



‘Where the biggies leave off...’

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Cedar-Isles-Dean may be unique of city's 87 neighborhoods

By Michael Wilson

There are 87 neighborhoods in Minneapolis, according to David Rubedor, director of the city's Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. People live in 84 of them, and 70 of them have neighborhood associations. They're like an extended family to him, Rubedor would say, all of them special in their own way.

Are any neighborhoods more special than others, somewhat unique perhaps? Like any good parent, Rubedor won't go that far. They're all special, each in their own way.

But here in Hill and Lake land, we don't have to be so circumspect. We know that our four neighborhoods are highly unique, extremely unique even. They'd better be (right?), given the sky-high rents and property taxes we pay. Backing up that appraisal with facts, though, is something we rarely do.

The case is easily made, however, that Cedar-Isles-Dean is the unique of Minneapolis' 87 neighborhoods. The facts are irrefutable.

Chowen Place — truly unique.

For starters, Cedar-Isles-Dean is the only neighborhood in the city to encompass parts of three lakes — Cedar Lake and Lake of the Isles, of course, and also the north 10 percent or so of Bde Maka Ska (also known as Lake Calhoun). (It is true that a pond develops in Kenwood Park during spring snowmelt season or after heavy rains, but until the pond is given an actual name, it doesn't count.)

Then there are the street names. Cedar-Isles-Dean has the longest list of names — thirteen! — that occur nowhere else in Minneapolis:

- Dean Parkway *
- Dean Court *
- Depot Street *
- Benton Boulevard *
- Burnham Boulevard *
- Chowen Place *
- St. Louis Avenue
- St. Paul Avenue
- Sunset Boulevard
- Cedar Lane
- Cedar Lake Avenue
- Basswood Road
- Park Lane

The six asterisked Cedar-Isles-Dean streets are unique still: they're the only roadways with that name in the entire state of Minnesota. St. Louis Avenue almost got an asterisk, but there's a tiny stub of a street with that name out in Deephaven, with just one house.

Burnham Road exists nowhere else in Minnesota but has to be left off the list entirely because the eastern end of Burnham protrudes a few feet into Kenwood. But no matter. When you're as unique as Cedar-Isles-Dean, you don't have to fudge the truth.

Special recognition is due to the extraordinarily unique Chowen Place. It's the only street with that name in the entire world! Infrastructure geeks have been known to travel from across the globe just to photograph the Chowen Place street sign and add it to their life lists.

Four Triangles - a unique endowment.

Another area where no other Minneapolis neighborhood comes even close to Cedar-Isles-Dean's uniqueness: the number of its parks. More exactly, the number of its tiny Triangles.

As Parks historian David Smith told us during his February 25 CIDNA Speaker Series talk, the park system has 39 tiny parks — 37 Triangles, one Circle, and one Oval. Distributed evenly across the city, that's a little less than half a tiny park per neighborhood. Cedar-Isles-Dean, however, has been handsomely and uniquely endowed with four tiny parks: Alcott Triangle, Chowen Triangle, St. Louis Triangle, and West End Triangle.

At Smith's February 25 talk Rosanne Halloran, CIDNA's meticulous and diligent board secretary, was able to name and locate three of the Triangles. St. Louis Triangle, right at the intersection of Chowen Avenue and West Lake Street, was the elusive fourth one. Go to <minneapolisparcs.org> and type "Triangles & Other Tiny Parks" into the search bar to read Smith's histories of all four Cedar-Isles-Dean Triangles, plus Levin, Smith, Fremont, and Vineland Triangles.

While you're on the Park Board website, type "Southwest Service Area" into the search bar to learn more about the major project just getting started to develop Improvement Plans for all neighborhood parks in the southwest quadrant of the city. A SW Service Area Master Plan Project map is available there too.

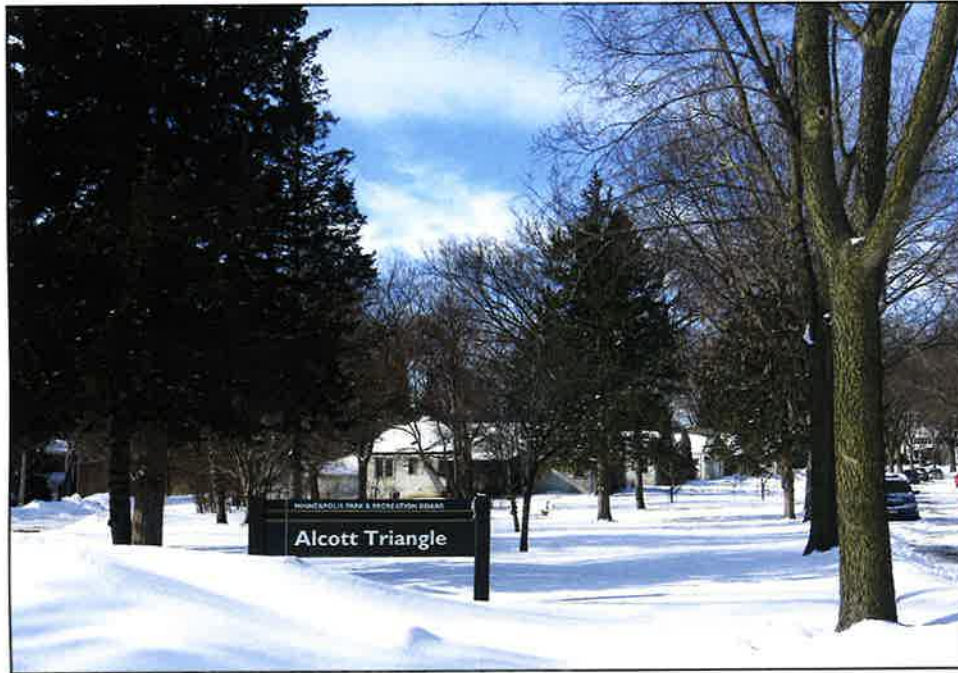
And a closing note to folks in Kenwood, East Isles,



Chowen Place is the only street in the world with that name -- the very definition of "unique." (Photo and caption: Michael Wilson.)

and Lowry Hill: while Cedar-Isles-Dean is demonstrably and unsurpassably unique, the other Hill and Lake neighborhoods are quite unique as well. Write an article for Hill & Lake Press and tell everyone why!

Unique Cedar-Isles-Dean has four Park Board 'Triangles.' Can you name and locate all of them?



Alcott Triangle -- St. Louis Ave. and West 29th St. Platted as a park in 1887. The Park Board turned down the city's offer to give them the Triangle in 1927, stating the property was "apparently of no use as a park." Alcott School stood just to the west of the Triangle from 1921 to 1940. Park board records do not indicate when the board officially accepted title to the land from the city.



Chowen Triangle -- Chowen Ave. and West 28th St. Alfred Dean and his brothers had donated most of Dean Parkway to the Park Board when in 1911 he made an offer the board couldn't refuse: two triangles for \$50. Chowen Triangle was curbed, graded and seeded, and a sidewalk was laid on one side in 1915. Trees and shrubs were planted in 1916.



St. Louis Triangle -- Intersection of Chowen Ave. and West Lake St. Transferred from the city council to the park board on May 19, 1927; officially named on November 18, 1931 for the intersecting street, St. Louis Avenue. (Photos and captions: Michael Wilson. Histories: David C. Smith, "Triangles & Other Tiny Parks," <minneapolisparcs.org>.)



West End Triangle -- West 28th St. and Cedar Lake Ave., overlooking Cedar Lake. On November 11, 1911, the Park Board accepted Alfred Dean's offer of two triangles platted as parks in the West End Addition and thus became the owner of West End Triangle and Chowen Triangle. The cost for not one, but two triangles? Fifty bucks.