

DALLAS Observer

Get Off My Lawn

Klyde Warren Park is Every Kind of Wonderful. No, Really. I Have Video.

By Jim Schutze Mon., Nov. 19 2012



So a couple weeks ago Angela Hunt calls me up and tells me I have to go down to the new deck park. Then maybe two days later my wife starts telling me I have to go down to the new deck park.

So Sunday I was about to embark on the very important task of disengaging the electric valves from my wife's pot watering system and mucking out all the scunge and slugs and stuff so the valves could be safely stored for winter, and I thought, "No."

No, I really needed to tear myself away from the valve-scunging job and go look at that new park. At least that way, the next time anyone brought it up, I could stop them and say, "I have seen it already, but thank you so much for thinking of stuff I should do."

We took the dogs. It was my idea, because one of them, Dorothy the healer-mix, bites. I like to make new friends when I walk, but I think they should prove their mettle first.

Here's the thing. This summer my wife and I were in Chicago, and we spent an afternoon in Grant Park. It is just wonderful. It's urban heaven, with every-which-way kind of people out there speaking a jillion languages and picnicking and kicking balls; it is humanity at its sunny best. And I remember thinking with a real knife in my heart that this could never happen in Dallas.

It has happened. I saw it yesterday. Klyde Warren Park is Grant Park. Yesterday the new deck park built above the sunken portion of the Woodall Rodgers Freeway between the Arts District and Uptown was every wonderful park I have ever seen anywhere in the world on a beautiful day, with all kinds of people and kids and dogs on leashes, big family picnics spread on quilts, food trucks as far as you could see, impromptu Frisbee football played by kids of all ages who didn't even know each other, and not a sour note in the air.

We walked up and down. It's big. It's crazy with little venues and spaces and things to do. Dorothy, the biter, bit no one. I even experimented, letting the leash out a bit when I passed people who looked like they might need a wake-up nip, but she turned her face up to me reproachfully, like she was saying, "Boss, please, this ain't that kinda joint."

The whole park, three blocks long from St. Paul Street to Pearl Street, was one long smile, like the beaming face of a buried giant, bright as a new penny, rising up out of the soil laughing. And a long time coming.

I wore the hatcam. I do that anyway when I take Dorothy into urban venues, mainly for litigation purposes. But when I got home I watched the choppy video several times, marveling. This is really a whole new moment in the life of the city. I think I was for this from the beginning, wasn't I?