

Political Update

By Nina Albano Vidmer

Re-elected in April, Anthony Calderone has served Forest Park as its Mayor since 1999, and was first elected as Forest Park Commissioner in 1995. A lifelong resident of Forest Park, he has a long track record of public service and a commitment to the Village, its residents, businesses, and organizations. "I'm pleased that a clear majority of the voters saw fit to return me back to the office that I served in the last eight years." Calderone says that residents have seen beyond the fray and nonsense of the recent campaign, and are pleased with his vision and execution of improvements for the community. "The proof is in the pudding, and I want to keep it going," he says. Much has changed since he began his tenure as mayor when, 50 percent of storefronts were empty. Now you're hard-pressed to find a vacancy in town – business is booming and property value is rising.

Plans for the future include a complete makeover of Roosevelt Rd, the town's major thoroughfare. "It needs a vision. Everything begins with a single thought. From there you work toward achieving your goals," says Calderone. Most of the south side of Roosevelt is occupied by recently redeveloped strip mall. The north side - worn, depressed and under utilized - is targeted for redevelopment.

Calderone touts the progress and is excited about the future. "We've built it and now people are coming. Madison street is doing fantastic. Young people are rehabbing homes at a staggering pace, with new construction and tear downs. The tax base easier than neighboring communities; we have our own identity in Forest Park.

Calderone's grandfather emigrated from Termini, Sicily around 1912, wound up ended up in Forest Park, and operated a Centrella Food Store at 7413 Madison St. up to and including the depression years. Calderone's father was also a lifelong resident of Forest Park. Born premature above the family grocery on the 2nd floor, he weighed only 1.5 lbs and was nestled in shoe box and warmed by an opened oven until he grew strong enough to be moved to a crib. "The roots are deep," says Calderone. In those days, Forest Park was split between Italians and Germans, and Calderone contends that there was always a connection with Melrose Park, probably because of the Italians who there and therefore the residents gravitated to each other.

Among the many organizations to which Calderone has served are St. Bernadine's Parish, Forest Park Little League, West Suburban Senior Services (formerly Proviso Council on Aging), Proviso Municipal League, West Central Municipal Conference (past president), Oak Leyden Developmental Services, Kiwanis International, Columbian and Lions Clubs. He is also a founding board member of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

With Over 30 years in the alarm and security industry, Calderone owns and operates Illinois Alarm Service, located in Forest Park. He has held a variety of posts with such professional organizations as the National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association, Illinois Electronic Security Association, Illinois Fire Inspectors Association, American Society of Industrial Security, and the Alarm Industry Research and Education Foundation.

Calderone's public service achievements have been recognized by such organizations as Department of the Army, United Way, Misericordia, Save a Life Foundation, Illinois Order Sons of Italy, Illinois Main Street, Governor's Home Town Awards, the Illinois Crime Commission, and the Triton College Foundation.

Anthony Calderone is married to Lois: they have 2 adult children - Augustino and Anthony Jr.

This column is written by Nina Albano Vidmer, executive director of the Italian American Political Coalition. To submit information, please fax to 708-401-0360 by the first of each month for consideration in the following month's issue.