

INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

VOICE



FUNDRAISER

Our Great Virtual Party

Robin Hochstatter

Who says you can't eat and drink together this season? While we were not under one roof for our annual Wine & Cheese Party, we partied together under one Zoom roof on December 5th at the first GIPNA sponsored Virtual Beer and Barbeque Tasting Fundraiser.

The event was hosted by our own talented neighbor, Bobbie Bolociuch, who was assisted by GIPNA'S Vice President, Kevin Haight. Jimmy Kimmel should seriously worry about these two on-air personalities.

Tickets sold out for this event as neighbors were excited for the opportunity to raise funds for our local charities in this difficult year. The pandemic wasn't going to stop this community from helping those in need.

Four courses of food and beer/cider were enjoyed by over 150 people online. The food was created by the chefs at JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop, Independence Pork (our neighborhood BBQ experts)

and Geja's. It took 54 lbs. of pork, 432 pretzel sticks, 720 beers, 144 ciders, and 20 beer growlers to feed this hungry bunch. Roberta and Ken Wilk, Sharon Sears and Kate Nolan were featured online tasters for the event.

Because GIPNA fans always love a raffle, we wanted to make sure we included this aspect in our virtual event. Raffle prizes included 3 buckets of microbrew beers donated by neighbors, gift certificates to many of our local restaurants and businesses, tickets to Brookfield Zoo and the Shedd Aquarium, a handcrafted cutting board by Master Johnny, a family outdoor portrait, tickets for comedy clubs in the area, handmade jewelry and ornaments by local artisans, a winter floral

arrangement from the Farmers Market Garden Center, and a spring garden consult and planters by our own April Bayne. As always, Roberta Wilk brought in many of the raffle items with her charming skills. While many raffle tickets were bought prior to the event, forty additional purchases were made while folks were enjoying the live webcast.

GIPNA would like to thank our Community Champion Sponsor Columbia Care Dispensary, Gold Sponsor State Rep. Jaime Andrade, Silver Sponsors Rover-Time Dog Walking & Pet Sitting, Red Stem Native Landscaping, Annette Held Landscape Design, plus Sponsors Wintrust Bank, Greg Shea, Al De Reu, and Veronica and Doug Lewis.

Continued on page 3



The regular GIPNA Board Meeting WILL NOT BE HELD in January.

The February meeting will be on Tues., February 2, 7 p.m. Join us online via Zoom. Meeting I.D.: 819 2958 6855, Password: GIPNA.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Due to the on-going coronavirus pandemic, some future events are cancelled for the foreseeable future. Please contact GIPNA (info@gipna.org) , IPAC (ipac.chicago@gmail.com), AFAC (athleticfieldpark.com), Friends of Murphy (friendsofmurphy.org), and CAPS (CAPS.017District@chicagopolice.org) for updated event information.

JANUARY

TUES., JAN. 5—The regular GIPNA Board Meeting WILL NOT BE HELD in January.

MON., JAN. 11—Athletic Field Advisory Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., go to athleticfieldpark.com for Zoom link.

TUES., JAN. 12—Friends of Murphy, 7 p.m. Go to friendsofmurphy.org for Zoom link.

WED., JAN. 13—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting, 7 p.m. via Zoom. Contact CAPS.017district@chicagopolice.org to make reservation.

FRIENDS OF MURPHY MATCH:
Dec. 15 to Jan. 31 (friendsofmurphy.org)

FEBRUARY

TUES., FEB. 2—GIPNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., online Zoom Meeting ID: 819 2958 6855, Password: GIPNA

MON., FEB. 8—Athletic Field Advisory Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., go to athleticfieldpark.com for Zoom link.

TUES., FEB. 9—Friends of Murphy, 7 p.m. Go to friendsofmurphy.org for Zoom link.

WED., FEB. 10—CAPS Beat 1732 Meeting, 7 p.m. via Zoom. Contact CAPS.017district@chicagopolice.org to make reservation.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Good Neighbors Shovel Their Sidewalks – Great Neighbors Help Those Who Can't

Sue Ryan

The Farmers' Almanac is calling for snow this winter. Your neighbors are calling for sidewalks free of snow. Please do your part this winter and keep your snow shovel handy. City regulations call for clearing your sidewalk soon after it stops snowing and slackers can be fined \$500.

A benefit of prompt snow removal is knowing that you did your part in keeping our walks clear of snow. If you wait, snow can melt during the sun's warmth and then freeze at night leading to the dreaded and dangerous black ice. Slipping on the ice is one for the most common accidents in



winter and leads to bruises, broken bones, and concussions.

If you need some extra steps and strength training or just want to be a thoughtful neighbor, think about clearing your neighbors' sidewalks especially if they are elderly or have mobility issues.

Don't have time, a shovel or don't want to go out in the cold? Try AJ Holub's Snow Removal Service. AJ is an eighth grader in

our neighborhood who started his shoveling business a few years ago and for a reasonable fee will make sure that your sidewalk is free of snow. If you are going out of town, make arrangements with AJ to shovel your walk if it snows. And once the winter is behind us and you don't like cutting grass, AJ does that too. Give him a call at 773-297-4389.

INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

VOICE

The Independence Park Community Voice is published by the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA), a 501(C)3 corporation.

This newsletter is for the Independence Park community. Please consider renewing your membership or joining GIPNA now. We need your support. Thank you.

Editorial: Sue Ryan
Photography: Robin Hochstatter and Cindy Schuch

Writers: Lorraine Antieau, Pat Clark, Terry Cunningham, Lis Drew, Robin Hochstatter, Amber Joiner-Hill, Jenny Kotz, Maureen Milota, Tia Pepper, Ellen Ryan, Sue Ryan, Jean Sabatka, Penny Schultz, Gretchen Siffring, and Jan Berger
Design/Production: Cindy Schuch

For submissions for March/April 2021 issue:

Editorial Deadline:
February 15, 2021

Advertising Deadline:
February 10, 2021

The editorial board reserves the right to edit all submissions. Errors in advertisements are the sole responsibility of the advertiser.

E-MAIL: INFO@GIPNA.ORG

MAIL: GIPNA, P.O. BOX 18184
CHICAGO IL 60618

WEBSITE: WWW.GIPNA.ORG

The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA) is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the Independence Park community by involving, informing, and encouraging people to participate in matters relating to the community, and by protecting the historical, social, cultural, and architectural character of the neighborhood.

This all-volunteer publication is made possible by the creative voices of our community and the generous support of area advertisers.

Join GIPNA on Facebook

Check out the GIPNA Facebook page for news, alerts, and conversation with your neighbors. Post your own comments to get the word out on your activities and announcements. To find the page and like it, search for GIPNA: Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association.

GIPNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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3800 Irving Park Road - Linda Lehman
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3600, 3700 Monticello - Pat Clark
3800 Monticello - Barbara Shaw
3900 Monticello - Cindy Schuch
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3800 Ridgeway - Karen Fontanetta
3900 Ridgeway - John & Sang Kuczura
3800 Springfield - Roseann Seablom

COMMUNICATION

E-Blasts to GIPNA Members

All GIPNA members who have access to email should be receiving e-blasts twice a month. The emails are compiled by GIPNA and feature such news as announcements of events in the community, crime reports, and notices of meetings.

If you're a member in good standing and are not receiving the blasts, send an email to us at info@gipna.org. We'll sign you up so that you don't miss any more neighborhood announcements.

IN MEMORIAM

The Passing of Our Neighbor John M. Fusco

We regret to inform you of the passing of our dear neighbor, Dr. John M. Fusco, PhD, on November 4.

John was a cherished GIPNA board member and devoted volunteer. His calming smile was present at nearly all of our Farmers Markets where both he and his partner, Florian Pasilio, were integral parts of the market setup and managing the GIPNA tent.

As a GIPNA board member, John's kind and sensitive perspective and input on community matters were valued by all of us on the board.

We extend our deep sympathy

Virtual Party Continued from page 1
Liz Drew chaired the sponsorship committee with help from Jodie Bargeron who scored our new Community Champion Sponsor this year.

The other team members that put this innovative concept together included Dickie Nichols, Andy and Kristen Holub, Chris Cunningham, Adam Guillame, Jason Siffring, Tom Whitworth, Eileen Garcia, Robin Hochstatter, John Kuczura, Amy Mastroianni, Chris and Katie Strong and Kristin Walker. A special shout out to Jackie Bravo, the live coordinator



to all of John's extended family and many close friends whom he shared his love with.

We particularly send condolences to John's beloved partner, Florian, who lovingly cared for John during these last two years. Our hearts go out to you, Florian. Your neighbors and community are here to support you with anything you may need.

of the broadcast and Cindy Schuch who handled the event's technical aspects.

All proceeds from the event will benefit GIPNA, neighborhood organizations such as Murphy School, Lydia Home, Irving Park Food Pantry, Openlands, Carlson Community Services and other community organizations. At press time, the total amount raised was close to \$15,000 before expenses.

Look for information soon on our next Virtual Wine and Dine in the spring of 2021 featuring Hearth & Crust.

COMMUNITY

Have an Idea for the Newsletter?

If you want to see something in the neighborhood highlighted or just want to provide feedback, reach out to us at newsletter@gipna.org.

Are They Learning Anything?

*Penny Shultz,
Fourth Grade Teacher,
Murphy School*

I emerged from the classroom, exhausted, and rushed out to meet my coworker in the hall. We looked at each other, and proclaimed through our masks in unison, "That was excruciating!" The first few days of remote teaching was rough. Imagine teaching 26 people to log onto a certain website, navigate through opening a document, then expect them to insert an image from the web while learning an entirely new math concept, say, long division. Will we ever be able to get through this?

On this particular day, our team decided that we would make it easy to answer by having the students highlight the correct answers. After a 45-minute circus of teaching, demonstrating, repeating, and encouraging all of them to click, drag over, and find the highlight icon, each student could answer the question. AAAARRRGH! How in the world did we expect to teach the regular fourth grade curriculum if highlighting took 45 minutes?

Thank goodness for the learning curve. Fast forward ten weeks. My class, now 30 students, is learning about text structures, Native American diversity, landforms and composite numbers today while using computer skills adeptly as a second nature. If they are having difficulty, a student will present her work to me or go to a breakout room so another student can help. If my presentation is hard to read,



a student will ask me to enlarge my screen and split his screen so he can see the presentation and his own work at the same time.

As I said to all the parents at our student led conferences, I am extremely proud of these students! Not only are they learning what every fourth grader is expected to learn, they have become successful at using technology in a way that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. In addition, the class has about a 95% attendance rate. What if your boss told you, "We will be having meetings with 30 other people from 8:00 to 11:45 a.m., then 1:00-2:15 p.m. every

work day, and I expect you to have your camera on so that you can respond to questions. While you are in the meeting, you will be creating reports on all that you are learning." Could you imagine having that kind of stamina?!

In answer to the initial question, "Yes! They are learning quite a bit!" Besides the academic content and computer skills, the students are also learning many social and emotional skills. Murphy School has a curriculum for social/emotional learning called Responsive Classroom. The basic tenet is that students need to be taught expected

behaviors in the same way they are taught anything else. The beginning of the year is important to teach children how to be caring, assertive, responsible, empathetic, and self-controlled (we call it CARES). If students make a mistake, we practice the correct behavior, just the same as reteaching the concept of $16 \times 3 = 48$, for instance. It is a great strategy for creating a learning team. Recently, one of the students had something traumatic happen during class. In the few minutes it took for me to respond and dismiss the other students, many of the kids had written helpful and encouraging advice in the chat:

"Take a deep breath! You can get through this."

"You are strong! We are with you."

"Find a safe place and think about positive things."

"We care about you."

In these difficult times, I feel like every one of us could learn from my students!

TALENTED NEIGHBOR

Is Bobbie O'Connor Leading a Double Life?

Sue Ryan

Did you know that our very own Bobbie O'Connor is actually a seductive sister-in-law? Who knew that the former GIPNA president, prodigious volunteer, funny neighbor and all around good soul was leading a double life? I was totally in the dark when I heard this rumor. How does she pull it off? I had always pegged Bobbie as a salt of the earth kind of woman. If you want to unravel this mystery then head over to Show Girl Production's new comedy web series 'Where Did Clive Hide?'. The six-part series, according to the show's publicist "takes place after the mysterious death of a famous film director. Seventeen unconventional women, who loved, hated and/or were wronged by him, seek atonement at his Zoom funeral."

Not only will you see Bobbie in a different light and laugh (and who doesn't need some laughter these days) you will also help support local actors who have struggled during the pandemic. You can see the series at www.chicagoshowgirls.us.



**Bobbie O'Connor
as the seductive
sister-in-law**

For more info: subscribe at
ChicagoShowGirls.us

PARKWAYS

GIPNA's New Tree Steward Wants to Give You a Tree

Lorraine Antieau

Hello, neighbors, did you know that trees not only beautify our neighborhood, but they can also increase the value of your property? My name is Lorraine Antieau, and my husband and I have lived on the 3800 block of Hamlin since 1993. After 40 years as a social worker, I recently retired, and as I approached this new phase of my life, I looked forward to getting more involved in our neighborhood, as well as to pursuing another lifelong interest: nature and conservation. To that end, I enrolled in the summer TreeKeepers course through Openlands, and learned how to care for and advocate for trees in our urban environment.



When the previous tree steward for GIPNA, Katie Miller, moved out of the area, she asked me to consider taking her spot, and it was the right challenge at the right moment. Openlands, an organization dedicated to connecting Chicagoans to nature, offers neighborhoods in the Chicago area grants and support to increase the number of trees on their streets. In 2020, Openlands planted 21 free native trees in parkways in our neighborhood, and we have the opportunity to apply for the program again in 2021! There will be planting days

COURTESY OF AN OPENLANDS TREEPLANTERS GRANT AND GIPNA

FREE NATIVE PARKWAY TREES

Up to 40 Independence Park residents will receive a free tree (est. value \$200)

TREE RECIPIENTS AGREE TO:
 VOLUNTEER AT TREE PLANTING
 WATER THEIR TREE WEEKLY
 PROVIDE YEAR-ROUND MULCH

Interested? Questions?
 Send your name, street address and phone number to:
 GIPNAtrees@gmail.com by January 8, 2021
 (first come, first served)



in spring and fall, and we need at least 10 homeowners to qualify for an Openlands planting day. The recipients agree to water and mulch the young tree for at

least 3 years. Please email me at GIPNAtrees@gmail.com if you are interested. I'm happy to be on board and look forward to working with you!

Are you a GIPNA member? Join today!

Pay at www.gipna.org or mail in the form below with a check. For information, send an e-mail to: membership@gipna.org



MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Must be 18 yrs old) Fill in this form, and send with check, payable to GIPNA, to: **GIPNA P. O. Box 18184 Chicago, IL 60618**

Check amount enclosed:

- Single** \$10 **Family** \$20
- Business** \$15
- Lifetime** \$100 per person

Check here if a new member

Annual Dues enclosed: \$

Tax Deductible Donation for GIPNA: \$

Total of enclosed check: \$

Check if you would like to volunteer for events. (GIPNA is an all-volunteer association.)

PLEASE PRINT: DATE

NAME #1

NAME #2

ADDRESS

Check here if new member, new to the neighborhood.

PHONE #1

PHONE #2

E-MAIL #1

E-MAIL #2

Winter Sowing

Terry Cunningham

While the weather outside is frightful, it's a great time to try something delightful for your 2021 garden. Have you heard of winter sowing? It's a simple and inexpensive way to add new plants to your garden by starting seeds outdoors in January, with the help of a mini greenhouse, usually a gallon milk jug. While this is most commonly done with seeds requiring a period of cold stratification (i.e., freezing and thawing), you can also sow tender seeds, including tomatoes.

You can certainly sprinkle many types of seeds in your garden in the fall and spring, then let nature take its course. I like winter sowing because I easily know exactly what is new — since it's isolated in the greenhouse — so I don't yank out the newbies during my occasional spring/summer weeding frenzies. You will also have greater germination since outdoor critters won't be dining on your seeds and the wind won't blow them into your neighbor's garden.

You can also start seeds indoors, however this requires a bit of set up and a process for hardening the seedlings that involves moving them around outside to acclimate them to the sun. Plus, improper indoor conditions can lead to soil borne viruses that cause damping off where the stems of the seedlings wither and die. With winter sowing, your seedlings are automatically acclimated to the sun and are much stronger.

What type of seeds can you winter sow? Look on the outside of your seed package for these

keywords: self-sowing, direct sow outside in the fall, direct sow outside in early spring, cold stratification, cold hardy, or perennial. I've winter sown delphiniums, yarrow, coneflower, sweet alyssum, lupine and dianthus with great results. You can also winter sow veggies such as beets, broccoli, cabbage, chard, carrots, kale, radishes, and spinach. You can also use this method for tender annuals by setting your greenhouses out in March or April. This spring I'll sow marigolds, zinnias and cosmos, as well as tomatoes, cucumbers and zucchini.

How does it work?

First, make a tiny greenhouse. Gallon milk jugs work well but any small container with a transparent or translucent top can work too (2-liter soda bottles, old food containers). You will need to poke holes in both the bottoms for drainage and tops for ventilation of your containers. For milk jugs I've used a screwdriver that I heat up over the gas flame on our stove to poke the holes (lesson learned: plastic will melt on this screwdriver so use one that has seen better days). After you've poked, you need to create a hinged cover: just below the base of the milk jug handle, cut almost all the way around the jug but leave about 1 inch uncut to serve as a hinge.

Next, add seed starting soil and water. Sow your seeds on top of the soil, pressing very gently down on the soil. Tiny seeds do not need to be covered with soil. Larger seeds can be pushed down further and lightly covered. Close up your new mini greenhouse and shut with duct tape. Do not put the cap back on the milk jug as the opening provides additional

ventilation and allows moisture from rain and snow inside. Set your jugs outside in an area protected from heavy winds and away from the playful antics of dogs, cats and creatures of the night. Even better, set them inside a very low, translucent plastic container with drainage holes so they have more support. Don't forget to label your plants using a permanent marker otherwise come springtime you'll be dealing with a bunch of mystery seedlings.

Seedlings will sprout in the spring while temps are still freezing. When temps are above freezing, open the tops of the greenhouses during the day to give your babies some air, but be sure to close them up overnight. Check the soil to see if it needs moisture; if so, water gently. When your seedlings are tall enough to reach the top of your container and the temperatures are suitable, it's time to transplant them to their new homes.

Interested in more info? Just Google winter sowing, you can find tons of great info online!

Lawndale Home Stars in Beer Commercial

Pat Clark

Anne and Mark Watkins's home was the locus for a Modelo Beer commercial after sunset on November 18. The film crew, headed by Indy Park photographer and film director Chris Strong, created a magic Christmas snow globe scene with fiberfill snow drifts, colorful lights on the porch columns and around the front door, a Christmas tree inside the house, and sparkly snow. The ribbon topped box of Modelo Beer was perched on the front porch awaiting its happy gift recipients.

It was fun and amazing to watch the film crew create such a wondrous scene on an otherwise ordinary Wednesday night. You can watch the commercial at <https://vimeo.com/488537595>



Henry Reichert

Ellen Ryan

Henry Reichert lives in the 3700 block of Lawndale in one of the many typical gracious two flats we see in our neighborhood. But his life story is far from typical.

Henry is of German descent, but was born in Liebling, Romania, a town comprised mostly of those of German descent. He was nine years old when he and his parents left Romania in 1943 because of World War Two. This author notes that in 1944, more than 2,000 primarily German-speaking people fled Liebling due to the advancing Soviet army.

Henry was not too sad to leave Romania because he was young and it was an opportunity for him to see a new place. He and his family travelled for five and a half weeks by horse and wagon to Austria. They settled in a village close to Salzburg where he attended school and had many friends. The instruction was in Austrian, but Henry was able to understand it as the language is very close to German. However, making ends meet in Austria at that time was difficult. The cost of living was high and the wages were low. Henry's sister was living in Chicago and, fortunately, the corporation for which she worked sponsored Henry's family to come to the United States. So, after living

in Austria for ten years, the family came to this country.

Henry was excited to arrive here at age 20. He got his first job at Heick Diecast, followed by a job at a foundry and then as a maintenance man for the Bank of America. He was always appreciative of having a job and enjoyed his work. Henry also served his country in the Korean War from 1957 to 1959, spending the second year in South Korea.

Henry met his wife Katharina at one of the many German dances that were held in Chicago. He knew she was the one for him the minute they met and that she would be his soulmate. They dated for about ten months. But there was a BIG problem! She lived south of the city and he lived on the northside. Henry didn't want to travel to her place in the winter, so what to do? Get married of course, which they did in 1962. They initially lived near Loyola University and later moved to Independence Park where they raised their son and daughter. They were married for 55 years, but sadly Katharina passed away in February of 2018.

Henry has spent all of his adult life in Chicago. He loves his city and the USA. Every once in a while he thinks about the beautiful mountains of Austria but only for a moment. He hasn't been back to Europe since 1999. Any complaints about his home? Well, like most of us, he said he could do without the winters.



Be Safe

Pat Clark

There has been a recent uptick in catalytic converter thefts in the neighborhood. If you see someone trying to steal a catalytic converter from a car, do not confront them as they are known to be armed. Immediately call 911 and report what is going on and give the address. If possible, write down the license plate and description of the offenders and their car and what direction they were headed.

Ally to Co-Conspirator

Amber Joiner-Hill

Just seeing the title of a piece in the last newsletter, "Let's Talk About Race," immediately struck me because in our neighborhood, I have often felt a sense of "color-blindness" from others. But after the murder of George Floyd, more Americans have accepted the fact that racism was never a thing of the past and remains alive and well today. Black Lives Matter lawn signs suddenly popped up and there are semi-regular protests scheduled in a neighboring ward. Many of the white people who communicate opposition to racism in these ways call themselves an "ally."

Supportive actions can include donating money to civil rights organizations, shopping at a Black-owned business, or wearing a statement T-shirt. However, what if allies took it a few steps further and decided to be a

co-conspirator? Dr. Bettina Love penned this term for white people who risk their power solely to increase the privileges of Asian, Black, Latino, and Native American people. Co-conspirators take real risks - professionally, socially, and sometimes even physically - to protect others. What can this practically look like?

Use your white privilege at work to promote the work of your colleagues of color, even if it jeopardizes your chances of getting a promotion. Regardless of the professional setting, most employees of color are regularly overlooked for advancement opportunities simply because of a higher ups' discomfort with racial diversity. You can use your (unearned) privilege to help someone else break through institutional barriers. When someone in your family makes a racist remark, don't brush it off as "Oh, that's just Aunt Karen, or Uncle Kyle." Correct and educate them in the moment, even if that relationship ultimately ends. If you're going to marches for racial justice, create a barrier between your Black peers and the police by walking on the perimeter of the group.

Power is not an equally distributed resource in this world. In order for few to have it, it needs to be stripped from many others. I encourage you to be bold and confident enough to use some of your power to actively resist racism and make clear to your peers that you won't stand for it.

Doc on the Block

Jan Berger

It all started with "I have the wrong house in the wrong neighborhood that I believe you will love". This was the comment made by a realtor on Mother's Day 1993. This statement led to my being part of the Independence Park community for the last 27 years. It has been an amazing experience. I must admit, Independence Park was not a community that I knew prior to my introduction by the realtor. My response was similar to many others, "where?" It was a drive-by neighborhood on my way to the expressway. I was wrong. For me, Independence Park brought three wonderful surprises that have had a significant impact on my life.

First is the neighbors. I was initially concerned that I would be a stranger in a strange land. I had lived either in Lakeview or Boystown most of my adult life. As a gay woman, I was concerned that I would be an outsider living with another woman in this neighborhood. As Toyo, my next door neighbor said to me "I don't care what you do or who you live with, just take care of your lawn." I quickly found that this was a neighborhood where kindness and friendliness mattered, not your race, religion or sexual orientation. In addition to the open acceptance, as fate would have it, on the first day I moved into the house, I heard someone shout out my name from across the street. It turned out that my new neighbor was Bridget Rae, a woman that I had worked with years earlier. Quickly, I met my neighbors through Christmas caroling, wild and crazy progressive dinners, Halloween and Boxer Day



parties. Through the years, this neighborhood has supported each other through good times and bad. We have gone through breakups and divorces, illness and death. We even have gone through weddings. As Robin and I were planning our wedding, we could think of no one better to officiate than neighbor friends, Miguel and Delphine Ruiz.

The second surprise for me was the integration of the neighborhood and my career. Independence Park was not only my residence, but it was also part of a community in which I practiced medicine. I trained in pediatrics and spent a number of years early in my career practicing general pediatrics. Many of my patients lived in the neighborhood. I have seen these children grow to be wonderful adults. Many of them have children of their own. One day, Robin and I were playing tennis at Independence Park and a woman kept staring at us. She finally came over to speak with us. It turned out that I had been her children's pediatrician. She had recently adopted another child and she wanted this little girl to meet me. Another time, I was leaving Jewel and a young woman ran up to me and threw her arms around me. At first, I was a bit taken back. After a few minutes I recognized her as a former patient that had lived on Central Park Ave. She shared with me that she was now training to be a pediatrician and that I was one of the things that motivated her to

take on this life journey. Wow.

The last surprise is the wonderful location of our neighborhood. The real estate phrase describing the importance of "location, location, location" holds true for me. We are centrally located near the highway and the Blue Line. The last twenty years has required me to travel extensively for my job. When I left pediatrics, I began a career that allowed me to impact healthcare both here and internationally. For eleven years, I was the Chief Medical Officer for Caremark and CVS Health. During that time, I not only worked on behalf of both individuals and employer clients, but I have had the unique opportunity to testify in front of Congress several times on behalf of consumer health. After leaving CVS Health, I began a consulting company that has given me the chance to consult in places such as Israel, Saudi Arabia, France, Chile and many other countries. Needless to say, having the Blue Line so close to home has been a lifesaver. Prior to the pandemic, it was not unusual that on Thursday evenings as I was returning home from some city or country that I would jump off the plane, take the Blue Line and meet Robin at Hearth and Crust for our version of home cooking.

Over the last 27 years, we have seen lots of changes in the neighborhood, but one thing has not changed, the welcoming friendly, supportive neighbors. Although COVID has been tough, the one gift is that we have gotten to know many of our new neighbors as we are home more and walk the neighborhood. Please feel free to wave and say hello. For those I do not yet know, I look forward to getting to know you and for those that I have shared a drink, a meal or even just a smile, thanks. I have traveled all over the world but there is no place like home.



EDUCATION

Friends of Murphy's 4th Annual Murphy Match Fundraiser Is Here!

Gretchen Siffring

We might be physically distant, but the spirit of togetherness runs deep within us. Now more than ever, Murphy School needs your help to Fund our Future. A very generous donor is excited to match, dollar for dollar, all donations up to \$10,000! We are calling on you to help turn \$10,000 into \$20,000 for the students and teachers of Murphy Elementary. As you finalize your end of the year giving or plan for 2021, please consider this wonderful opportunity to make a positive impact in your community. The program will run from December 15 through January 31. Please visit www.friendsofmurphy.org to donate and find out more information on how your contribution has and will make a difference.





IRVING PARK COMMUNITY

Food Pantry

COMMUNITY

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Liz Drew

Even before the pandemic hit, I knew that the Independence Park community was special, filled with generous and caring people. And what I've seen over the past several months has certainly reinforced that. This year as so many individuals and families found themselves struggling to meet basic needs, cornerstone institutions like the Irving Park Community Food Pantry have been busier than ever adapting their models to keep their programming safe and accessible. Craig Shutt, the Pantry's Publicity and Special Events Coordinator, reminded me their motto is "neighbors helping neighbors"—they relied on community volunteers and donations to stay open and serve as many as 200 families a week during their busiest times this year. They expect the number of clients to increase again throughout the winter as families are struggling again without federal relief. If you are able to donate or volunteer regularly for the weekly food distribution, please visit their website for more info: www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org. Hopefully by the time this is published there will be new

stimulus funding, but if not, one way to help our neighbors is to write to Congressional leadership and urge them to finalize aid for families and businesses impacted by the pandemic.

If you live in the 60641 or 60618 zip codes and need food assistance, you can visit the Pantry during their open hours, from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. on Wednesdays, and the second Tuesday of each month, from 6-7 p.m. The Greater Chicago Food Depository (www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/) has information about pantries outside those zip codes.

In addition to supporting long-standing programs in our neighborhoods, Chicagoans also launched mutual aid collectives in response to the pandemic that use social media and other tools to crowdfund, identify, and respond to individual needs like rent or food. You can find an active community on the Irving Park Mutual Aid Network's Facebook page. Another initiative worth highlighting is the Love Fridge Chicago: www.thelovefridge.com. You can drop off or access foodstuffs and hygiene items at these "community fridges," at your convenience. The closest (for now) fridge to us is behind Honey Butter Fried Chicken on Elston. There are so many different ways to help our neighbors right now, and every action is meaningful, from shoveling snow for a neighbor to volunteering at the Pantry to cleaning up our parks to supporting our small businesses to sharing what resources you can. If you have ideas about how we can continue to embody the spirit of "neighbors helping neighbors," please share with us on Facebook!

COMMUNITY

Foster Dogs - a Win Win

Tia Pepper

My family began to foster dogs in the summer of 2019. We first fostered one dog from PAWS, a non-profit rescue. Our busy lives didn't allow us to foster anytime besides summer, but when COVID-19 halted everyone's lives in mid-March 2020, we finally had time.

After looking into fostering again, I realized availability of dogs was scarce. Many other families found themselves with enough time on their hands to give a pet copious amounts of attention. After researching new rescues, I found Paws and Affect Animal Rescue. Paws and Affect was one of the few rescues that had many dogs available to foster. The rescue is located in Gurnee, Illinois, and they rescue animals from Georgia that are stray or that were in kill shelters. They partner with a rescue in Georgia that transports the animals from Georgia to Illinois



every other week, so families can care for them. Regular vans hold around 50 dogs and foster families give workers time to find permanent families.

My family has fostered many times from Paws and Affect and we love the people that run the rescue. Most recently we have fostered a momma and three of her puppies from Chicago Canine Rescue. The puppies required lots of care and attention, but they were the most adorable things ever. Fostering dogs is a lot of work, but since our family cannot commit to having a dog due to our busy schedules, fostering is a great option that leaves us with amazing memories of great dogs.

COMMUNITY

Help Wanted

Do you live on the 3800 or 3900 block of Central Park Avenue? GIPNA needs a block rep, who will deliver the newsletter to their neighbors six times a year. The newsletters are delivered to your front porch and then you distribute them to your neighbors. What do you get in the way of pay? You get a free GIPNA membership, an invitation to our annual Volunteer Thank You Party (held at the Alps Restaurant in a normal year), and appreciation for your volunteerism. If you are a student, delivering the newsletters can go toward your required number of service hours. If you are interested or have a question, please email info@gipna.org

And GIPNA thanks Vania Bandelli, who has been the stalwart newsletter Central Park Ave. deliverer for years and years. Thank you, Vania!

Talented Neighbor

Five Questions with Integrative and Functional Medicine Practitioner Maureen M. Milota, APRN, NP-C, Founder of Great Lakes Integrative Medicine

Maureen, how long have you been a resident of Independence Park?

I've loved being a member of this awesome community and beautiful neighborhood for 21 years.

Tell us about your journey as a medical professional.

I've had more than twenty years of healthcare experience and have seen firsthand the limitations of how modern healthcare is delivered. That's what inspired me to open my own integrative and functional medicine practice. My mother



was a pharmacist and my grandfather was a physician who worked with Native Americans; they both sparked my interest in a holistic, non-traditional approach to wellness.

What exactly is integrative and functional medicine?

Dr. Andrew Weil, an American physician thought by many to be the founder (or grandfather) of integrative medicine calls integrative medicine, "the intelligent combination of

conventional and alternative medicine. It's healing-oriented medicine that takes account of the whole person, emphasizes lifestyle, and is willing to use all remedies."

The Institute of Functional Medicine defines it as an "individualized, patient-centered, science-based approach that empowers patients and practitioners to work together to address the underlying causes of disease and promote optimal wellness."

For me, it's the best of both worlds: a return to an era of medicine where visits are not rushed, the focus is on the patient's unique needs, and the healthcare provider partners with you on a healing plan.

How has your practice changed during the pandemic?

Like everyone else, I've had to pivot. After the landlord closed

the office building where my practice was based, I shifted my focus to in-home and telemedicine appointments. As a family nurse practitioner, I continue to see patients from infants to the elderly. What's changed during COVID is the number of patients seeking help for anxiety, depression, ADHD, fatigue, brain fog, poor sleep and weight gain.

Any tips for those of us seeking to get healthier in 2021?

Pay equal attention to your mental and physical wellness. Consider daily meditation. Try to get more sleep, spend less time sitting, and do something active every day. Consider a detoxification program to reset your metabolism and boost your immunity.

For a free introductory call, contact Maureen at maureen@greatlakesim.com

Remembrance of Someone Special

Jean Sabatka

This is a profile of a celebrity who lived at 3908 N. Central Park Ave. Born Mary Ann Grochowina and through marriage to a Chicago police lieutenant became Mary Ann McMorrow.

Her story started on Central Park Ave. with my sister Joan, who was eleven months younger than Mary Ann and her close friend. Since I was Joan's younger sister by nearly ten years, I was brought along on their escapades. I remember them always arguing about something. One day Mary Ann's mother heard them arguing and told her



daughter, "Mary Ann, you should become a lawyer." I also remember one day when I was four years old I joined the big kids kicking cans in the alley. One skinny boy, about 16, was the leader of all the kids. He grew up to become chairman of the House and Ways Committee. He was Dan Rostenkowski. He and Mary Ann were first cousins.

In 1953 Mary Ann was in the graduating class president of the Loyola University School of Law and Associate Editor of the Law Review. She was the only female in

her class and her fellow students voted her in as president.

My sister was already married and no longer lived on Central Park when one night in October 1955 Mary Ann came to our door. She was a State's Attorney on the Schuessler Brothers murder case and a few hours before had witnessed their sexually mutilated bodies. She was distraught. The next day when I went to my Division Room Class, a fellow student told the story about her next door neighbor boys who were found murdered. They were John Schuessler, age 13, and his brother Anton, age 11, and their friend, Robert Peterson, age 14.

In 1976 Mary Ann was elected judge in the Cook County Circuit

Court, and a decade later elected to the Illinois Appellate Court. She was the first woman to lead the Appellate Court's Executive Committee. In 1992 she was elected to the Illinois Supreme Court and in 2002 she was the first woman Chief Justice in Illinois. In 2007 Mary Ann was inducted Laureate of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois – Area of Government and Law, which is the state's highest honor. She has one daughter. Mary Ann died February 23, 2013.



Solar Power

Jenny Kotz

In February 2020 we embarked on a path towards solar power. Both my husband and I have always been interested in what the average person can do to minimize their carbon footprint and live a greener life. Although we each have our passions (Todd is an ardent composter and avid biker; I steer more towards reduce, reuse, recycle), green power was an achievable and intriguing option to both of us. With a nudge from a friend who attended a seminar, we met with a Certasun representative, Paul Doughty, and received a plan, proposal, and plenty of education that continues to this day.

The process is fairly simple, although we chose to proceed in the midst of a global pandemic and international lockdown, so that added a month or two. After signing, we received an engineered plan. Technicians accessed our roof framing for inadequacies, any electrical code concerns (our house is circa 1908), and the condition of our roof. After we addressed any items that were flagged (a few open junction boxes in the attic; verification of the presumed lifespan of our roof), the engineering department completed permit documents. By early summer, with a permit in hand, we were ready for installation, which was completed in one day. We have a meter on the exterior and a power feedback to the electrical panel in the house. We have an app that provides real-time data as well as



historical data. It took a few weeks for the city electrical inspection to happen, so the equipment was only eye candy until the end of July. After the inspection, we were live and producing our own electrical power. We receive net metering credits from both Constellation and ComEd (it was surprisingly easy to connect with representatives at the utilities and apply for net metering). It took about 3 months for credits to begin to appear fully, so we are just now able to analyze the impact, which appears to be a net metering credit on average, of about \$70/month to us. Our roof pitch is south facing at 27 degrees so there's said to minimal impact to production due to snow. A light dusting should be zero impact. A 15" storm will lower production briefly, until the warmth of the panels, the angle of our roof, and the sun help the snow slide off.

We are sized to produce 5,693 kWh a year. Although there's not a standard cap, ComEd calculates each residence based on typical past year use, and other variables, and limits the sizing of a system to offset up to 110% of potential use. We are sized to about 98%. Our historical use is less than most. Average is closer to 10,000

kWh/year, which varies due to location, house size, and general use patterns. Certasun guarantees a minimum 90% production average over 5 years. On December 9, we produced 17.7 kWh, used 12.9 kWh, and sent 4.8 kWh back to the grid. Production varies by the day, however. In the month of November, we were 93.4% solar. We produced 382.4 kWh, used 409.3 kWh, and subsequently needed 26.9kWh from the grid. In October, we were 102% solar, and in September, we were 96.7% solar. However, in August we were only 80% solar. This summer, we had one extra household member, and kids and parents that were home full-time, which isn't typical in a normal year. I haven't compared our electrical usage for 2020 against the past, but it's fair to assume it's been considerably higher this year. Ideally, we'll return to more typical consumption by next summer.

We purchased the system, in lieu of leasing. The gross cost was \$15,900. Between a tax credit and the Illinois Shines rebate, the total net cost will become \$5,400. Most systems start closer to a gross \$25K. Rebates and credits are based on size of service. We were

able to finance part of the cost at 0% to help start the process. The overall anticipated timeframe to recap our investment is 6-7 years. There are basic utility fees of about \$15/month that we will always have to pay. The system is warranted for 25 years and we have the capacity to expand on the house or garage, as well, in the future. Each added panel (about \$1,500/ea.) increases the capacity by 5%. When we eventually need to re-roof, Certasun will remove, store, and reinstall the panels. We will need to pay the labor cost, however.

The Illinois Shines rebate program expires at the end of this year and is due for a re-vote on 1/13/21. A majority vote from state reps will continue the program. We are in block 1 out of 3. Currently block 3 offers a rebate of \$0.6725/kWh. When this block is maxed out, the rebate will end without a majority vote from state reps to renew. Here's info on the program:

<https://illinoisshines.com/about/>
<https://certasun.com/illinois-solar-incentives/>

Purchasing a solar panel system is a long-term investment. We are really happy we made the plunge and are excited to lessen our dependency on the grid, as well as teach our children about cleaner power and a lesser impact to the environment. If you want further info, don't hesitate to reach out to us. We've been happy with the knowledge and experience from Certasun, which helped us take the leap forward. Feel free to reach out to Paul with technical questions as well (mobile 773.320.5119).

TALENTED NEIGHBOR

Art Corner Featuring Owen Mastroianni



Sue Ryan

Owen is a talented artist and the son of Chris and Amy Mastroianni. Owen is a senior at Lane Tech High School and has been drawing since he could hold a crayon. At Lane he has taken classes in drawing, ceramics, metalsmithing and sculpture and is busy putting together a portfolio for college applications. Although he is applying to art schools, he is also interested in International Relations and Linguistics having taken four years of Japanese.

If you would like your child's art featured in the newsletter, please send a photo of the artwork and a brief description of your budding artist to newsletter@gipna.org.



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District Office Info

3007 W. Irving Park Rd, Suite A-Front Office

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And the Spirit Award for the Most Festive Holiday Block Goes to...

The neighbors on the 3900 block of Dakin coordinated their holiday spirit with lighted arches over the sidewalks. The colorful display brought joy and smiles to GIPNA residents. One resident said she felt like royalty walking under the arches. Thank you, Dakin neighbors for brightening up the night during the holidays. We hope there will be a repeat performance next year!

