

INDEPENDENCE PARK COMMUNITY

VOICE



COMMUNITY

Ooh La La! A Record-Breaking Night of Wine and Cheese

Patti Kimbel

It was quite a 'Night in Paris' to remember. A French-themed party highlighted the event from the French wines and cheeses to the Eiffel Tower table décor at Color Club. It was another record breaker with over 175 attendees this year. This included both old timers and newbies from the neighborhood (or just new to the event). We were delighted with the showing of a number of our political representatives; for some this was their first year in attendance! Thanks to Alderwoman Ruth Cruz, State Senator Rob Martwick, and State Representative Lindsey LaPointe who sponsored and attended the event. Congressman Mike Quigley also stopped by!

The Color Club ballroom provided the perfect backdrop for a second year in a row. The GIPNA Board is grateful to owners Abby Monroe and Josh Dihle who



charitably donated the space for our use. If you haven't been to Color Club before, you can enjoy performances every week of comedians, musicians, and artists. Yet, Abby reported that it remains their mission to provide the space to help support local neighborhood causes. Supporting the cause of more fun, Abby also generously opened up the first floor Tavern for us this year for those revelers who still had the energy for an after party.

The French wines were selectively paired with delicious

truffles from our local chocolatier Katherine Duncan of Katherine Anne Confections. All of her truffles were generously donated for our event which included a citrus truffle ganache, raspberry champagne truffle ganache, and Figgy Baby truffle with fig and cognac. If you are wanting more—or to try her delicious drinking chocolate—you can visit her new storefront on Irving Park Road. We also enjoyed a mead to sample. Second City Meadery donated a case of the Fake Door Mead black currant and blueberry mead. In our Moulin Rouge corner, Jordan Tapper doled out his tastings compliments of his company, Apologue. He is an Indy Park resident who generously donated tastings of their Hoste brand's Gold Fashioned and The Martini.

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NEIGHBORHOOD

A Big Shout-Out to Our Food and Beverage Donors!

Bobbie Bolociuch

Katherine Anne Confections, Golden Leaf Liquors, and JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop have been presented with special award plaques by GIPNA in recognition of and in appreciation for their contributions to the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association 10th Annual Wine & Cheese Party. Katherine Anne Duncan, Sky Patel, and Chris Cunningham have been unbelievably generous with donations to the annual Wine & Cheese Parties and other GIPNA-sponsored events.

This year all three went above and beyond for our French-themed party. Katherine Anne created three special truffles to pair with the incredible white and red Bordeaux wines donated by Sky. Chris joined in the French theme with French cheeses and a chicken liver pate that have us planning our next trip to France. We are so lucky to live in such a generous neighborhood. Please support these local businesses—they are a huge part of our community!



There will not be a GIPNA Board meeting in January. The February meeting will be on Tues., February 6, at 7 p.m. Join us online via Google Meets meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd. This link is also on the [gipna.org](https://www.gipna.org) website under "Events."

COMMUNITY EVENTS



JANUARY

No dates were scheduled for CAPS or Senior Meetings as of publication day.

TUES., JAN. 2—The regular GIPNA Board Meeting WILL NOT BE HELD in January.

MON., JAN. 8—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

MON., JAN. 8—AFAC MEETING, 6:30 p.m., Athletic Field Park. athleticfieldpark.com

MON., JAN. 15—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

TUES., JAN. 16—Murphy School LSC, 5:30 p.m.

WED., JAN. 17—IPAC Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, Room 100. independencparkchicago.com. [facebook/ipacchicago.com](https://www.facebook.com/ipacchicago.com)

MON., JAN. 22—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

WED., JAN. 24—Murphy School's Dine and Donate, Panda Express, 5-8 p.m.

FRI., JAN. 26—Murphy School Community Sing, 8 a.m.

MON., JAN. 29—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

FEBRUARY

No dates were scheduled for CAPS or Senior Meetings as of publication day.

SUN., FEB. 4—Irving Park Fine Arts Concert Series, 2 p.m., Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding Ave. See article on page 9.

MON., FEB. 5—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

TUES., FEB. 6—GIPNA Board Meeting, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/nkn-dcgc-tfd

THURS., FEB. 8—Murphy School LSC election applications due at 3 p.m.

MON., FEB. 12—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

SUN., FEB. 18—GIPNA Blood Drive, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse. See article on page 12.

MON., FEB. 19—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

WED., FEB. 21—IPAC Monthly Meeting, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, Room 100. independencparkchicago.com. [facebook/ipacchicago.com](https://www.facebook.com/ipacchicago.com)

FRI., FEB. 23—Neighbors Night Out, The Cabin, 4104 N. Pulaski Rd., 5-8 p.m.

MON., FEB. 26—30th Ward Night, 5-7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Meet with Alderwoman Ruth Cruz to discuss problems, ideas, etc.

ENERO

No se programaron fechas para CAPS o reuniones de personas mayores al día de la publicación.

MARTES, ENE. 2—La reunión ordinaria de la Junta Directiva de GIPNA NO SE CELEBRARÁ en enero.

LUNES, ENE. 8—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

LUNES, ENE. 8—REUNIÓN AFAC, 18:30 p.m., Parque del Campo Atlético. Athleticfieldpark.com

LUNES, ENE. 15—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MARTES, ENE. 16—Escuela Murphy LSC, 5:30 p.m.

MIÉRCOLES, ENE. 17—Reunión mensual del IPAC, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, sala 100. independenciaparkchicago.com. [facebook/ipacchicago.com](https://www.facebook.com/ipacchicago.com)

LUNES, ENE. 22—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MIÉRCOLES, ENE. 24—Cena y donación de Escuela Murphy, Panda Express, 5-8 p.m.

VIERNES, ENE. 26—Canto comunitario de la Escuela Murphy, 8 a.m.

LUNES, ENE. 29—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

FEBRERO

No se programaron fechas para CAPS o reuniones de personas mayores al día de la publicación.

DOM., FEB. 4—Serie de conciertos de Bellas Artes de Irving Park, 2 p.m., Iglesia Luterana de Irving Park, 4100 N. Harding Ave. Consulte el artículo en la página 9.

LUNES, FEB. 5—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MARTES, FEB. 6—Reunión de la junta directiva de GIPNA, 7 p.m., meet.google.com/

nkn-dcgc-tfd

JUEVES, FEB. 8—solicitudes para las elecciones del LSC de la Escuela Murphy deben entregarse a las 3 p.m.

LUNES, FEB. 12—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

DOM., FEB. 18—Donación de sangre GIPNA, de 11 a.m. a 3 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse. Ver artículo en la página 12.

LUNES, FEB. 19—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

MIÉRCOLES, FEB. 21—Reunión mensual de IPAC, 7 p.m., Independence Park Fieldhouse, sala 100. independenciaparkchicago.com. [facebook/ipacchicago.com](https://www.facebook.com/ipacchicago.com)

VIERNES, FEB. 23—Vecinos de fiesta nocturna, The Cabin, 4104 N. Pulaski Rd., de 5 a 8 p.m.

LUNES, FEB. 26—Noche del Distrito 30, de 5 a 7 p.m., 5714A W. Belmont. Reunirse con la Concejal Ruth Cruz para discutir problemas, ideas, etc.

COLOR CLUB

Be sure to check out additional art programming and events at Color Club! www.colorclub.events/events

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A trio from our resident Farmers Market musical group provided the musical accompaniment and added ambiance to the party. A special thank you to the Three of a Kind performers including Tim Porcelli, Tim Schneckcloth, and Ed Studzinski for the outstanding performance.

In the raffle this year, there were three Neighbor's Wine Baskets with one including two magnums. There were a few very happy winners of those prizes this year. A special raffle item

was an S2 Electric Scooter generously donated from The Electric Bike Store. The silent auction items were tremendous this year and included such items as an autographed book by Wilco's Jeff Tweedy, Bears tickets, a holiday arrangement, and all kinds of gift certificates from our local businesses. Thanks to all our generous donors and those who added to the competitive spirit in outbidding each other for prizes!

GIPNA President Scott Dewey was a lead organizer of the event this year and spent many hours of his free time to help coordinate all of the planning. Scott owes much of the success to his wonderful team that also put in tremendous work, from collecting raffle items to decorating the event space and volunteering before, during, and after the event. The core committee to be recognized includes Megan Kozonis, Christopher Rose, Bobbie Bolociuch, Roberta Wilk, Pat Clark, Sharon Sears, Dickie Nichols, Kevin Haight, Sue Ryan, Ellen Ryan, Dan Doughty, Jodie Barger, Amy Mastroianni, and Patti Kimbel.

Special accolades to Bobbie Bolociuch for not only securing cases of donated wine but also our special additions of the liqueurs and mead. Bobbie added her special touch in coordinating the pairings with Katherine Anne's chocolates. Sue Ryan coordinated the Wine Basket raffle and Megan

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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.

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

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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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GIPNA BLOCK REPRESENTATIVES

3800 Avers - Candace Wayne
3600 Byron - Jackie Ropski
3700 Byron - Stephanie and Jeremy Smith
3800 Byron - Suzanne Edwards
3900 Byron - Roseann Seablom
3600 Central Park - Sharon Gilbert
3700 Central Park - Bob Brutvan
3800, 3900 N. Central Park - Joe and Annie Bailey
3900 Dakin - Holly VanEssen
3600 Grace - Alison Benjamin
3700, 3800 Hamlin - Sharon Nichols
3900 Hamlin - Linda Lehman
3700 Irving Park Road - John Kuczura
3800 Irving Park Road - Linda Lehman
3700 Lawndale - Dorene Jordan
3800 Lawndale - Mark and Casey Watkins
3900 Lawndale - Cy Clausen
3600, 3700 Monticello - Pat Clark
3800 Monticello - Barbara Shaw
3900 Monticello - Cindy Schuch
3700 Ridgeway - Dawn and Josh Urban
3800 Ridgeway - Karen Fontanetta
3900 Ridgeway - John and Sang Kuczura
3800 Springfield - Roseann Seablom

FUN(DRAISER)

Add a Little Color to Your Front Lawn!

You've probably noticed the colorful GIPNA lawn signs in the neighborhood. The cost for the 12" x 18" flag is only \$20 and includes the flag stand. Go to <https://gipna.org/historic-independence-park-lawn-flags> or order online using the QR code below. Flags purchased by each Friday will be delivered to your front lawn the following weekend.



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Kozonis led the team obtaining the abundant Silent Auction items, championed by our number one auction gatherer Roberta Wilk. Christopher Rose and Sharon Sears were master designers and provided the vision to bring a special French-inspired sparkle to the ballroom. JT's Sandwich Shop provided a delicious assortment of cheeses, pate, and veggies along with French bread, and so much gratitude goes to Chris Cunningham, who generously donated all of the food for the event. It was hard to miss trying your hand at the Cork Game this year, so many thanks to Steve McKenzie and Carol Lynn Coughlin for managing it.

Proceeds from this event will support Murphy Elementary and the Independence Park Farmers Market. Finally, gratitude to our generous sponsors including our Gold Sponsors: Alternative Home Improvement and LadyBug & Friends Daycare and Preschool, Silver Sponsors: The Doggy Dojo, State Senator Rob Martwick, and Alderwoman Ruth Cruz, and Bronze Sponsor: State Representative Lindsey LaPointe.

To join the Color Club's e-newsletter for updates on events you can email info@colorclub.events or follow on Instagram: [@colorclubarts](https://www.instagram.com/colorclubarts) and consider joining a dance class in the new year.



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.

A Trivial Winter Pastime

Carolyn Chandler

When the weather gets cold and dreary, it takes a little more effort to get out of the house and socialize. Each winter I try to pick some kind of tradition to follow that involves people, some kind of activity, and possibly a pint by a fire.

One of my go-to's for this has been getting 1-5 friends together to go to a Trivia Night event at a local bar. These events can help businesses bring in customers on nights that would otherwise be a bit slow—often Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. The pot is usually sweetened by a prize or two for teams that finish at the top, which makes the competition a little more meaningful.

Jodie Barger (editor of the GIPNA e-newsletter, among other things) joined me to visit three of the local Trivia Nights so that we could share some of the details in time for the January and February chill. This was my first time playing trivia with Jodie, and I was happily surprised to realize that her globe-trotting past combined well with her time spent as a DJ and working at a video rental store, making her a trivia-playing juggernaut.

If you have a large amount of your brain dedicated to facts in geography, music, movies, sports, current events, and any other random memorizations, read on for an overview of our trivia journey!

Leona's Pizzeria and Restaurant

Our first Trivia Night was at the newly renovated and reopened Leona's, located at 3877 N. Elston. Jodie had been to Leona's prior to the remodel and said that it is



brighter and airier now. She gave a positive review of the sazerac, and we also tucked into some barbecue rib tips.

We were at a disadvantage by only having two players, as many teams have up to six, but with only five teams playing we felt our odds weren't too horrible.

The trivia itself was "Whaddaya-know," which is a popular source for free pub trivia. The MC ran it in a relaxed way, presenting a challenge but with plenty of time to think through the answers. We ended up coming in 3rd, which meant no prize for us, but we were hungry to try again.

Leona's typically runs Trivia Night on Tuesdays starting at 8 p.m.

Paddy Mac's Chicago

Our second adventure led us to Paddy Mac's, located at 4157 N. Pulaski. When we walked in the door we were surprised to find it so packed for a Tuesday night. We quickly realized it was because the Bears were playing, which had us worried that Trivia Night had been bumped. In fact, the two gentlemen at the table next to us kept telling us we were likely out of luck.

Happily, Paddy Mac's was able to handle both the Bears and Trivia Night easily. The MC made his

announcements short and sweet, but still left plenty of time for answering. We took advantage of two of the specials of the night, 90 cent wings and \$5 Modelos, along with mozzarella sticks and a Caesar salad topped with rare tuna steak.

There were 10 teams so the competition was a bit tougher. But we both felt like we were on fire and ended up tying for a prize winning spot. Jodie won the tie breaker - "Name all of the Batman movies that included Harvey Dent" - and went home with a bottle of Absolut Raspberri. She would not recommend it - for her, it was an absolute raspberry. But it was still sweet to win something.

We would both go to Paddy Mac's again, so you may see us there if you try it some Tuesday night at 8 p.m.

Lizard's Liquid Lounge

Our third trivia trip was to Lizard's Liquid Lounge at 3058 W. Irving Park, which is a popular place for all sorts of events like live music, karaoke, and bingo. There's no food at this venue, but you can order some delivered if you need some noshes.

There weren't as many places to sit, so we were glad we came early when we grabbed the two remaining stools at the counter.

This was the hardest trivia of the three! But they also promised that every team who played got a prize from a prize table, with the winners getting first crack at the shirts, mugs, and other items (most provided by liquor brands). We faced up against 5 other teams with names like "Quizzie McQuizzface" and our counter partners, "Pauly Shore Should Have Played Jack Sparrow."

We placed fourth on this one but we were still happy to walk away with a little tchotchke to celebrate

the night.

Trivia often happens on Tuesdays at 8 p.m., but Lizard's has a pretty packed calendar and some of the trivia is themed, like Ted Lasso or Game of Thrones. Be sure to check their calendar ahead of time at lizardsliquidlounge.com/calendar.

Other Options

There are two other places we know of in or near our neighborhood that host Trivia Night. Eris Brewery at 4240 W. Irving Park holds it one Tuesday a month from 7-9 p.m., and reserving a seat costs \$5 per person as a credit that goes towards the tab (you can buy the tickets online before you go). O'Donovan's Pub and Restaurant at 2100 W. Irving Park hosts trivia every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. So, plenty of ways to keep your mind and social life active over the winter, or beyond!

If you're heading over to any of these, we recommend you check to make sure trivia is being held that night as special events can sometimes bump it. Get there at least 15 minutes early to snag a table, grab your trivia entry sheets, and come up with a clever team name which will be called out to everyone when scores are read off. And if you find out you're competing against team "CarJo," come on over and say hello!

Blue Hookah Brings Smoking Vibes

Greg Shea

Entering The Blue Hookah House at 3524 W. Irving Park Rd. is like entering an oasis. You immediately smell the incense-like scent of hookah smoke while you take in the ambience of a relaxed lounge.

Then you spy a crowded weekday afternoon crowd and wonder, "What have I been missing?"

"It's a great place for socializing," Shivani Modi said. "It has a great vibe."

As people lounge on couches and cozy chairs, you realize this is a refuge in our midst. People are chatting with friends, working, reading, or drinking tea as they enjoy their hookah pipe.

Blue does not serve alcohol, just tea, soda, hookah pipes, and relaxation. It does allow alcohol on a BYOB permit, but they do not serve food. It is open very late on weekends, until 3 a.m. on Friday and Saturday, but Sunday and weekdays maintain a normal 3 p.m. until 2 a.m. schedule.

Nawar Baram was enjoying a pipe of Valletta, a concoction of Irish peach, gum, and watermelon. Nawar was in town from California and saw the reviews on Yelp and joined a friend, Sarah Ahmed, to try Blue for the first time. Ahmed drove from Michigan after she read about Blue. They were looking for a place where they could enjoy a smoke and forget about the stresses of life for a while.

"We read the reviews and they said it was calm and relaxing," Ahmed said. "And I just love the décor."

If you're looking for a way to spend a lazy weekend afternoon or just want some peace and quiet for a few hours after work, the Blue Hookah House will be your new home away from home.

COMMUNITY

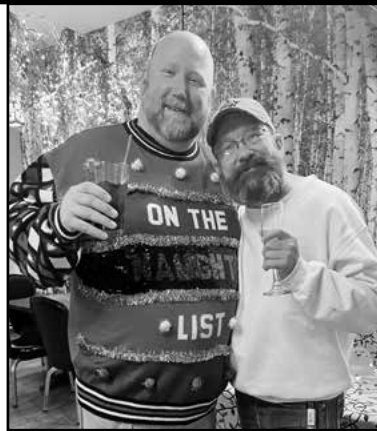
Holiday Cookie Exchange: Turtles and Elephant Ears and Bear Claws, Oh My!

Sue Ryan

Move over Wine and Cheese Party: you are not the final GIPNA-sponsored event of the year. That honor now goes to the first annual Holiday Cookie Exchange. And we can thank Christopher Rose, our indefatigable neighborhood organizer (3800 Lawndale Block Party, Wine and Cheese Party Co-producer), who proposed the Cookie Exchange at a GIPNA board meeting a few months ago. A call to The Cabin to book the space, a beautifully crafted flier posted on social media with the call to action: bring five dozen festive cookies, a few reminder emails, and voila, the makings of a delightful gathering were in place.

Harry Nyholm, owner of The Cabin at 4104 N. Pulaski, graciously hosted the cookie exchange. Holiday music wafted in the background and holiday décor with sparkling white lights and garlands greeted neighbors. And with Christopher's imprint, every detail ensured a visually magical experience. From festive tablecloths to cookie boxes adorned with delightful ribbons to beautifully crafted cookies placards, the room was transformed into a setting worthy of a Hallmark holiday movie minus the boy-meets-girl plot. The stars of the party, however, were the amazing array of mouthwatering cookies in all shapes and sizes.

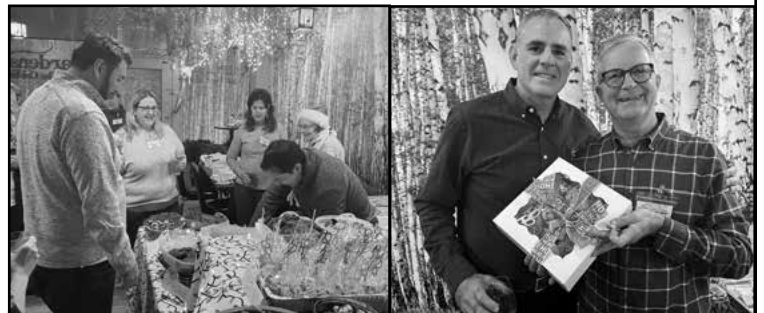
Some neighbors pulled out



their favorite family recipes. Bobbie Bolociuch paid homage to her mother with Loretta's Famous Walnut Crescents. And Pete Rogers shared Grandma Rogers' Perfect Sugar Cookies. Other neighbors, like this author, Googled 'impressive, but easy holiday cookies' and baked peanut butter Hershey's Kiss cookies. Regardless of where the recipes hailed from, decadence was on full display: peanut fudge, monster M&M oatmeal cookies, toffee, Mexican wedding cakes, ginger molasses cookies, graham cracker pralines, holly glob cookies, kolacky, and about ten cookies whose main ingredient was chocolate. Valerie and Wes Matucha outdid themselves with three

delicious cookies: Hershey's Special Dark Chocolate Chunk, Hershey's Cream Cheese Chip, and walnut cookies.

Neighbors munched on sweet treats while chatting about recipes, holiday plans and news of the neighborhood. For several neighbors, the cookie exchange was their first GIPNA-sponsored event and in small groups, I overheard friends introduce them. All in all, it was a cheery way to spend a Monday night. Thanks to the neighbors who turned out to spread some holiday cheer. And thank you Christopher for curating an evening of joy. We look forward to the second annual cookie exchange.



The Wide World of Speech-Language Pathology

Ellen Ryan

When my daughter started grad school in speech pathology, I envisioned her exclusively working with a child or adult, getting her/him/them to say their r's or s's or whatever letters correctly. It just took a conversation with neighbor Megan Kozonis to disabuse me of my limited knowledge of the breadth of this profession.

Megan, a speech language pathologist, was raised in Florida and moved here after graduating from Florida State University and obtaining her master's in Speech Language Pathology from Georgia State. She met hubby Loukas at a wedding in Florida. He was living in Chicago with an established career, so after doing the oh-so fun long distance routine, she moved up here. It was exciting to move from a small town to a big city and she told herself she could do it for a year. That was eleven years ago.

Megan first interned at a special education co-op in Highland Park where she remains today. She started in the K-high school realm, but now works in a transition program for 18-22 year olds, helping students learn how to function as adults in society. It's basically a life skills program. The majority of her students are autistic, while others have Down syndrome or other disabilities. A portion of her students are non-verbal, and she works with them to use their communication devices to interact with people. Things we take for granted—asking for a cup of water at a restaurant, calling someone to make an appointment,



developing friendships, saying hello to a colleague—don't come naturally for her students. Few of them have deep relationships with others, so she teaches skills to help strengthen or even create friendships a bit more easily.

Megan is out "in the real world" with her students for fifty to seventy-five percent of her work time—at stores, restaurants and on buses—giving them the tools to handle a myriad of scenarios in day-to-day life. Not only are her students learning to function, but the community sees them and provides natural support to them. Megan would like us—the community at large—to engage with people with disabilities. Saying hello to them and being open-minded about employment possibilities can make a world of difference and bring so much light to her students. She teaches skills and tools that can enable them to hold a job, working up to 20 hours a week. This gives them purpose and helps them be active/participating members of the community, and sets them up for Social Security down the line. Megan also works alongside parents in aiding them in advocating for their young adults. When their sons or daughters graduate, they will be their case managers.

Positives? Megan works with these individuals for four years so, though progress may be slow, she's able to see the growth in her students. She loves that she is making a positive impact on their lives. And summers off??? She

can't complain.

Negatives? The only downside to her job is knowing her students' lives will be difficult. They will all either live with their parents or in group homes. Some are complex needs students with many health issues and, consequently, lower life expectancies.

Who knew this is all in a day's work for a speech therapist? Megan truly opened my eyes to the fact that a speech pathologist treats a wide range of communication disorders. It's not just about the mechanics of speech; there are so many complex cognitive functions that come together in producing speech.

If this inspires any young people to look into speech pathology careers, I'm sure Megan will be happy to talk with them as she graciously did with my own daughter. Megan, Loukas, and their two children, Robert and Ioanna, live on Monticello Avenue.

COMMUNITY

Neighbors Night Out at The Cabin

Pat Clark

Do you remember going to The Cabin, 4104 N. Pulaski Rd., last February for Neighbors Night Out? I do! I had the best time reconnecting with people I haven't seen since winter had descended. Lots of laughs and stories. Harry, The Cabin's owner and barkeep, is an excellent host who offered special drinks at discounted prices for the GIPNA folks.

This year's Neighbors Night Out is on Friday, February 23, from 5 to 8 p.m. Tap that date into your smartphone right now so you won't forget to swing by and enjoy an adult beverage or two and old and new friends.

COMMUNITY

Uncorking for the Environment

Greg Shea

The dilemma hits every time you open a bottle of wine. What do you do with the cork?

It is too small for recycling because it will clog the recycling machines, but it seems to be a shame to throw it away.

Luckily, there are nonprofits that specialize in those wine cork dilemmas you often face.

Wine cork is harvested from the bark of the cork oak tree. Harvesting it from a tree does not require cutting a tree down, and cork oak trees can live for over 200 years. In that span, they continually recycle carbon dioxide from the air and help our planet. Each ton of cork harvested equals 55 tons of carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere. Saving the cork and the cork trees does a lot of good for the world.

After a collection of hundreds of corks at this year's Independence Park Farmers Market as well as from the annual Wine and Cheese event, the corks were dropped off at a collection site. The donated corks are ground down and then reformulated into new corks, or the nonprofit sells them for use on playgrounds or as inserts in running shoes or a number of other products. So please keep saving the corks for donation at next summer's Farmers Market.

So, no, you don't have a wine problem. You're actually helping save the world.

Sandra Cisneros Visits Disney II Magnet High School

Ilina Rzodkiewicz

Born and raised in Chicago, I hail from a community where we celebrated our heritage and cherished the rich tapestry of our intersectional identities. *The House on Mango Street* stands out as a book I fondly recall reading during my school days. The eloquent words of the author, Sandra Cisneros, leaped off the pages, forging profound connections with my life and experiences. When I became a teacher, sharing this book with my own students and witnessing them forge their own meaningful connections was a heartwarming experience. Little did I anticipate that my journey would lead me to the position of Principal at Disney II, where I would have the privilege of meeting Ms. Cisneros in person and witnessing her read to our students.

This extraordinary encounter had its origins in a heartfelt letter penned by DII's Spanish teacher, Ms. Mailander, to Ms. Cisneros. It was a simple invitation, a heartfelt request, an earnest appeal for her to grace our diverse school with her presence and share her remarkable story with our students. Though she had refrained from school visits for many years, something about Ms. Mailander's letter resonated deeply with her, prompting her to say yes. This marked the genesis of a remarkable event on October 10, 2023: an intimate reading session with students, followed by an engaging question-and-answer session,



and culminating in a heartwarming community meet and greet.

Ms. Liz Burns, our DII Friends President, and Ms. Cynthia Blease, our DII Friends Lawn-dale Parent Director, posed one of the most pivotal questions: "What can we offer her for dinner?" We contemplated the posh Chicago restaurants we envisioned a celebrity author might favor, but also took into account the local eateries we wished to highlight. Ms. Mailander sought guidance from Ms. Cisneros's agent, asking, "What would Ms. Cisneros like for dinner?" The response was unexpectedly simple and perfect: "A peanut butter and jelly sandwich and an apple."

In the spirit of classic comfort and familiarity, Ms. Burns suggested, "Let's reach out to JT's!" JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop is conveniently located within a short walk from Disney II. Our staff and students frequent their menu daily, and we've collaborated with them for fundraising events in the past. Ms. Burns approached the

owner, Chris Cunningham, and inquired if he would be interested in crafting a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for this globally renowned author. In a delightful gesture of hospitality, he prepared a delectable sandwich, on the house, which Ms. Cisneros enjoyed after spending a few hours with students from Disney II Magnet's Spanish World Language program.

The heartwarming unity and camaraderie exhibited by our community in welcoming and celebrating Ms. Cisneros were truly exceptional. This is a cherished memory that will stay with us for a very long time.

Disney II Magnet is also proud to have partnered with JT's Sandwich Shop on December 18 for the Ceramics Empty Bowls Fundraiser. Funds were raised to support those experiencing food insecurity, and our ceramic arts program. Uniquely crafted bowls were available for purchase and served with delicious hot soup. Supporters got to take home their student-made bowls.

An Award and An Accolade

Pat Clark

JT's Genuine Sandwich Shop, 3970 N. Elston Ave., owned by neighbor Chris Cunningham, is a finalist in the 2024 Jean Banchet Awards for Culinary Excellence in the Best Counter Service category. The winner will be announced on January 28. The Jean Banchet Awards started in 2002 to recognize Chicago's local culinary talent. The awards are named after chef Jean Banchet, the face behind Le Francais in Wheeling. He was considered to be the city's first celebrity chef and helped elevate Chicago's dining reputation in the 1970s and 1980s. The program partners with Chicago Chefs Cook, a nonprofit working to unite Chicago's culinary community and provide humanitarian relief locally and around the world.

Katherine Anne Confections, our delicious chocolate shop at 3653 W. Irving Park Rd., got a shout-out in the Chicago Tribune's Primetime section on December 3. The article praised Katherine Anne Duncan's various artisan chocolate confections, including truffles, caramels, marshmallows, and hot chocolate. She uses the term "drinking chocolate" and has 15 types available in-store, topped with house-made marshmallows, or you can pick-up one of five types of mixes to take home.

Thank you to both Chris and Katherine for the continued support and contributions to the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association not only during the summer Farmers Market, but also to the annual Wine & Cheese Party.



NATURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Winter Explorations

Lorraine and Dave Antieau

Engaging with nature during the winter months can be more challenging for many of us. We tend to spend much less time outdoors, and when we do go out, it is often simply to dash to the car or to huddle at a bus or train stop.

The cold, dark months can be a rich time for connecting with nature through books, and there are so many titles to choose from. Curling up with a good book and a blanket is the very definition of coziness. You might even consider making reading aloud with family or friends a part of your life this winter. Or you could challenge each other to read the same book and get together to talk about it.

Most of the books mentioned below have been read aloud by Dave and me through many years, and we often return to incidents or ideas from books we read together decades ago.

On the theme of winter and coldness, *Winter World* and *Ravens in Winter* by naturalist Bernd Heinrich could be a great place to start. Once you start reading Mr. Heinrich's books, you'll find yourself reading more! *This Cold Heaven* by Gretel Ehrlich, along with her books *In the Empire of Ice* and *The Future of Ice* explore coldness in some of the harshest—and yet most beautiful—places in the world. The classic *Wandering Through Winter* by Edwin Way

Teale along with *Never Cry Wolf* and *People of the Deer* by Farley Mowat, and *Arctic Dreams* by Barry Lopez all open our eyes anew to winter's glories.

Classics titles such as those listed below have stood the test of time, and are great places to start your winter explorations:

- *The Singing Wilderness* by Sigurd F. Olson
- *A Book of Bees* by Sue F. Hubbell
- *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey
- *The Outermost House* by Henry Beston
- *Journal of a Prairie Year* by Paul Gruchow
- *The Desert Smells Like Rain* by Gary Paul Nabham
- *The Immense Journey* by Loren Eisely
- *The Sea Around Us* by Rachel Carson
- *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

These more current books have offered many hours of pleasant reading and discussion at our house:

- *Braiding Sweetgrass and Gathering Moss* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- *Of Time and Turtles and Soul of an Octopus* by Sy Montgomery
- *Wilding: Returning Nature to Our Farm* by Isabella Tree
- *The Genius of Birds* by Jennifer Ackerman
- *Wild Comfort* by Kathleen Moore Dean
- *The Blue Wonder: Why the Sea Glows, Fish Sing, and Other Astonishing Insights from the Ocean* by Frauke Bagusche

- *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers* by Ben Goldfarb
- *The Forest Unseen* by David George Haskell
- *The Wild Trees* by Richard Preston
- *Chasing Dragonflies* by Cindy Crosby
- *The Bluebird Effect* by Julie Zickefoose

And for younger readers, there are hundreds of nature books aimed at capturing the interest of children: stories and novels, science books, coloring and activity books and reference works. Here is a short list of titles to watch for, and browsing the shelves at the library will yield many more.

- *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen and John Schoenherr
- *Wonder Walkers* by Micha Archer
- *Outside In* by Deborah Underwood
- *Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner
- *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin and Marian Azarian
- *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker and Jon Klaussen
- *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George
- *The Sense of Wonder* by Rachel Carson
- *Grand Canyon* by Jason Chin
- *The Little Book of Backyard Bird Songs* by Andrea Pinnington

Reading is a pleasure that can be enjoyed any time of year! Let me know what books from this list you love, or what books you think should be added.



SCHOOLS

Murphy School Update

Dr. Rebeca Shick and Katie Kobeszka

The commitment to building community has always been strong at Murphy Elementary School, but especially these past few months. Organized events were in abundance with the goal to both support and celebrate diversity and unity. One of such events was our celebration of Day of the Dead Ofrenda. This thoughtful tribute honors the lives of our ancestors and loved ones, creating a space for reflection and remembrance. Our community also came together in an outpouring of support for each other by the organization of a clothing swap. This was an opportunity for all families to get what they need to stay warm as the temperatures continue to drop. A Murphy Mutual Aid Committee was formed to coordinate support for families in need, specifically focused right now on the urgent needs for our Newcomer families from Central and South America. If you are interested in finding out how you can help with these efforts, please go to the Murphy website (murphy.cps.edu) and look under the drop-down menus for Families - Family Groups & Organizations - Murphy Mutual

Aid, or reach out directly to MurphyMutualAid@googlegroups.com.

Another great way to support Murphy is by donating to the Murphy Match. Murphy Match is a fundraising campaign through which every dollar you donate will be matched by an anonymous donor, thus doubling the impact of your donation! The campaign kicked off November 28, 2023, and will run through January 19, 2024. Go to friendsofmurphy.org to make your donation now and make a difference for the students and staff at Murphy School!

See below for a list of upcoming events that all can participate in!

- January LSC meeting will be on January 16 at 5:30 p.m.
- Dine and Donate: January 24 at Panda Express 5-8 p.m.
- Community Sing will be January 26 at 8 a.m.
- LSC election applications are due February 8, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.

COMMUNITY

News from Carlson Community Services

Liz Mills

Trivia Night Thanks!

Congratulations to "The Gang of Four et al" on winning Carlson Community Services' 19th Trivia Night held in November. Led by Carlson Treasurer Bill Sherlock, the team generously returned their \$200 cash prize to Carlson. The bragging rights and glory remain theirs! Including matching funds, the evening netted \$14,000 for Carlson's programs: The Magic After-School Place, Three Brothers Garden and the Irving Park Fine Arts Concert Series.



Thanks to our Round Sponsors who helped make the event a financial success: Holly VanEssen Mobile Physical Therapy, Free Range Insurance, Wintrust Bank Mayfair, State Rep. Lindsey LaPointe, Broker Clare Spartz, Irving Park Lutheran Church and the Carlson Board and Committees. Special thanks to raffle prize donor Farmers Market Garden Center!

Thanks to our many volunteers who helped with set up, cleanup, and everything in between. And to our gracious host, the Irving Park Lutheran Church. It was a great night for a

great cause!

Irving Park Fine Arts Committee Presents Soprano Alicia Berneche, Feb. 4, 2 p.m.



Celebrating its 30th season, the Irving Park Fine Arts Committee will present noted soprano Alicia Berneche in a solo recital on Sunday, February 4. The concert will be held at 2 p.m. at Irving Park Lutheran Church, 4100 N. Harding. Ms. Berneche is a renowned American lyric coloratura soprano who has sung leading roles in opera houses throughout the United States and around the globe. She appeared on the stages of the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* and as Helen Niles in the new edition of *Mourning Becomes Electra*. She also appeared at The Goodman Theatre, The Barbican in London, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York in the world premiere of Philip Glass' and Mary Zimmerman's *Galileo Galilei*. In addition to performing, Alicia teaches voice at Glenbrook North High School and privately. Fine Arts audiences will remember her February 2020 performance in *Broadway's Best*.

Fine Arts concerts are free, although the audience is invited to make a donation. This season is supported with a generous bequest from the late Doris Peterson, a long-time Fine Arts Series patron. The final concert in the season is Matthew Beck, performing Clarinet Trios of Brahms and Beethoven on May 5.

Three Brothers Garden Wrap-Up

Three Brothers Garden had a great season! In addition to providing neighbors served by the Irving Park Food Pantry with fresh vegetables, the garden served as an outdoor space for neighbors to gather weekly for a common purpose. We welcomed several new volunteers, all under the guidance of our Garden Intern Ruth Bouman and Garden Committee Chair Judy Sviatko. Thanks to all who volunteered throughout this past season, especially Independence Park residents Sue Ryan and Ellen Ryan.



In 2023, we donated 421 pounds of vegetables to the Food Pantry, on par with our 2022 total. Thanks to generous neighbors, our donations were bolstered by home garden surplus, which we gladly took to the Food Pantry on Wednesday mornings. The garden is a partnership with Irving Park Lutheran Church and is located at 4107 N. Pulaski. If you'd like to get involved in planning for the 2024 season, contact Liz Mills at lizmills@carlsoncommunityservices.org.

Carlson Community Services connects the Irving Park community with programs that enrich lives through education, culture and service. For more information, visit carlsoncommunityservices.org or contact Liz Mills at 773/398-6766 or lizmills@carlsoncommunityservices.org.

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Henry Reichert In Memoriam

Sue Ryan

Henry Reichert, who lived on the 3700 block of Lawndale, passed away this summer.

Henry was a fixture on our block and he may be the one person whom everyone knew. Nearly everyday, weather permitting, neighbors would see Henry strolling our block, first with no assistance, then with a cane, and in the last few years with his walker on wheels that also served as a portable chair. He loved to park his walker on the sidewalk and chat with neighbors. If no one was out, he'd sit and simply enjoy the weather of the day.

Henry was proud of his German heritage and looked forward to German Fest every year in Lincoln Square. When Henry was featured in a Meet Your Neighbor column for the *Voice*, he recalled his life in the German-speaking town of Liebling, Romania, before fleeing in 1943 as the Soviets advanced. After settling in the U.S., he served for two years in the army during the Korean War. He met his wife Katharina and together they raised their two children, Henry Jr. and Monica. To read more about Henry's life, check out the *Voice* archives (January/February 2021 at tinyurl.com/4j2tw5z3).

With his love for chocolate, Henry had an uncanny ability to win one of the sweet treats during the block party cake walk. At the block party in 2022, he was honored with a plaque and, of course,



chocolate cake to acknowledge his sixty plus years on Lawndale.

Mike and Dorene Jordan lived next-door to Henry for over twenty years and would often have breakfast with him on Fridays. Dorene offered this remembrance: "I enjoyed over-the-fence (Mr. Wilson-like) talks with Henry, catching up on our lives. He had many life stories to share, with lessons he passed on to me and my kids. I see the empty bench in his backyard and miss those sweet neighborly niceties. He met my mother-in-law and father-in-law during several family gatherings, and never failed to ask about them over in Detroit. We enjoyed German Fests and White Sox baseball games together. Most of all, I will miss seeing him outside early spring through late fall, pushing his walker, leisurely touring the neighborhood. Taking a periodic break to enjoy the sights and sounds of the "hood," and striking up a conversation with any willing neighbor who passed by."

It has taken a bit of getting used to not seeing Henry outside talking to neighbors who came his way. We will miss you, Henry.

A Solar Panel Journey 3 Years On

Jenny Kotz

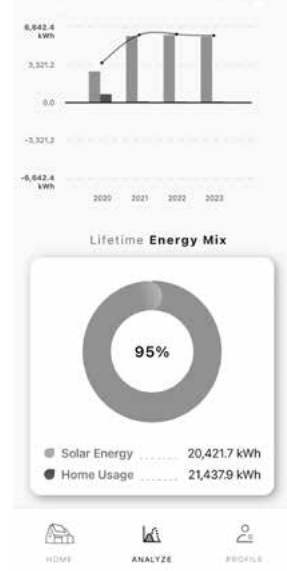
December 2023 update:

As we wrap this calendar year, it was fun to revisit our solar journey and how far we've come since I wrote our original article for GIPNA in 2020, also known as the best year ever. We've been solar panel owners for about 3-1/2 years now. It's been a no-maintenance project and our electric bill averages about \$13/month throughout the year. Because we don't have a backup generator or batteries to contain the surge of power we produce, we are connected to the electrical grid and these are the taxes and fees we pay as a consumer. As a recap to our system, we have Certasun panels that are sized for about 5,600 kWh per year, which was based on about 98% of our 2018-2019 average usage. Ironically, even with the return to home that the pandemic brought, our average usage isn't much more these days than pre-pandemic levels. For the 2022 calendar year, we produced 5,958 kWh and consumed 6,038 kWh,

giving us an average energy mix for the year at 99% solar. Year 2021 was 98% solar. We are trending 99% for the 2023 calendar year as well. Our average November 2023 was 126% solar, and on 12/11/23, we ran 103% solar. Our lifetime solar percentage is 95%, with a consumption of 21,437 kWh and an output of 20,421 kWh. Winning! This equates to \$2,074 in cost savings, which puts us at about a 7-8 year ROI for the out-of-pocket cost. Almost halfway there!

The overall interest in going solar was to reduce our impact on this earth. Every little bit helps. While solar has been great for our family, we still rely on natural gas for other appliances and equipment, such as heating, the gas dryer, the gas stove, and the water heater. Slowly as our appliances age, we plan to convert the power source to electric and replace when the time warrants. In the interim, we will keep living and looking for opportunities to do better for our environment. If you're interested in learning more about our solar panels, please revisit our 2020 article and don't hesitate to reach out at jennykotz@gmail.com.

To read the first article about solar panels, go to tinyurl.com/4j2tw5z3 and flip to page 11 of our 2021 January/February issue of the *Voice*, for the article "Solar Power."



Irving Park Food Pantry Seeks Toiletries

John Psiharis

The Irving Park Food Pantry provides clients with most in-need personal-care items, trying to stay in stock on key items: toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, body wash, razors, and shaving cream. Unfortunately, they all are popular and even with the limitations we put on how many each client receives, the items are difficult to keep stocked.



To alleviate these shortages, we are asking for donations (or drives) of the basic toiletry items as well as other popular options such as body lotion, conditioner, sunscreen, lip balm, larger sizes of diapers (#5 and #6), adult diapers, washcloths, and baby wipes.

Donations can be dropped off at the Big Helpers store at 4184 N. Elston from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday or on the front porch at 3912 N. Kenneth any time. You also can make a contact-free donation from our Amazon registry using the QR code on this page or on our Facebook page. We



appreciate your help to fill this ongoing need!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our holiday programs in which we provided the makings of a holiday meal to all clients both for Thanksgiving and the holiday season. We also gave stockings of toys and goodies to clients' children 12 years old and younger in December. Donations to help for these programs can still be made via PayPal at irvingparkfoodpantry.org or via check to Irving Park Food Pantry, 4256 N. Ridgeway Ave., Chicago, IL 60618.

Thanks also to everyone who donated their leftover Halloween candy to the Pantry. We packaged it in festive cellophane bags and provided one to each of our larger families to give them a surprise treat for the holidays.

We appreciate everyone's time, effort and donations that help us be Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

This QR code will take you to the Pantry's registry for personal-care items to use to order donations or as examples to do in-person shopping.



What Brings Joy in the Winter?

Carolyn Chandler

The leaves have largely fallen and the weather is turning to that time of year where short days and cold temperatures make connection with your neighbors a bit more difficult. But luckily, we have some lovely thoughts about connection and comfort from our second GIPNA neighborhood poll.

This time we asked neighbors, "What do you do in your home or around the neighborhood that brings you joy during the long Chicago winter?"

By far the most frequent answer was about walking around and admiring all of the decorations, mentioned by Kate, Maggie, Edie, Grace, and Jessi—with a thank you for those who spend the time to light up the winter. We also had a special callout for neighbors who work together to set up decorations across multiple houses, such as the arches on Dakin. It really expresses a feeling of community!

Here are some of the other moments and ideas shared by your neighbors:

Amy Mastroianni: "I love catching up with neighbors as we shovel after a fresh snow. I also love catching a whiff of a nearby wood-burning fireplace."

Jimmy H.: "When there is snow I like it when my good neighbors shovel and don't save the parking spot. The trash that is put out to save a spot can damage a car if not noticed."

Hannah Esparza: "I spend more time at my flower shop in the winter and make beautiful things for people, that always brightens my day. But when I'm not working,

I'm visiting so many local shops for gifts, cozy cocktails, or checking out the amazing restaurants in the neighborhood. My husband and I love taking walks to see the unique homes in the area, and sipping hot cocoa at any and all of the Sip 'n Shops the flurries bring! We've become close with so many of our customers, and we enjoy hopping around to holiday parties with dear friends."

Delphine: "I invite neighbors over to make tamales. Everyone brings a favorite tamale filling, something they'd love to taste in tamale. We cook them and eat them. Think of it as a cookie exchange, but not."

Other ideas included visiting a holiday themed bar or having friends and family over for cookie decorating. And if you're looking for events to get you out of the house, Abby Monroe mentioned that Color Club will have lots of them for all ages this winter, listed on their calendar at colorclub.events/events.

Thank you to everyone who shared in the poll! We'll be running another one for our March/April issue. So take a moment to share the answer to this question now, or sometime before February 10:

What do you consider the first real signs of spring in the neighborhood?

Is it the appearance of a particular flower or animal? A certain neighborhood tradition? Let us know by using the QR code below or visiting tinyurl.com/4n86a89r to share.



Mural, Mural on the Wall

Sue Ryan

Mural, mural on the wall, who's the prettiest of them all? Judging from a recent inspection, it is not any of the murals on Pulaski underneath the Kennedy Expressway. These once-beautiful murals are public art and should bring a sense of pride and joy. But sadly, several are deteriorating: fading, flaking, cracking, and defaced by graffiti and pigeon poop. These murals are in desperate need of restoration.

Scott Dewey, president of GIPNA, was contacted by Lynne Ankney from Old Irving Park Association (OIPA) to discuss the battered murals. OIPA has been maintaining the murals under the Kennedy and The Villa Improvement League (VIL) has been the caretakers of the mural underneath the Metra tracks. This past summer it was spruced up with a gentle cleaning and touch up painting. Cyd Smillie, Arts Alive Chicago muralist, oversaw mural maintenance.

A few neighbors representing GIPNA, OIPA and VIL gathered to inspect the murals under the expressway. The easiest solution is to ask the city to whitewash some of the murals and return the maintenance back over to the city. Just contemplating that possibility was depressing, so the group started brainstorming for ways to save them.

Some suggestions include enlisting help from art students at Disney II or Schurz High School and Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU). One of the murals from 2014 was signed by students from

NEIU. The group discussed hiring Cyd to help with maintaining the murals under the expressway. Another possibility is contacting former GIPNA resident, Tony Passero, who was the creative force behind many of the stunning murals in the area. He painted the mural on the east side of Pulaski and though it is peeling and flaking, it could be restored. Another possibility is to contact the Chicago Public Art Group which tracks murals throughout the city for guidance on restoration. The group will also reach out to local politicians to devise a coordinated effort with neighborhood groups.

Of course, the biggest nemesis

when walking by the murals is pigeons—or, rather, pigeon poop made possible by those who insist on feeding them. It is difficult to enjoy the murals when your eyes are fixed on the ground trying to sidestep around stuff you don't want stuck on the bottom of your shoes. Alderwoman Ruth Cruz has pledged to help keep the sidewalks clean, but everyone realizes that this is a never-ending battle until there is a long-term solution to keep pigeons away from the viaduct.

The group is in the brainstorming phase and would welcome suggestions to save our murals. If you are interested in being part of the solution, send an email to info@gipna.org.



Time to Roll Up Your Sleeve for the Blood Drive

Sue Ryan

The mobile blood bank will be back at Independence Park on February 18, 2024. After the success of its initial blood drive in summer and then again in fall, GIPNA will once again sponsor a blood drive to offer a convenient way to donate blood. Thank you to those who have previously given when about 60 pints were collected. Blood supplies often run critically low and are needed for lifesaving surgeries and other medical procedures.

On a personal note, when our son received blood transfusions during his chemo, I would look up at the IV of blood about to flow through his veins and offer a prayer of gratitude to the donor who took an hour out of the day to give blood. Your donation does make a difference!

Some people for various reasons are not able to donate, but if you are not in this category, please make an effort to do so. It costs nothing to give the gift of life. Look for the sign-up link in the GIPNA e-newsletter and Facebook page. And don't worry, you will not be outside in February. The blood drive will be held in the fieldhouse on the second floor. The hours are 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Hope to see you there.

Independence Parka

by erica dreisbach



... On the Dog Side

K. Laurel & her dog Andy Jack



Andy's sage advice for all...



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Great neighborhoods don't just happen - they come from work and commitment. The events and services that make Independence Park the jewel of the northwest side requires time and money. Our wonderful volunteers give their time, and GIPNA membership helps provide the money. If you're not already a member, you can join by visiting gipna.org/membership.



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ORDER AN INDEPENDENCE PARK STREET BANNER FOR \$350 AND GET A SECOND BANNER FOR ONLY \$250!

You may have noticed the bright, new GIPNA banners going up to replace the old, faded ones along Elston Ave. and Irving Park Rd. Several of our GIPNA business partners and neighbors have already purchased banners to help beautify the neighborhood. There are still a few spots open that you can use to promote your business, display your family pride, or show your block's solidarity.

Purchasing a banner is an affordable way to advertise your business and show your neighbors your support for our community.

Get together with your neighbors and purchase a banner to represent your block like the 3700 block of Lawndale and the 3600 and 3700 blocks of Monticello did. Let's get a competition going to see which blocks come through!

This is a great opportunity to show your support for our neighborhood. The purchase of your banner will proudly display the name of your business, a person you would like to honor or memorialize, or your proud block of neighbors.

You have a choice of location at which to install your banner (with some limitations).

With this limited time offer, you can get your second banner for an additional \$250!
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For other questions, please email dickie.nichols@GIPNA.ORG

