

Recruiting Vacant Land Ambassadors NOW!

Submitted by Lydia Yoder

Growth Through Energy and Community Health (GTECH) is on a search for ten Northsiders looking to make change in their neighborhood. From the fall of 2014 to the spring of 2015, these individuals, called Ambassadors, will meet for classes and workshops to learn about Pittsburgh's vacant land issue and think about recreating vacant lots in ways that benefit their communities.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2015, each Ambassador will make their ideas come to life. Participants will use what they've learned in the classroom to build their very own project on a vacant lot in their neighborhood. We'd love to have an Allegheny West resident as part of the cohort.

Please help spread the word or recommend any potential Ambassadors. Here is a link where more information about the program can be found along with the application: <https://gtechstrategies.org/reclaimnorthside/>

Star Spangled

This year marks the 200th birthday of the writing of our national anthem. If you are looking to take a road trip, there are celebrations in nearby Baltimore to mark this event. The sight of those "broad stripes and bright stars" were the inspiration for Francis Scott Key as he watched the raising of a huge American flag at Fort McHenry to celebrate an important victory over the British forces during the War of 1812. The writing of the song gave an enhanced significance to our flag and the struggles for freedom and independence that it signified.

On September 14, 1814, U.S. soldiers at Baltimore's Fort McHenry raised a huge American flag to celebrate a crucial victory over British forces during the War of 1812. The sight of those "broad stripes and bright stars" inspired Francis Scott Key to write a song that eventually became the United States national anthem. Key's words gave new significance to a national symbol and started a tradition through which generations of Americans have invested the flag with their own meanings and memories.

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ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

September 2014

A Message From President Bob:

*WHILE not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare*

*Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.*

— William Wordsworth, September 1815

After the muggy weather we had for the Labor Day Block Party on N. Lincoln Avenue, it's hard to believe that autumn is on its way. Still, the calendar tells me that it's so. While we've had an unusual amount of cool weather this past summer, I'm still looking forward to the crisper days ahead.

I think everyone who attended the block party will agree that it was another excellent Allegheny West event. A tip of the cap goes to Tom Barbush - the Corn Master, and Scott Mosser - the grill master who tended the hot coals and turned out some truly excellent roasted ears of corn. I'd also like to thank everyone who provided side dishes or desserts. They were uniformly excellent, with the possible exception of the Keebler Cashew Sandies that I brought. Thanks, too, go to all the folks who helped set up before the event, or cleaned up afterwards. I'd also like to express my appreciation to Cathy Serventi, who staffed the donations table for the food pantry, and to all those who donated. The biggest thanks, though, go to Tim Zinn, our Membership Chair, who has overseen these events for the past two years. He's done a great job with Allegheny West parties and community events. Give him your thanks when you pass him on the street, and tell him that his beard looks good, too.

Please don't forget the next membership meeting on Tuesday, September 9, at Calvary U.M. Church on Beech. There will be lots of exciting games and prizes. Well, maybe there won't be games or prizes, but it will be an informative meeting nonetheless.

I'll leave you now with one more September quote:

I love September, especially when we're in it.
- Willie Stargell

I hope you have a great month.

Bob Griewahn
President, AWCC

The Gazette

The monthly newsletter of the Allegheny West Civic Council. Editor: Fran Barbush
Letters, Submissions, Advertising and other notices:
Gazette@alleghenywest.org.

AWCC September Calendar

AWCC General Membership Meeting
Calvary United Methodist Church
(Beech Avenue Entrance)
Tuesday, September 9 @ 7:30pm

Housing & Planning Committee Meeting
(845 N. Lincoln Avenue)
Tuesday, September 16 @ 7:30pm

AWCC Executive Committee Meeting
806 Western Avenue
Tuesday, September 30 @ 7:30pm

Neighborhood Clean Up
806 Western Avenue
Saturday, September 27 @ 9:00am

YOU'RE INVITED TO A



Meet & Greet

Catch up with neighbors, enjoy some light refreshments and get the latest scoop on what's happening in nearby Allegheny Commons Park and at The Western PA Humane Society! We will tour the shelters facilities, meet some animals and learn about the different services provided here at their Northside location! * Humans only please!*

Where: The Western PA Humane Society
1101 Western Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15233

When: Wednesday, September 10th, 7-9 PM

This event is FREE but space is limited; please RSVP by emailing Erin@pittsburghnorthside.com or by calling 412-330-2569



AWCC – This is YOUR Civic Council

Submitted by Tim Zinn

Many times in the past I have written about the importance of volunteers to the Allegheny West Civic Council. We are, after all, a volunteer-based organization with no paid staff. Without dedicated volunteers, we would accomplish nothing and AWCC would cease to exist. Fortunately, we have a core group of faithful volunteers that we know will continue to give of their time and talents. However, we have very few NEW members that attend civic council meetings, and are therefore knowledgeable of the workings of AWCC and understand its structure, finances, current challenges, and projects.

The problem, however, is two-fold. Not all can be blamed on neighborhood apathy or the seeming unwillingness of some of our newer residents to become involved in the civic council. The bylaws of AWCC specifically direct each committee chair to "select from between two and ten members for their committees within 45 days following their election. This stipulation has not been rigorously followed in the past. However, this is precisely how we encourage new or currently non-participating members to become active in AWCC and ensure that we have a strong membership and future leaders within the organization. Please thoughtfully consider any request you may receive from a committee chair to join their committee.

In the next few months we will prepare for our largest fundraiser of the year, the Christmas House Tour. While this event draws dozens of volunteers from not only inside our neighborhood but far beyond it, there is always a need for additional help with some aspect of the event. If you have never participated in the house tour, I encourage you to do so.

In addition to the tours, numerous other challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year. We need your help to ensure that the quality of life we enjoy in Allegheny West continues to be enhanced year after year. Show your support of YOUR civic council by becoming a member, renewing your membership, volunteering, joining a committee, and attending the monthly general membership meeting.

WANTED: Hosts for Allegheny Commons Meet & Greets!

Love Allegheny Commons Park and looking for a way to meet new people in the neighborhood?

Host an Allegheny Commons Meet & Greet! These small gatherings with neighbors, light food and beverages exist to celebrate Allegheny Commons and to inform the community about the park restoration process. Hosts invite friends from the neighborhood and prospective Friends of Allegheny Commons to the event. Participating in an Allegheny Commons Meet & Greet is a great way to learn about current and future projects taking place in the park. If interested in hosting or attending a Meet & Greet please email: erin@pittsburghnorthside.com

Erin Tobin | Project Administrator | Allegheny Commons Initiative

Donna Otto: A Life Well-Lived

Submitted by Fran Barbush

The members of the AWCC extend our sympathy to Donna's surviving family. Her devoted husband, Gary; her daughter, Lonice Wells (Keith), Cindy Musselman; her stepson, Aaron Otto; sister, Laura Artinger (Robert); and beloved grandchildren, Layla Raye Musselman, Wynn Musselman, and Laura Wells.



Bob Griewahn asked if I could write something about our neighbor Donna Otto. For those of you who knew her, I hope that you will recognize her from my reflections, and find inspiration from the way she lived her life.

What words could I use to describe Donna Otto?

Beautiful, funny, successful, charming, generous, loyal, competitive, focused, engaging, welcoming, compassionate, and loving come to my mind very quickly. But these individual words could never capture the vitality and love of life that she exhibited. When I first met Donna she was dating Gary and was meeting other long time neighbors for the first time. She completely disarmed me with her candor. I learned that you could talk with Donna about anything. She actively listened, and had a gift for building strong relationships. All her friends sought her counsel, her listening ear, and her shoulder. I think it was because she valued people, and was open and honest with them. I can also say that I never heard her speak negatively about anyone. Donna had accomplished much in her life, but would remind people that she was from "the bottoms" of McKees Rocks. She never wanted to put too much distance from where she grew-up.

I feel so blessed to have known her, become one of her friends, and shared wonderful precious moments. My last fun moment with Donna was on the 4th of July. I met her on her porch on my way home from watching the fireworks on Allegheny River. Carrie Doyle, brought out some sparklers. A collection of neighbors – young and old; the grandchildren – Layla Raye, Wynn, and Laura; Donna and I enjoyed one of those youthful moments twirling and writing with sparkler wands. I thought to myself, "Remember this." I try to keep these wonderful moments strongly in my memory. They are precious to me.

Donna loved life. She did all that was possible to spend as much time living as she could. That is why it is particularly sad that she lost her battle with pancreatic cancer on Tuesday, August 5, 2014. After her death, I was talking with friends and we were surprised that we had a common thought. "What Would Donna Do?" We decided to keep this in our minds when faced with decisions. We felt we couldn't go wrong if we approached life as she did. We spoke about the extra time she would take to invite you in; drive you somewhere; look at your pictures; share a glass of wine; sing and dance in the kitchen; help you select an outfit for a special occasion; or any number of other ways that she showed that she valued you. In doing so we all hope to be a little more like her.