



Times

CALENDAR



All events are held at the Old Town Triangle Center unless otherwise designated. Meetings are open to all members.

TRIANGLE EVENTS

November 10, 7:00 p.m.
OTTA Board Meeting

November 16, 7:00 p.m.
Neighborhood Improvements Meeting

November 17, 7:00 p.m.
HD/PZ Meeting

December 8, 7:00 p.m.
OTTA Board Meeting

December 15, 7:00 p.m.
HD/PZ Meeting



OPENINGS

November 8, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Land and Sea
Exhibition of watercolors and pastels by
Maureen Carr, Reven Fellars, Cindy
Johnson,
Geri Kaye, and Nancy Pinzke

December 6, 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Glass-Up Against the Wall
Fused glass art work by Michelle Rial

SPECIAL EVENTS

December 5, 4:00-6:00 p.m.
OTTA Holiday Party and Song-fest

January 28, 2010, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
OTTA Annual Dinner and Election

Note: The date of the 2010 Old Town Art Fair is **June 12-13**; not June 11-12 as listed in the September issue. The First Sight, Friday Night party is **June 11**. We apologize for the error.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



FERN BOMCHILL DAVIS

DEAR NEIGHBORS, As I write this, I'm looking at a gorgeous fall moon after spending a sunny fall day watching our Chicago Bears win at Soldier Field. A win is usually enough to make a successful Sunday, but today, there was a special treat—one that made me quite proud. 🍂 The game today was dedicated to Walter Payton on the tenth anniversary of his death. Walter was a great Bears running back, nicknamed "Sweetness", and he was fantastic to watch. The tribute today began with nostalgic pictures of Walter, and Old Town's very own "Sounds of Sweetness", led by Jeff Weaver, beautifully singing the national anthem. What a way to start the day! 🍂 As you know, in attempting to better serve our members, OTTA conducted a survey this summer. I hope you participated. As promised, here are the results. 🍂 **Communication:** The OTTA members want to keep in touch with their community. Our members want to know more about what is happening and want to hear more from us. So, you will hear from us more. Many requested more frequent e-mail updates. (If we don't have your e-mail, please get it to us). And we will keep you better informed in our newsletter and our e-mails as to what we are doing and planning. 🍂 **Membership:** The community is growing, and we're getting a lot of "new young blood". Our members want us to bring these untapped resources into the organization with our "oldies but goodies". Great idea! Now, let's all put our heads together and figure out how to have the necessary successful membership drive. 🍂 **Membership Benefits:** We are thrilled that our members enjoy what the association provides, but it is clear that you want new and different activities and maybe an expanded role for the organization.

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We heard you and we listened.

Step 1: We have formed a long-range Planning Committee. This committee will evaluate the OTTA goals, programs, resources, and member benefits with an objective to provide your OTTA Board of Directors with recommended directives for the association.

Step 2: Our talented, energetic **Emily Rose** will serve as chairperson. We are populating the committee with representatives from each of our constituencies. If you want to be involved, please contact Emily. This is a tremendous undertaking, but it's well worth the effort; and I know the results will help us strengthen our very wonderful and unique association.

Step 3: Stay tuned.

So, goodbye summer; hello fall. To each of you, a belated Happy Halloween and an early Happy Thanksgiving 🍂

EXCLUSIVELY IN THIS ISSUE'S WEB VERSION OF THE OLD TOWN TRIANGLE TIMES—2 ADDITIONAL PAGES OF COLOR PHOTOS OF THE CHILI COOK-OFF AND HOE-DOWN. SEE PAGES 9 AND 10

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

EMILY ROSE, CHAIRMAN

The Nominating Committee met and slated the following for officers and directors of the OTTA Board of Directors for 1910.

Officers

President: Fern Bomchill Davis

1st Vice President: Phil Graff

Treasurer: John Knoche

Secretary: Chris Beer

Directors

Jacqui Thams

Sue Apey

Continuing as Directors are Debbie Day, Jeff Pines, Dirk Vos, and Alice Huff.

Additional nominations may be made by written petition signed by ten percent of the total voting membership (49 signatures). Each nomination requires a separate petition. Candidates must have been voting members of the organization for 90 days prior to the election. All nominations must be received by the Secretary of the Board on, or prior to, 11:59 p.m. on December 10. At that time, nominations shall be deemed closed.

The Committee was composed of the following members: Emily Rose, Sheila Bracken, Alice Brunner, Tom Payne, Linda Sarli

BIO FOR NEW DIRECTORS

Susan Apey is an art educator who has started her own business, *Simply Art*, to teach art to young children. She has a Master's Degree in Interdisciplinary Art Education. Prior to the birth of her daughter, Gabriela, Susan taught art at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Laboratory School in Evanston, Illinois.

Susan met her husband Emilio when both were participating in triathlons, but with a one-year old, they are now lucky to get a short jog in the schedule. Susan moved to the Old Town neighborhood four years ago; Emilio is a long-time resident. In addition to spending time with her family, Susan enjoys creating and looking at art,

COMMITTEE REPORTS

reading, good food, and traveling.

John Knoche is a retired businessman

with a background in computer services and data analysis. He worked primarily with financial institutions. John and his wife, Patricia Cassiday, lived in the Crilly Court complex for a time before moving to Riverside. But the allure of Old Town was too strong to resist and they came back in 2005.

Since returning, John has served as the able chair of the Artist Breakfast for the Old Town Art Fair and has been an active participant in neighborhood activities, including social events at the Triangle and the Spring Clean-up. John and Pat have three grown children: Craig, Kevan, and Jane.

Jacqui Thams Jacqui moved to Crilly Court in June 2008 with her husband Keith and their daughters Maita and Stephi. She had hardly unpacked when she was recruited to co-chair the 2009 *First Sight, Friday Night* event for the Old Town Art Fair, a task she performed so well she was persuaded to return in 2010. Husband Keith did yeoman's service hanging art for the event. He will also, no doubt, be pressed into service again. Jacqui serves on the Membership Committee for the Triangle, helping to organize and implement the many neighborhood activities. Keith lent his sophisticated palate to the judge's panel for the chili competition at the 2009 hoe-down.

Jacqui graduated from Boston University and the University of Miami. She practices Immigration Law, and is fluent in both French and Spanish. She enjoys jogging, travel, and reading historical novels.

ART FAIR

CHRIS BEER, GENERAL CHAIR

The holidays are right around the corner. If you're looking for a fun gift for a fellow fan of Old Town, consider purchasing several of our vintage OTAF posters and hav-

ing them framed at Art de Triumph (www.artdetriumph.com, 773-832-4038), the official framing sponsor of the 2009 Old Town Art Fair. For more information on the availability of OTAF posters, contact Leslie Wolfe at lwolfe@oldtowntriangle.com.

The kick-off meeting for the 2010 Old Town Art Fair will be held on November 12, 2009. If you are interested in becoming more involved with the event, please contact Chris Beer at chair@oldtownartfair.org or 312-320-5992. We would love to welcome more neighbors to the committee! As always, thank you for your continued support of the Old Town Art Fair.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENTS

DIRK VOS, CHAIRMAN

There was an error in the October issue of the newsletter regarding the contact information for the Old Town Brick Repair, Replacement, and Beautification Program. Under the **Process for Participation** section, the contact person should be **Shannon Raglin Ceccola at 312-475-3152**. Robin will help you order bricks, obtain City of Chicago permits, and coordinate installation dates. Further, in the same section, submission of the original paid invoice should be sent to OTTA or e-mailed to **BrickProgram@oldtowntriangle.com** or via fax to **312-884-8936**. To view the entire brochure, please go on our website oldtowntriangle.com. On the home page under New, the Brick repair program is the first item. Click on "find out more" to bring up the document.

The following letter from Shannon will bring you up to date on what is happening with the program:

Dear Neighbors,

We are HAPPY to report...that the OTTA Brick Repair, Replacement and Beautification Program is officially underway! A number of neighbors have jumped quickly at the chance to help make our walkways and parkways safer, look better – and at the same time maintain the value of their homes and the character of ➔ **p4**

The Old Town Triangle Association Times is published ten times a year by Old Town Triangle Association Bounded by Clark Street, North Avenue, and the ghost of Ogden Avenue

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday–10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday–10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Please feel free to contact Administrators Shirley Baugher or Leslie Wolfe at the office during those hours.

OFFICERS

FERN BOMCHILL DAVIS, *President*
PHILIP GRAFF, *First Vice-President*
CHRISTINA BEER, *Second Vice-President*
MICHAEL WARNICK, *Secretary*
MARTHA CONNOLLY, *Treasurer*

DIRECTORS

MATT BEER
DEBBIE DAY
ALICE HUFF
JEFF PINES
EMILY ROSE
DIRK VOS

AN EXHIBITION OF WATERCOLORS & PASTELS This exciting show from students in the Old Town Art School will grace the walls of the Triangle Gallery in November. All of the painters have national reputations and have had their works widely displayed. ¶ **Maureen Carr** is a Chicago native who has been painting watercolors for more than 15 years. Her subjects include both landscapes and urban cityscapes. She concentrates on subjects that may seem ordinary on first examination—but look closer and you will discover something much more complex. She explores the role that light plays in art and she uses light to bring life to an otherwise commonplace scene. Maureen has a fulltime career in the healthcare field. She has studied painting under different instructors at the Old Town Triangle Association and has placed her art in both private and corporate collections. ¶ **Cynthia Johnson** has been studying watercolor and pastel for the past 12 years at the Art Institute of Chicago, Palette and Chisel, and the Old Town Triangle Art School. She has also participated in workshops at the International School of Painting, Drawing, and Sculpture in Italy. Her creativity and her emotions come through in her beautifully executed pastels and watercolors. ¶ **Gerri Kaye** is a native of Chicago and has been intrigued by color since she picked up her first crayon. She specializes in painting landscapes and nature scenes in both watercolor and pastel. ¶ **Reven Fellars** is a longtime Old Town resident and Art School student. Her breath-taking pastels have gained her recognition, and her shows are eagerly anticipated by her many

Left to right top: Cindy Johnson, Nancy Penske.

Left to right bottom: Reven Fellars, Maureen Carr, Gerri Kaye.



NOVEMBER land and sea

Maureen Carr,
Reven Fellars,
Cynthia
Johnson,
Gerri Kaye and
Nancy Penzke

fans. Reven is perhaps best known for her collaboration with best friend, the late Nancy Pinzke. Reven and Nancy attended many painting workshops together. One of their most memorable shows recalled a trip to Provence and featured fields of lavender. She is also justly famous for her pastel portraits of family and friends. ¶ **Nancy Pinzke's** palette left the Triangle in March of 2009. Her spirit never will. She was a talented artist whose works graced the walls of the gallery in solo shows and in concert with those of her fellow students. As an artist, Nancy showed an appreciation for subjects that others overlooked. This past winter, when most of us were swearing at pot holes, Nancy turned them into works of art. Her pastel pot hole series won her a gallery show and a radio spot. She brought her incomparable analytical skills to everything she painted, from lavender fields to sea-

scapes. This latest show is a celebration of her life and art. ¶



December brings a most unusual show to the Triangle Gallery: *Glass Up Against the Wall*, a collection of fused glass works by Michelle Rial. After receiving a degree in Visual Communications, Michelle first designed trade show exhibits. But she really wanted to seek a more creative artistic path. She had always been intrigued by glass, so she taught herself how to design and produce leaded, stained glass windows. This led to learning to fuse glass, which involved creating multiple layers each with its own unique pattern. One by one, the layers of fused glass sheets were cut, broken, and ground to fit specific shapes. They were then stacked to create a finished image. Additional elements, such as finely powdered glass, chips, and stringers were added to increase texture and highlights. Once all of the layers were complete, the pieces were placed in a glass kiln and fired—an eight-hour process. Only when the glass has cooled to room temperature can the kiln be opened, revealing the

DECEMBER glass—up against the wall Michelle Rial

full color, texture, and beauty of the piece. ¶ **Michelle** has participated in many art shows featuring glass work, the 2009 season. The show will be up from December 4, 2009 to January 15, 2010. A formal reception will be held on December 6 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the Triangle Gallery. ¶



our wonderful, charming Old Town.

To view a sample of brick work recently completed, take a stroll north along the 1700 block of Sedgwick (west side of street) – the work was completed in less than three days and is receiving rave reviews! **Do the bricks in front of your home need some TLC?** Remember, the OTTA will provide 20% cash back to Triangle neighbors who replace and/or repair the parkway and/or sidewalk brick work next to their home.

There are still a few good weeks remaining before the weather turns – NOW is a great time to take advantage of this terrific program – to learn more, visit: http://www.oldtowntriangle.com/association/nic/BrickProgram_FINAL_10.15.09.pdf. If you have questions, or to formally get started, contact Shannon Raglin Cecola BrickProgram@oldtowntriangle.com) and her volunteer team. They will be happy to guide you through the process.

PLEASE, jump in – the historic bricks are a signature of our lovely neighborhood – preserving them is something we can all do together one house at a time!

MEMBERSHIP

MICHAEL WARNICK, CHAIRMAN

We are pleased to report that the October hoe down was a big success. The event drew quite possibly the largest crowd ever to an Old Town neighborhood activity. The south room was crammed with children waiting their turn on the bouncy-bouncy moon walker and in the balloon line. In the north room, neighbors munched happily on good eats: corn bread, cole slaw, and, of course, CHILI! Thanks to all of you who lent loving hands to make and feed us. And thanks to our judges: Chef Ryan Poli of Perennial Restaurant, Ray Clark, Keith Thams, and Christina Wojtas who tasted

their way through 17 different chili entries to come up with winners in two categories: Best Traditional Chili—Lucy Wojtas; and Most Original Chili—Lucy Baldwin. They were all so good that Chef Ryan declared at the end of the judging he wanted to be a contestant next year. All contestants received spice packets of cinnamon and ginger from The Spice House on Wells. Winners went home with a gift box containing four jars of special Thanksgiving spices, cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, and whole nutmeg. The Whiskey Holler Bluegrass Band had us tapping our toes and clapping our hands. It's trite but true—a good time was had by all.

Coming up on **December 5 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.** at the Triangle Center is our annual **Holiday Sing-Along & Caroling Party**. As in the past, the incomparable **Sounds of Sweetness**—the all-male barbershop choir from Walter Payton High School under the direction of **Jeff Weaver**, will serenade us with songs of the season. Later, Jeff will lead us in familiar favorites. Don't worry, you won't have to remember the words. We'll have song sheets. There will be entertainment for the children, and punch and cookies for all. As a special treat, we are holding a holiday raffle. The lucky winner will receive a beautiful piece of 2-D fused glass artwork from December Gallery artist, Michelle Rial (see Gallery Section for a description of the artist's creative process).

In addition to the festivities, we will be participating in the **18th District Food Drive for Needy Families**. Officers from the 18th District will be on hand to receive our contributions and distribute them. All canned, packaged non-perishable items are welcome. Last year, OTTA was the largest contributor to this drive.

The 18th District is also conduct-

ing **"Warm Hands, Warm Hearts"** again this year. This is a program to help senior citizens in our area by donating **NEW** gloves, mittens, scarves, hats and socks. Donations can be delivered to the Triangle Center between November 1 and January 15, and we will take them to the Community Policing Office for distribution. Your help is much needed and will be greatly appreciated.

CAPS

SHIRLEY BAUGHER, LIAISON

As many of you may know by now, the case of U. S. Bank vs. Andre Willis came before Judge Patrick T. Rogers in foreclosure court on October 29, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. Attorney Mariclare O'Connor was present representing the plaintiff, U. S. Bank. Defendant Andre Willis was not present, nor was he represented by counsel.

The judge reviewed that on October 22, he had notified defendant Willis that the case would be tried on October 29 and advised that Mr. Willis be represented by an attorney. Mr. Willis affirmed that he would be in court with his attorney on that date. He also agreed to submit to the court's jurisdiction in the matter.

Ms. O'Connor informed the court that she was seeking an order of possession for the property at 1739 N. North Park on behalf U. S. Bank. The judge granted the order noting that it would become effective November 5. He thanked all members of the community who had attended both hearings and praised their diligence. Alderman Vi Daley informed the judge that the building had been boarded up under an order to vacate issued by the Building Department. The building is now vacant. **T**

Green City Market Moves Indoors. On Saturday, November 7, through December 23, the Green City Market will be open every Wednesday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. The market will be closed on November 28.

A big thanks to neighbor **Candace Jordan** who not only came to the hoe down laden

with cole slaw and cornbread, she also served as official photographer for the event, catching neighbors enjoying the food and camaraderie and toe-tapping to the music of the

Whiskey Holler Bluegrass Band. She got some incredible shots, many of which she posted on her popular web site, www.CandidCandace.com. And there we were, comfortably ensconced with some of the city's top social events, for all of Chicago to see. And by the way, if you haven't checked

out her blog, please do so. Candace knows everything worth knowing that's going on in Chicago; and she writes about it with great style and enthusiasm.

News from Abraham Lincoln Elementary School

On Friday, **November 13, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.** Lincoln Elementary School will hold its annual science fair. More than 200 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students will display their projects and vie for → p6



LOW DOWN ON THE HOE DOWN



prep and set up



sweet arrangements



the chili line and . . . accompaniments



Three generations



Candace and the band

chili judge Ryan Poli and Shirley



a chance to represent Lincoln at the City level competition and, hopefully, on to the Regional and State contests. All Lincoln friends and parents will want to attend this exciting event; but you don't have to be a parent to go and appreciate what our talented students are presenting.

The PTA is continuing its popular Evening Lecture Series for a second year. The first program on Internet Safety was held on October 14 in the school auditorium and was received with great enthusiasm by those attending. You can go on the school's website, www.lincoln.cps.k12.il.us to learn about upcoming lectures.

The Dance Goes On. Thought you would like to check out the latest rehearsal photo of our own Caroline Baldwin, now dancing with the Royal Danish Ballet in Copenhagen. She never ceases to amaze.



Neighbors Beware. As the 2010 Census process beginning, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) is advising people to be

cooperative, but cautious so as not to become a victim of fraud or identity theft. The first phase of the census is already underway, and workers have begun verifying addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data.

The big question is, how do you tell the difference between a W.S. census worker and a con artist. BBB offers the following advice:

- If a U.S. census worker knocks on your door, that person will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice. Ask to see their id and their badge before answering their questions. No matter who the person is, you should never invite anyone you don't know into your home.
- Census workers are currently knocking on doors to verify address information. Do not give your social security number, credit card, or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. census.
- No matter what they ask, you really only need to tell them how many people live at your address.
- While the Census Bureau might ask for basic financial information, such as a salary range, you don't have to answer

anything at all about your financial situation. The Census Bureau will **not** ask for social security, bank account, or credit card numbers. Nor will employees solicit donations. Anyone asking for that information is **not** with the Census Bureau.

- The Census Bureau has decided **not** to work with Acorn on gathering this information. No Acorn worker should approach you saying s/he is with the Census Bureau.
- Eventually, census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person at home. But note, the Census Bureau **will not contact you by e-mail**. Be on the lookout for e-mail scams impersonating the Census Bureau.
- Never click on a link or open any attachments in an e-mail that purport to be from the Census Bureau.
- For more advice on avoiding identity theft and fraud, visit www.bbb.org

Our friends at **Care of Trees** have shared the following fall "to-do" list to help us care for our trees :

November

- Water your trees and shrubs, if dry
- Apply gypsum or humate—two natural materials—around your trees and shrubs if winter de-icing salts will be used near them

December

- Inspect your trees for signs of problems and structural concerns
- Start dormant pruning
- Apply deer repellents and anti-desiccants to prevent winter burn ☾



THE TIMES THEY ARE A'CHANGING

*You've changed, Old Town, you've changed a lot;
And the folks who used to know you all concur.
You've changed, Old Town; you're not yourself,
And if you are yourself, you're not the self you were.*

At a recent Board meeting, OTTA President, Fern Bomchill Davis, described the Triangle as a neighborhood in transition. As I look down streets filled with baby strollers—often twin or even triplet strollers—and watch as mothers deposit carloads of children at the Menomonee Club for morning activities, I have to agree. I began to wonder, however, "When have we not been in transition"? Since the early German settlers moved north from the factory district along the Chicago River west of Clark Street and started planting vegetables in the dried up swampland that would become Old Town, we have been "on the move"—always looking ahead to more and better. Old Town is Toqueville's

America in microcosm: a place where people settled, began building their houses, and moved on before the roof was finished, although the move was more demographic than geographic and more psychological than physical. Come with me on a trip through time, and I'll show you what I mean.

OLD TOWN, 1852

In the mid-nineteenth century, Old Town, then known as the Cabbage Patch, was thriving. German farmers and masons had fashioned a farming community of small, single family frame cottages with miniscule front gardens and barns in the rear. They tended to their vegetables, worked in factories, and frequented the local saloons to socialize. Amiable tavern-keepers read German-language newspapers to them or wrote letters back to relatives in the old country. They left the Cabbage Patch only to go to work or attend mass at St. Joseph's Church in their old neighborhood. The pattern of their lives changed dramatically when prominent brewer

Michael Diversey donated a plot of land at North and Hudson Avenues to build a church. In four months, local builders completed a 40 X 60 foot frame building at a cost of \$750 and dedicated it to St. Michael, Mr. Diversey's patron saint. Mr. Diversey also sold the city large tracts land adjacent to Old Town which made the area ripe for investment by a number of prosperous businessmen and politically prominent personalities including Mayor William B. Ogden, William Rand, and Andrew McNally. Under Mayor Ogden, the first swing bridge was built over the Chicago River, allowing inhabitants to move more freely from one part of the city to another. Ogden promoted railroad building, which allowed Old Town's farmers to get their product to markets. He had a red light district to the south of the Cabbage Patch razed, making the area a more desirable place to live. New industry appeared in the form of businesses like the Diversey and Lill Brewery; and the area's alderman, Lawrence Proudfoot, succeeded in having the old City Cemetery removed and replaced with a park—now Lincoln Park. Irish, Italian, and French immigrants moved in with the original German population, creating both ethnic diversity and occupational diversity. The new settlers were shoemakers, tailors, brewers, carpenters, railroad workers, and grain elevator operators. The Cabbage Patch was in transition.

TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH 1870-1920

In 1871, the Great Fire destroyed an area of more than three square miles from Taylor Street north to Fullerton and west to the Chicago River. Every house in Old Town was destroyed, but not the determination and rugged individualism of its inhabitants. With kits purchased from the Fire Relief and Aid Society, they rebuilt, often on the ashes of their former home sites. In the downtown area, architects took Chicago buildings to great heights with the introduction of the skyscraper; the City Council outlawed frame construction within the city limits, and some Cabbage Patch residents began building their houses in brick and stone; those who could not afford these materials moved north of Fullerton or west of Halsted.

Wealthy families from the south and west sides of the city moved into the area and commissioned elaborate structures in Queen Anne and Italianate styles. Small apartment houses appeared, bringing in a population of renters. A bigger and better St. Michael's Church was rebuilt at a cost of \$40,000, and the Cabbage Patch was renamed, "North Town" in deference to its upwardly mobile population. By the end of the century Germans, Scots, Hungarians, Italians, Irish, Assyrians, Filipinos, Greeks, and Japanese lived side by side, rode the same public transportation, shared the Swan Ride in Lincoln Park, and cycled together in the Lincoln Park Cycling Club.

The 1870s through the early twentieth century were boom years for North Town—years in which the community's image, as well as its population, changed. Small farmers were replaced by businessmen, large and small. Piper's Bakery opened on Wells Street. Fick & Schute Private School opened next to the bakery. North Avenue became an important commercial street, with Henry Brandt's Shoe Store, a weekly newspaper office, and an antique trunk store that catered to the needs of a population now wealthy enough to travel beyond the city limits, an ice house, and a soap factory. The North Chicago City Railway built huge stables on Orleans Street, the current site of the LaSalle School. South of the horse car barns were a gold leaf factory, a silk factory, a fac-

tory manufacturing buttons and dress ornaments, and of course, the breweries, most prominent of which was the Peter Hand Brewing Company, distributors of the still popular Meister Brau beer. Two of North Town's most prestigious houses were built for brewers, the Frederick Wacker home (1872) and the Francis J. Dewes house (1876).

During the glory days of the 1890s North Town became a destination. Sight-seeing carriages picked up tourists at the Germainia Club and drove them through the business and residential districts. Newspapermen, writers, artists, lawyers, and manufacturers came through and liked what they saw. Many bought property in the neighborhood and commissioned two and three story homes. Daniel Crilly, a South Side developer constructed row houses and apartment houses that he rented to young married couples with children and to people associated with the arts: musicians, writers, actors, and media professionals. In 1907, George Spoor brought film-making to North Town and filmed Charlie Chaplin's first feature film here. For a few years, the Keystone Kops, Francis X. Bushman, Gloria Swanson, and Wallace Beery lived in the Crilly apartments and hob-nobbed with resident poets and painters.

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE A DIME 1929-1950

The First World War and the Great Depression ended the halcyon days, and the community experienced another transition. Once-grand houses became seedy tenements—their rooms divided and sub-divided to accommodate transients seeking cheap rent. Landladies sat on front stoops barefoot and tossed trash into back yards. The Crillys and other building owners lost their property to banks, and young marrieds fled the area. A few larger homes were rented by "Madams" who established "call houses", further discouraging middle class residents from moving in. Banks refused to lend money to those who were enterprising enough to brave the depressed conditions and buy foreclosed homes. North Town was not a desirable address in the years between the wars. And then, things changed—again.

WELL HELLO, OLD TOWN 1948

By the late 1940s, thanks to the intervention of the Vice Squad, taxicabs stopped driving up at three o'clock in the morning inquiring after the Madam. The cost of a house on Crilly Court rose to a whopping \$12,000, and a group of homeowners formed an association that began renovating and selling property throughout the neighborhood. They cleaned up yards, planted gardens, placed window boxes on decks, and in 1950 even held an art fair that attracted visitors from all over the city who liked what they saw, and stayed. North Town metamorphosed into Old Town, a solid middle-class community of young couples, artists, and artisans.

LIFE AMONG THE COGNOSCENTI 1960-1978

With the advent of urban renewal in the 1960s, rehab fever spread through Old Town. The new look of the community was achieved by looking back. Antique shops sprang up overnight, buildings underwent reverse face lifting as merchants tried to make their establishments look old. Vintage saloons, ice cream parlors, penny candy vending carts, Victorian emporiums, and Depression-style soup kitchens dotted Wells Street. Tourists flocked to Old Town on the Gray Line. The area was compared to Greenwich Village, albeit a little less crowded and touristy. Old Town's 174 shops took ➔ **8**



from
p7



pride in their smallness and offered shoppers an alternative to department stores. House sales rose by 25 percent and it became easy to get business and mortgage money.

The Earl of Old Town catered to the most famous folk musicians of the day; top jazz artists played at the Plugged Nickel and Mother Blues, and Piper's Alley was the "in" place to see and be seen. Second City opened its doors in 1959 and never looked back.

Old Town had become the quintessential "small town with a twist". The neighborhood's more than 8,000 residents included such entertainment and cultural icons as historian Paul Angle, artist Edgar Miller, Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist Bill Mauldin, television's Don Herbert, writer Herman Kogan, and painter Francis Chapin. All exercised their creativity here until the late 1970s, when they began to drift away. And, once again, the community was in transition.

OF CONDOS, YUPPIES, AND VARIOUS NEW GENERATIONS 1990-


In the late 1970s, the condo craze hit Old Town. Venerable apartment buildings were snatched up by developers and converted to condos. Unable to afford the escalated prices, many of the area's artists and performers moved on; and in came the single, young urban professionals (Yuppies). A pattern developed. The yuppies bought condos, stayed until they got married, and then went to the suburbs to raise their children, where they perceived life to be safer and schools to be better.

In 1978, Old Town became an historical district and saw

many of its houses enshrined in the National Register. The City followed suit by conferring landmark status on the entire neighborhood, which meant owners could not alter the facades or portions of their houses visible from the street. Past and present became one in Old Town.

In the 1990s, traders, bankers, and businessmen replaced yuppies. Unlike their predecessors, they opted to remain in the neighborhood after their children arrived. The educational system had improved to the point where local schools rivaled or surpassed those of their suburban counterparts. The local police officers kept the community safe; shops were convenient and accommodating; and neighbors were friendly. There was, quite simply, no reason to leave.

The young couples who stayed have followed the admonition to "be fruitful and multiply"—hence the appearance of all those baby carriages and the hordes of children descending on the Menomonee Club. The community organization of 1948 evolved into the Old Town Triangle Association which strives to address the needs of the glorious heterogeneity that is now Old Town: the old timers, the newcomers, and the little ones in between. Residents gather for seasonal celebrations; they participate on committees dedicated to neighborhood improvement; and every day, children come into the Triangle Center to get a tootsie roll or a lollipop. The dogs stop by for one of Newman's Own chicken treats. Art School students paint away, astounding all observers with their creativity. Others tend to their minds and bodies in the yoga classes. Life in Old Town is very good, indeed.

Will this be the last transition? Probably not. We'll see. 



food
fun
families,
friends,
neighbors



chili cook off winners, the two Luciys ▼





bouncing,
balloons,
acrobatics



rompin' stompin'
voices and strings