



WINDOW TO WEST CHICAGO

September/October 2011 • volume 6, number 5

Photo courtesy of Philip Weibler

Picture yourself standing amidst majestic oak trees on a brisk October evening at the oldest cemetery in West Chicago. You hear music wafting on the cool breeze, and listen as someone dressed in clothing from a different era shares a story - a real story, not fictionalized or exaggerated. This is West Chicago reality history.

For 21 years, the West Chicago City Museum has been providing living histories that focus on the stories of notable and ordinary people buried at Oakwood Cemetery, located at York Street and Oakwood Avenue. The **22nd annual Tales Tombstones Tell** program is scheduled this year for **Friday, October 7, 2011**.

With lanterns and candlelight illuminating your path, costumed interpreters are your hosts, revealing the life stories of selected former residents buried in Oakwood. Even though the subjects are former West Chicagoans, their stories are universal and transcend our town's borders.

Tours last 45 minutes and begin at 6:30 p.m. They run continuously about every 10 minutes, with the last tour getting started at 7:45 p.m. No reservations are taken, it's first come, first served, and if the weather is inclement the program is cancelled.

Tales Tombstones Tell, which is appropriate for families, is based on historical fact and does not contain ghost stories. It's a terrific way to learn the history of hometown personalities and events that have shaped the community we know today.

All in all, between 15 - 20 volunteers help to run a seamless operation. Over the years, these stalwart men, women and children have braved hail, rain, high humidity and hungry mosquitoes. They have a passion for history, and bring it to the public with a respect for the people buried here.

Refreshments will be served after the program in St. Mary's Church's basement. For twenty-one years, St. Mary's has graciously provided a place for visitors to relax and refresh while they reflect on the stories just heard.

Although the program is free, donations are encouraged. For more information, please call the Museum at (630) 231-3376 or email questions to museum@westchicago.org.



Oakwood Cemetery is truly one of our most studied local historical sites. Over the last several years two volunteers, Cheryl Waterman and Dennis Schuett, have surveyed the graveyard. What they have found has been documented on the website Find a Grave (www.findagrave.com).

They have spent hundreds of hours walking the cemetery, recording grave sites and tombstone inscriptions for the 1,471 known interments at Oakwood Cemetery. Photographs taken of each tombstone provide a valuable record as erosion renders the stones less readable each year. Obituaries and historic portraits of the deceased, if available, are included as well. Relation of the deceased to others in the cemetery (sister, wife, etc.) is noted.

It is random acts of genealogical kindness such as those performed by Waterman and Schuett that we recognize and salute for their preservation of West Chicago's historical record.

Kid's CORNER

Sept. 15 Home School Connections

Sept. 16 Make & Take Crafts

Sept. 18 Lego Club

Sept. 24 Game Day

Oct. 9 Lego Club

Oct. 15 Game Day

Public Library – (630) 231-1552

Oct. 1 Video Scavenger Hunt

Oct. 15 Safety Town Trick or Treat

Oct. 22 All Hallows Reel

Oct. 22 Downtown Trick or Treat

Park District – (630) 231-9474

IMPORTANT DATES

September 5 City Hall Closed
 September 9 Gallery 200 Opening Reception
 September 10 Kruse House Ice Cream Social
 September 11 9/11 Observance
 September 16 Local Music Night
 September 17 Coffee with the Mayor
 September 18 Mexican Independence Day

September 23 & 24 Gallery Theater Performances
 October 7 Tales Tombstones Tell
 October 8 Gallery 200 Opening Reception
 October 11 Wayne Township Job Fair
 October 15 Coffee with the Mayor
 October 21 Local Music Night
 October 22 Downtown Trick or Treat

For more community events, visit www.westchicago.org



FROM THE
mayor



As we approach the 10th Anniversary of 9/11, our hearts and minds return to the events of the day that changed the world as we knew it. What started out as an otherwise ordinary morning, turned into one of America's darkest days and was to become a defining moment in our history.

We went about the business of our lives, dressing our kids for school, pouring that second cup of coffee, boarding a train to work, or any number of daily routines, when a shocking event unfolded live on national television.

Many of us can remember exactly where we were or what we were doing when we first learned about the assault to our nation. *Is this for real? How could this be happening?* We made frantic calls to loved ones, held our children a little tighter, and stayed glued to the reports of the surreal events that were taking place in real time.

It was America's wake up call from a frame of reference that defied the belief that an act of war could take place on American soil, to a profoundly renewed and deeply felt appreciation for the high cost of our freedom. It has been said that our enemies underestimated the character and strength of the American people that day. Their act of terrorism was intended to bring us to our knees, provoke mass chaos and crush the American spirit. What they found instead, were countless acts of heroism, compassion and unity; first responders working past the point of endurance, and citizens helping citizens.

Please join us on **Sunday, September 11, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at Reed-Kepler Park for Remembering 9/11: A West Chicago Observance**, when we will pay tribute to those who lost their lives or risked them to help others, memorialize the events for future generations and celebrate America's strength and unity. The Friends of West Chicago Parks Foundation will be dedicating a bronze sculpture and presenting the first Hometown Hero Award at the Observance.

May God bless the United States of America.



CITY Services

Due to the Labor Day Holiday, **brush pickup** for the month of September will begin on **Tuesday, September 6, 2011** and **October brush pickup will begin on Monday, October 3, 2011**. As a reminder, the **final week** for brush pickup this year will begin on **November 7, 2011**. Brush may be placed at the curb no more than two days prior to the scheduled pickup. Please refer to the City's website for more information.

Residents may dispose of an unlimited quantity of **leaves** for a five (5) week period from **October 24 - November 26, 2011** on the **regularly scheduled garbage pickup day**. No stickers are required for leaves; however, no other yard waste may be mixed in. All leaves may be placed in a "Kraft" yard waste bag that does not exceed 50 pounds when full.

The City's Utility Division will be **flushing fire hydrants weekdays this October between 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.** Signs will be posted in the areas one day prior to hydrant flushing.



In an effort to reduce the amount of recyclable material being sent to landfills and increase the recycling rate in West Chicago, the Environmental Commission is sponsoring a **Citywide Recycling Event on October 1, 2011 from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., at Sims Recycling Solutions, 1600 Harvester Road**. A list of items that will be collected at the event may be found at www.westchicago.org. Please note: hazardous items that contain refrigerant, radioactive material, mercury, gasoline or oil will not be accepted. If you are interested in more information or in volunteering for the event, please contact Tim Wilcox at twilcox@westchicago.org.

In September, the City will initiate a program to replace every customers' water meter. This **meter replacement program** will take approximately 12 months to complete. The City's contractor, Water Resources, will be mailing a letter to all households and businesses to schedule a convenient time for a plumber to work in the residence or place of business to replace the water meter(s). Water will be turned off for a brief period of time while the meter is being replaced. The contractor's employees will be in the field in early September to begin identifying where the shut-off valves are located for each property to make the meter replacement go more smoothly. For further details, visit www.westchicago.org.

Police News

October was designated as **Crime Prevention Month** in 1984 by the National Crime Prevention Council. Here are some common-sense reminders and tips on how to keep safe:

- teach children about strangers
- always know where your children are at and who they are with
- keep all car doors locked (with windows rolled up) and valuables out of sight
- keep houses locked and garage doors closed when not in the area
- stay in well lit areas, use the buddy system, avoid known crime areas, etc.
- call 9-1-1 to report any crimes and/or suspicious incidents
- get to know your neighbors and keep a look out for them
- get involved with the neighborhood watch program, if it's available in your area
- stay informed with the most current information from the Police Department by subscribing to Police E-News from the homepage of the City's website, www.westchicago.org.

Volunteers are needed for a **leaf raking event** on November 5, 2011. Contact Chris Holguin at (630) 918-0299 or email kholguin@westchicago.org.

Thanks to all who came out to this year's **National Night Out**. Our community partnerships continue to thrive!



Back to School Safety Reminder
Be Alert, Slow Down
Protect our community's children

Culture

West Chicago celebrates its multi-cultural roots this fall with several special events. An Oktoberfest-style community dinner, planned for Friday, September 9, 2011, will honor twenty-seven guests from West Chicago's sister city, Taufkirchen Vils, Germany who arrive on September 2, 2011 for a ten-day visit. Twenty-one of the visitors are members of the renowned Schuhplattler dance group, Volkstracht-Erhaltungs-Verein d'Vilstaler Gebensbach e.V. They perform traditional Bavarian folk dances and dramatic plays in their Bavarian dialect. The group has existed for over 75 years. They have participated in Munich's Oktoberfest parade several times. The visit is being organized by West Chicago Sister Cities. For more information about the community dinner or dance performance, visit www.westchicagosistercities.com or contact Melissa Birch at (630) 621-0128.



West Chicago City Museum, 132 Main Street
(630) 231-3376 • www.westchicago.org/museum
Tues.- Fri. 10:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Sat. 12:00 - 3:00 p.m.



Dancers from the renowned Ballet Folklorico Quetzacoatl perform in many age categories.

Colorful dance performances, festive music, car show for charity, and fancy footwork demonstrated by soccer aficionados during a kids' soccer camp will be some of the highlights of **West Chicago's Mexican Independence Day Parade and Celebration**. The event takes place on **Sunday, September 18, 2011 from noon to 9:00 p.m.** and begins with a parade, which steps off from Joliet Street and Augusta Avenue and makes its way over the A. Eugene Rennels Bridge into downtown West Chicago.

Members of Volkstracht-Erhaltungs-Verein d'Vilstaler Gebensbach e.V. will be among German visitors. Photo courtesy of Angela Müller



Adriana Perez's winning entry in the Fine Arts Fiesta craft division was a dress made out of 11,300 paper clips. Photo courtesy of Uwe Gsell

GALLERY 200

200 Main Street • (630) 293-9550
www.gallery200.org

Thurs. & Fri. 12:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Sat. & Sun. 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.



Design your own "Little Ghost" with artist Heide Morris in one of the class offerings during Artoberfest.

Artist and actor **Mark Fortman** will display pen and ink drawings of area landmarks, as well as hand-painted scenery and props from local theater productions in his Featured Artist exhibit on display at Gallery 200 from September 9 through October 2, 2011. Meet Mark at a free **Opening Reception**, including live music and refreshments, on **Friday, September 9, 2011 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.**

Artoberfest at Gallery 200 brings a **month-long schedule** of cultural opportunities including classes, demonstrations, featured artists, Local Music Night and Gallery Theater. Also featured is a reunion of past Gallery 200 members exhibiting a variety of two and three dimensional art. A free **Opening Reception on Saturday, October 8, 2011 from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.** includes refreshments and entertainment and offers guests an opportunity to meet the artists. Full details may be found at www.westchicago.org.

Congratulations and thanks to all those

involved in this year's **Railroad Days Fine Arts Fiesta**. The Cultural Arts Commission would like to thank the artists, volunteers, City Museum, Park District and Community High School personnel for all their assistance. The awards for the People's Choice winners were presented at the City Council meeting of August 15, 2011. Some of the winning art work is on display through September in the hallway at City Hall. A complete list of the People's Choice award winners may be found at www.westchicago.org.



Former Mayor A. Eugene Rennels seated at Sesqui-centennial Park in front of the bridge renamed in his honor.

Former West Chicago Mayor A. Eugene Rennels was honored by the City of West Chicago for his many contributions of public service, by renaming the Wilson Avenue Bridge the *A. Eugene Rennels Bridge*.

A special proclamation was read at the August 1, 2011 City Council meeting honoring **retiring Fire Chief Ron Ackerman** for his 31 years of service to the West Chicago community.



Read more on both stories in **Raising the Bar**, a blog found on www.westchicago.org.

Job Fair

Wayne Township, along with the IL Department of Employment Security, will be hosting a **Job Fair** on **Tuesday, October 11, 2011 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.** Wayne Township is located at **27W031 North Avenue in West Chicago**. All are welcome to attend. Visit their website at www.waynetwp-il.org for updated information or call Cindy at (630) 231-7140.

Volunteer

Make a difference for the environment or the arts in your community, and meet like-minded people while doing so. Consider public service as a volunteer on either the **Environmental or Cultural Arts Commission**.

There are currently **two vacancies in both Commissions**. Those interested should contact City Hall at (630) 293-2200 x 170 for more information.



Look who's new

Stop in and say hello to our newest West Chicago businesses.

Color Iris Hair Salon
117 Main Street

Egg Yolk Café
100 S. Neltnor Blvd.

D & M Laundry, LLC
934 E. Roosevelt Road

Samy's Hair Salon
1400 S. Neltnor Blvd.
Suite 104

@ www.westchicago.org

- ➔ Artoberfest Schedule
- ➔ Citywide Recycling Event List
- ➔ Washington Street Update
- ➔ Brush Pickup Information



NUMBERS TO KNOW

Fire Administration (630) 231-2123
Fire Emergency 911
Police Administration . . . (630) 293-2222
Police Response 911

City Administration

City Hall (630) 293-2200
 Michael B. Kwasman, *Mayor*
 Nancy Smith, *City Clerk*
 Don Earley, *City Treasurer*
 Michael Guttman, *City Administrator*



Window to West Chicago is published six times a year by the City of West Chicago. It is designed to keep our residents informed about city government, services and events. Check out www.westchicago.org for more information.

CITY COUNCIL

Ward 1

Lori Chassee (630) 231-8709
 James Beifuss (630) 231-0584

Ward 2

Ronald Monroe (630) 231-6967
 James Smith (630) 231-1524

Ward 3

Ruben Pineda (630) 231-3181
 Russell Radkiewicz (630) 231-5679

Ward 4

Al Murphy (630) 231-4624
 Sandy Dimas (630) 293-5170

Ward 5

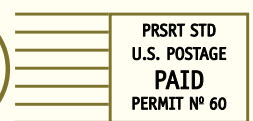
Kurt Meissner (630) 231-9302
 John C. Smith, Jr. (630) 293-3802

Ward 6

Rebecca Stout (630) 293-7335
 Nanette Connelly (630) 231-2482

Ward 7

Nicholas Dzierzanowski . . . (630) 587-9608
 Matt Fuesting (630) 762-1996



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