



Fall/Winter 2008

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## Wooden Alley Restoration

Modern day Chicago alleys primarily consist of asphalt paving. A few alleys in older parts of the city can still be found paved with Belgian block from the early twentieth century. However, in the 1800s, wood block was the standard material for alley paving. According to one source, in 1891, three billion board feet of lumber passed through Chicago's thriving lumber market, and Chicago had 481 miles of wood-paved streets and alleys. While practically all wood block alleys in the city have been repaved with asphalt over the years, at least two still exist.

One of them, known as the Gold Coast Wooden Alley, is in the Astor Street Historic District and thus is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It dates to the late 19th century, and runs from State Street east to Astor, just south of North Avenue, in the Gold Coast neighborhood. (The other known remaining wood block alley is on the 2100 block of North Hudson Avenue.) John Russick, senior curator for the Chicago History Museum, calls this little time capsule "one of the most important alleys in the city." But "because [alleys] were everywhere and were so common, we failed to recognize how important it was to document them thoroughly," he says. "It's a classic example of how the everyday becomes historically significant."



Efforts are currently underway to restore and preserve this unique part of Chicago's history.

Kaswell & Co., from Framingham, Massachusetts, a company that specializes in this type of wooden alley restoration, has advised that the wood blocks used in our Gold Coast Wooden Alley are "square-cornered" creosote-treated

cedar blocks, about 3-1/2 inches in depth and 3-3/4 inches by 10 inches in size. Standard block size today (for industrial purposes) is 3-1/2 inches in depth and 3-3/4 inches by 8 inches in size. It may be possible to re-use some of the existing wooden blocks as well as some similar wooden blocks that have been salvaged from another wooden alley located near Milwaukee Avenue. To the extent that old wood blocks are not available for the project, such new wood blocks could be used.

The restoration project would involve restoring the wooden alley between State and Astor with wooden blocks, either salvaged material or new material, and then installing a new "green" alley on the adjacent stretch that runs from the wooden alley south to Burton Street. We might also seek to install a more attractive and historically appropriate fence on the Cardinal's residence adjacent to the wooden alley as well as antique-styled gas lights along the wooden alley.

This restored wooden alley would be of great historic significance and would add tremendously to the unique character and beauty of the Gold Coast neighborhood in which it exists.

Our 43rd Ward Alderman, Vi Daley, has committed \$160,000 of City funding to this wooden alley restoration project and will take a leadership role in supervising the project. [Gold Coast Neighbors proposes to participate in the project with a donation of \$10,000]

For more information about this project contact Alderman Vi Daley, 773-327-9111 or ward43@cityofchicago.org.

Story by Joe Gromacki





## Ghouly Park Halloween Party is a Huge Success

The fourth annual "Ghouly" Park Halloween Party at Goudy Park, Astor and Goethe, attracted close to 1,500 local children, parents and grandparents over the three and a half-hour event held on October 31st.

The park was decked out with many new displays, including the "Land of Awe" populated by large inflatable, mobile characters; "Eerie Lane" surrounded by screaming skeletons, ghosts and witches hanging from trees; and "Ghouly Graveyard" featuring headstones surrounded by skulls and spooky lights. The kids enjoyed the "Little World of Wonders" puppet show presented by PuppetBike.com and interacted with a Magician Vampire and Frankenstein on Stilts. Throughout the park, committee members in costumes passed out candy from pumpkin heads.

Sponsored by Gold Coast Neighbors and the Chicago Park District, the event was made possible by generous donations of funds or talent from many of the retailers patronized by Gold Coast families, as well as from two residents. GCN wishes to send out special Halloween "Thanks" to Oak Bank, FedEx, CVS Pharmacy, Walgreen's, Jewel-Osco, P.J. Clarke's, The Lodge Management Group, Judy and Jack Klutznick, Jackie Chesler, Formula Fitness Clubs, Hotel Indigo, 3rd Coast Café, RJD Photo, PuppetBike.com, John's Cleaners and Mario's Restaurant.

Thanks to the Halloween committee members for their work on soliciting support and producing the event; Co-Chairs Sophia and Mike Boccio, Kathy and Jerry Koster, Elizabeth and John Gable, Sandi Schlueter, John Schmidt, Abby Zanarini and Laurie and Dale Ashcraft. The committee also wishes to acknowledge the good counsel of event founder, Tom Gariti, and 2007 Chair Jean Gamble.



**Indeed, it was an eerily good time for all.**



## Gold Coast Neighbors 2009 Fiscal Year Budget

REVENUE YEAR ENDED 9/30	2009	2008	2007	2006
Dues, Contributions, etc.	\$35,900	\$25,009	\$24,515	\$22,880
Ghouly, Goudy Parkway Donations	6,025	5,100	3,579	2,821
Evening on Astor, net	24,000	23,342	22,472	18,836
Spring Event, net	8,500	4,691	48,580	11,882
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$74,425</b>	<b>\$58,142</b>	<b>\$99,146</b>	<b>\$56,419</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Administration, Acct	\$23,200	\$25,168	\$21,132	\$21,225
Annual Meeting	2,000	4,531	2,157	3,492
Insurance, Legal	1,075	1,018	1,012	1,572
Educational Mailings, Marketing	16,400	10,141	30,920	16,363
Donations	10,100	20,200	20,000	21,564
Beautif., Goudy, Ghouly, Outreach	12,125	16,626	7,652	4,719
Doggie Bags, net	0	652	4,004	4,626
Web	1,100	1,337	3,278	868
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>	<b>\$79,673</b>	<b>\$90,155</b>	<b>\$74,429</b>
<b>BALANCE – 9/30</b>	<b>\$67,193</b>	<b>\$58,768</b>	<b>\$80,209</b>	<b>\$71,218</b>

The GCN Board of Directors has approved the following budget for FY 2009. GCN is aggressively seeking new donors and sponsors in 2009 to support our various activities. GCN is also embarking on a spirited membership drive and hopes to increase dues from prospect solicitation. As always GCN will continue good expense management. Also, a successful resolution of the second NNPC lawsuit would be terrific. Any questions about the budget, please call the GCN office at 312.360.0386.



[goldcoastneighbors.org](http://goldcoastneighbors.org)

The Jr. League has kindly offered GCN the use of their home/headquarters located at 1447 N. Astor for our bi-monthly meetings.

Left to right: Laura Anderson, Junior League of Chicago President, Maureen O'Brien, outgoing GCN President, Bill Ketchum, New GCN President, Vern Broders, GCN Director

### 26th Evening on Astor ~ Oh, What a Night!

With the skies threatening overhead the Gold Coast Neighbors Association welcomed neighbors and friends to celebrate the GCN's 26th Annual Evening on Astor block party. The evening offered food, musical entertainment, children's games and prizes. GCN members danced in the streets to the music of the Michael Lerich Orchestra and enjoyed food service from neighborhood favorite, Mario's Gold Coast Ristorante. Libations were donated by GCN director Chris Ryan from the Division Street Merchants Association.

To accommodate the growing number of children attending the event, the children's game and play areas were expanded. Thanks to the Chicago Park District for working with the GCN to include Goudy Park in the children's area.

Always a highlight of the evening, the raffle was graciously emceed again this year by Leslie Hindman. Thanks to the people and businesses that donated prizes. Through the generosity of this year's corporate sponsor, Sudler-Sotheby's International Realty, the angels, the raffle prize donors, table sponsors, the evening was a big success.

The only complaint heard at the end of the evening..... The party ended too early.



## President's Message

GCN members, please welcome your new President, Bill Ketchum. It's been my pleasure and honor to serve as GCN President for past three years and I'd like to outline a few of things we have accomplished during my tenure. During the summer of 2007 GCN celebrated our 50th year as a neighborhood association with a tour of two private homes in the Gold Coast topped off with a gala evening of food, drink and good friends at the Chicago History Museum.

As part of our 50th celebration, we donated five trees to the City of Chicago that were planted in city neighborhoods hit hard by storms. We also established a program with the Mayor's Office for 'Green Chicago' that allows citizens to donate trees to be planted in city parkways and boulevards, donated in memory of a loved one.

GCN has been working with Vi Daley and the Chicago History Museum for the past three years to preserve the wooden alley behind the Cardinal's residence on State Parkway and we're happy to report that Walsh Construction Company is also now involved with this project. (Please see wooden alley article in this newsletter)

Sudler-Sotheby's and its CEO, Janice Corley, a Gold Coast resident, have been corporate sponsors for the last two years and have already agreed to sponsor EOA in 2009. With the help of State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and newly elected State Senate President, John Cullerton, GCN has applied to the State of Illinois for tax exempt status and this will save GCN a lot of money if approved.

During my tenure I've continued to work on issues with area developers and concerned neighbors to make sure our neighborhood continues to remain the best place to live in Chicago.

One of the accomplishments I'm most proud of is getting Mayor Richard Daley to agree to be the guest speaker at our 50th year Annual Meeting in October of 2007. As you know we had over 340 people in attendance. For the 2008 October Annual Meeting our guest speakers spoke on relevant area issues such as crime prevention, identity theft. and recycling. It was a terrific three years. Thank you all.



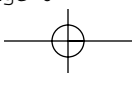
Maureen O'Brien, Immediate Past President, top. Maureen with with new President, Bill Ketchum, bottom.

## Soccer Field Update



The artificial turf soccer field in the south fields of Lincoln Park has been completed and officially opened on November 1st, 2008. The soccer field is open to the public and is available for local schools and sports organizations. Reservations for play must be made through the Chicago Park District. (see photo for information)

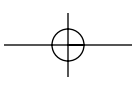
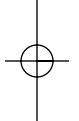
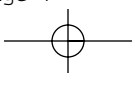




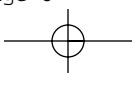
Bob & Carol Dowey Productions presents an evening of  
*26<sup>th</sup> Evening on Astor*  
 Wednesday, September 3, 2008  
 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm  
 Astor, Astoria, Seaside and Astoria  
 Astoria, Oregon September 3, 2008

All Evening on Astor Photos  
 by Bob Dowey









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