into the day of the luncheon, we didn’t know if we would be celebrating the case being allowed to continue or mourning the fact that it had been thrown out. Fortunately, Judge Darrah refused to dismiss the case. The news was already spreading online as our luncheon guests began to arrive, so there was an extra-special buzz of excitement in the air!

Erma Tranter, FOTP’s former president of more than 30 years, was honored with the inaugural A. Montgomery Ward Award.

The Lakefront Legacy Award was presented to the nine aldermen, one city plan commissioner, and one state representative who boldly voted against the Lucas Museum’s efforts to encroach on Chicago's lakefront.

Janis Taylor, who retired this spring after nearly four decades with the Chicago Park District, received the CPD Employee of the Year Award.

Todd Gee and Michael Burton impersonated Daniel Burnham and Montgomery Ward, reminding us whose shoulders we stand on in our work to protect Chicago's lakefront.
Executive Committee
Lauren Moltz
President
Fred Bates
Vice President
Troy McMillan
Secretary
Jackie Sloan
Treasurer
Lynda Birkelbach
Robert Gordon
Sylvia Jones
Alicia Pond
Deborah Strauss

Board of Directors
Patricia Ballman
Victor Bernhard
Paul Boyd
Mark Calderone
Sean Durkin
Thurman Foreman
Ian Grossman
Diana Harris
Kate Kennedy
Gavin McCarty
Serge Pierre-Louis
Janet Reali
Rachel Steiner
Gavin Tun
Bryan Whitehead

Staff
Juanita Irizarry
Executive Director
Kim Klein
Director of Operations
Nicole Machuca
Director of Environmental Ed. & Neighborhood Parks

In Memoriam
Friends of the Parks mourns the loss of longtime board member and friend up until the very end, Oscar D'Angelo.

"Oscar was a valued, devoted, and outspoken board member of Friends of the Parks for many years. He was passionate about our mission and the vital role that Chicago's parks play in our city. Oscar's insight, perspective, and enthusiasm will be greatly missed."

~Lauren Moltz, Board President

May he rest in peace.

Help preserve Chicago’s parks. Join our 4,000 members for 40 years challenge!

☐ $50 Individual ☐ $250 Conserver
☐ $75 Family ☐ $500 Sustainer
☐ $100 Corporate/Steward ☐ $1,000 Benefactor

Name:_______________________________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________
City/State/Zip: _______________________________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________________________________
Email: ________________________________________________________________

You can also join or renew online at www.fotp.org.
Friends of the Parks is a proud partner of the Chicago Region Trees Initiative. CRTI, a collaboration of more than 100 agencies, non-profits, and municipalities across the seven-county metropolitan region, is the largest such initiative in the country! Together, we are working to build a healthier, more diverse regional forest.

Chicago's trees are a critical asset, improving quality of life throughout the city. However, our trees face threats from invasive plants, the emerald ash borer, and a lack of funding for proper tree care. In response, CRTI seeks to coordinate action on key issues to protect our urban forest for the future.

As part of its commitment to Chicago’s trees, Friends of the Parks leveraged its relationships with the Gary Comer Youth Center, ComEd/Exelon, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to plant oak saplings at the Gary Comer Youth Center’s urban farm in Greater Grand Crossing last April (photo, left). Oak saplings were also distributed to neighborhood residents as part of the youth center’s “TREE-mendous” Arbor Day event.