

Our most interesting people *Luis Carlos Saavedra*



The Park Neighborhoods have a new poet, and he lives just off of 7th and Arthur. Luis Carlos Saavedra writes poems about his love of Milwaukee. Perhaps because of this it was fate that Luis ended up working as an outreach specialist at the storied Roberto Hernandez Center at UW-Milwaukee where he creates social, cultural, and educational programming that connects UW-M students and faculty/staff to the community at-large. He also helps acclimate UW-M students and prepare youth for college.

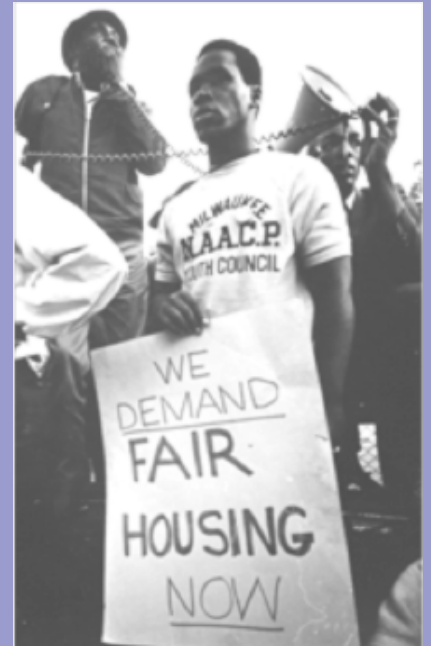
Love of the neighborhood

Luis moved to the Park Neighborhoods in 2010 and has fit right in. He talks about seeing a deer grazing along the Kinnickinnic River and the “grand diversity” of his neighbors. According to Luis, “Kosciuszko Park and the Kosciuszko Community Center have characteristics of a plaza area where people gather just to walk, talk, purchase ‘street food’, celebrate whatever, and so much more.” He loves patronizing the ethnic shops on Lincoln Avenue—the bakeries, the Mexican seafood restaurants, and the Polish deli.

Play about this neighborhood to be performed *The March to Kosciuszko depicts fair housing marches in the 1960s*

In August of 1967, Father James Groppi and the Youth Council of the NAACP marched to Kosciuszko Park to advocate for a fair housing law for African Americans in Milwaukee. The marchers were 200+ strong, but the counterdemonstrators numbered near 10,000.

Urban Anthropology Inc. conducted oral histories of African Americans who lived during the Civil Rights movement and Park Neighborhoods’ residents who remember the event. From these interviews, UrbAn has created the play, *The March to Kosciuszko*. A synopsis of the play appears below.



Synopsis of play

During the turbulent year of 1967, two fictionalized families struggle with an appropriate response to the upcoming fair housing march to Milwaukee’s Kosciuszko Park. A southside family wants to hold on to their Polish neighborhood that has recently lost housing as a result of freeway construction, but sees race becoming the operative theme in the opposition. On the north side, a Black family that has also lost housing during freeway construction, questions whether they should risk participation in the potentially violent march.

The events are narrated by General Thaddeus Kosciuszko whose monument symbolizes the Polish presence on the south side. As he speaks, the audience learns the historic Kosciuszko—not the one both sides conceptualize.

The play challenges many commonly held ideas about race, culture, and neighborhood.

Performance

The play will be performed in the autumn of 2012 at several locations. One performance will be in the Park Neighborhoods. UrbAn is currently seeking actors to audition for the play. See the article on the roles in this newsletter.

Join the Old south Side Artists Guild

The Park Neighborhoods (Lincoln Village and Baran Park) are home to many artists, musicians, poets and writers. We have found that the Park Neighborhoods have one artist in every six households. To become a member of our artist guild please contact Rick Petrie at: (414) 271-9417 or rickpetrie@gmail.com

Casting needs for fair housing play



Can you act? If you are interested in auditioning for the play, *The March to Kosciuszko*, contact Jill Florence Lackey at JFLanthropologist@sbcglobal.net. Please indicate which of the following roles interest you. A stipend will be provided actors who are selected.

List of characters

General Kosciuszko: This leading role is for a white male between 22 and 42 who can be very animated and keep an audience engrossed during long monologues. He'll be dressed in a Revolutionary War costume that will be tinted the color of the statue, and will speak in a heavy Polish accent, which can be learned

Roman Michalski: He is a somewhat reasonable Polish-American

in his middle years. He is a thinking man.

Mary [Maria] Michalski: This is Roman's wife and she is Puerto Rican. She is obstinate and outspoken. Because she is not Polish but lives in a Polish neighborhood she tries to overcompensate by being against just about anything that is not Polish.

Stephan Michalski: He is the college-aged son of Roman and Maria, who is beginning to learn about topics like race and ethnicity and is questioning some of the commonly held ideas of his time and his neighborhood. He appears to be just another white guy—he looks more like his father than his mother.

Henryk Piotrowski: He is a comic character who is a hopeless racist. He's middle aged and finds no value in anyone who is not Polish. He speaks in absolutes.

Jorge [George] Gonzalez: He is a college-aged Latino who tries not to get involved in conflicts. Whoever plays this role will also play one of the last two roles, but in a brown wig.

Lila Waters: Lila is Charles' (African American) mother, who lives with the family. She is very astute

and able to pick up on the important issues of her time. This is a leading role.

Maribel Brown: She is a comic character who often makes ridiculous statements. She is the (African American) spinster sister of Lila Waters. This is the kind of part that in films that, if well played, could warrant a best supporting nomination.

Charles Waters: Charles is a reasonable African American man in his 40s whose chief concern in life is the wellbeing of his family. He tries to avoid conflicts that could put his family at risk.

Darby Waters: She is a (African American) teenage girl wanting to participate in the marches. She questions some of the old school ideas of her father, grandmother, and great aunt.

Jason Waters: He is a (African American) teenage boy wanting to participate in the marches. He questions some of the old school ideas of his father, grandmother, and great aunt.

Stan and Garek: These are racist friends of Henryk. They are counter-demonstrators. They are white and can be any age. I can change one to a female role, if needed.

Yes, it's really FREE! Genealogy services offered

Urban Anthropology Inc. offers genealogy services at no cost to Milwaukee residents. The services are limited to gathering information on ancestors that lived within the borders of the United States.

Interested parties can simply stop at the Old South Side Settlement Museum at 707 W. Lincoln Avenue and

pick up a form that asks for some information on parents and grandparents. The family tree (or what parts can be found) will be provided by UrbAn staff within two weeks. If it is inconvenient to stop at the office, email Rick at RickPetrie@gmail.com and he will email you a copy of the form.

Our sponsors *Lincoln Village has become a Healthy Neighborhood through these Urban Anthropology Inc. sponsors.*



NIDC, in partnership with the City of Milwaukee



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