



Park People News

Creating Citizen Connections to Our Parks

Run for the Parks

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It's time to lace up your running shoes to show your support for the Milwaukee County Parks! For the first time, The Park People of Milwaukee County will host two Run for the Parks 5K fun run and walk events! Washington Park will host its inaugural run on Wednesday July 31st, co-sponsored by the Washington Heights Neighborhood Association. The fourth annual Humboldt Park run will be held on Tuesday

August 20th, rescheduled from June 25th, and is co-sponsored by the Bay View Neighborhood Association.

These cross county-style fun runs will take participants through two of the most beautiful and scenic parks in Milwaukee. All runners and walkers will receive a very handsome t-shirt to commemorate the event, a goodie bag filled with fabulous swag, and exclusive access to the post-run VIP areas where they can enjoy refreshments while listening to the evening's entertainment. Kt's Universal Love Band will perform at Washington Park, and Ramma Lamma and Wanton Looks will play at Humboldt Park. Register now at: <http://parkpeoplemke.org/5k> - All proceeds go toward park improvements and advocacy efforts. You run, you walk, our parks win!



Open Letter from John Dargle our new Parks Director

Dear Friends and Advocates,

I am so excited for the opportunity to lead this great organization as the Interim Director of your Milwaukee County Parks! My wife Maureen, daughters Rachel and Suzanne, and son Jack (who is in the Air Force) share my enthusiasm to call Milwaukee home.

I had a passion for parks and recreation early on and majored in Recreation and Leisure Studies at the State University of New York, College at Cortland. I spent eight years in the U.S. Army after college and served in Operation Desert Shield/Storm. I began my parks and recreation career in 1995 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and had a

strong programming focus. I transitioned to park operations during my tenure there with more involvement in maintenance and capital improvements in urban areas. I took my first Director position in 2001 in the City of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Most recently, I was the Director of Fairfax County Park Authority in Virginia, a large system with many of the same amenities we have here in Milwaukee.



Dan Cody, Board President, with John Dargle at the TPP Annual Friends Group Gathering in June

It's always been a professional objective of mine to promote the message that parks, recreation and open space add intrinsic value to the community. Forming business and public partnerships, friends groups, and advocacy groups, are accomplishments I've always been proud of. I have developed cultural arts partnerships, creative partnerships with non-profits, and improved core services, while at the same time accomplished community goals and developed staff.

As I spend more time traveling through this amazing and historical system I am reminded repeatedly of why I pursued this leadership opportunity. The staff has been incredibly welcoming and I've had the pleasure of meeting many friends groups and partners in my first two months. I'd like to thank you all for your support and I look forward to working beside you for a better Milwaukee.

Best regards,
John Dargle, Jr.
Interim Director, Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture

Note from the editor:

John is still in on an interim basis until he receives confirmation from the full County Board. Let's all hope that the current wayward politics between the Board of Supervisors and the County Executive does not play a hand in delaying his confirmation.

Annual Friends Group Gathering

On May 30, the rescheduled annual Friends Group meeting occurred at Greenfield Park overlooking Cool Waters Aquatic Center. The attendees included participants from friends groups across the county, along with board members of The Park People, Milwaukee County Parks employees and many park leaders.

The keynote speaker was Katie Williams, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She shared her initial research findings on the impact of a friends group to the park it supports, and continues to expand her research through a new extended study. Katie is a park supporter herself as a member of the South Shore Park Watch and Farmers Market committee and as a new addition to The Park People board.



You may recall Doctors Park being welcomed into our little "circle of friends" at the 2012 meeting.

Doctors Park Friends Group members Kim Caviggola and Maureen "Mo" Daly spoke

of their extensive plan for park improvements. These women were full of energy and dedication to making their favorite park better. They seem to tirelessly work toward achieving their goals that include everything from parking lot resurfacing to dreams of structural improvements and accessibility of buildings. They stressed the importance of dedicated volunteers in their accomplishments to date.



The Friends of Grant Park celebrated after being presented with the Friends Group of the Year award. Their mission is to preserve natural areas of the park, enhance unique features of the park, encourage use of the park, and to provide a mechanism for private contributions to supplement public funding of Grant Park. They have done exactly that through beach clean-ups, weed-outs, bird watching and implementation of the Seven Bridges Shore Restoration project.

The meeting concluded with an introduction of the new (just announced a few hours before the meeting!) Milwaukee County Parks Director, John Dargle Jr. from Virginia. It was a wonderful surprise that he was able to attend and share his background and answer questions from those in attendance. We all look forward to getting to know and to work with him very soon.

Weed-Out 2013

Our usual weedy culprits were delayed by the cool wet spring, but they finally arrived with a vengeance! Not only did we find the usual garlic mustard and dame's rocket, but many invasive grasses are also showing up in new places. It shows we need to be ever on the lookout, and for that we rely on YOU, as regular visitors to YOUR parks!



We want to thank the many volunteers who turned out this spring; many of you repeatedly. Without your efforts our native plants would not have a hope of surviving the invasions.

Thanks also to ATC and REI for financial support for Weed-Out! Their generosity assures we will have ample tools, herbicide, and other equipment to tackle the woody plants in fall.

Remember, although our scheduled events are in spring and fall, we're prepared to work with you throughout the year. We encourage you to contact businesses in your area to see if they will consider an employee work day in your park. It's a good way to build community!

Goodbye and Thank You to Dan Cody

The Park People bids a fond farewell to President Dan Cody. Dan and his family are moving to California where Dan accepted his dream job with Apple Computers. Dan was president of The Park People for over four years. He dedicated a tremendous amount and time to our organization and his absence will be keenly felt. Dan has left many tangible marks on The Park People. He is responsible for our professional website and our social media presence. He led many efforts through his tenure

including implementing and executing a three year Strategic Plan, the hiring of our current Executive Director, serving on the interview committee for the new Parks Director, and programs such as Run for the Parks and Story Time in the Parks.

Dan appeared at dozens of public hearings to promote the parks. He has set the bar high by his hard work and endless talents. Cody took on this role along with his full time job, a side-business and a family with a working spouse and four kids under the age of eight. He never used time as an excuse and often showed up at board meetings with a toddler and a Disney movie on his iPhone.



Sue Spoerk, incoming President, presents Cody with an award for his commitment and tenure with The Park People

The Park People thanks Dan for his countless contributions and the consistent leadership he provided through the years. We pledge to you, The Park People will carry on with the mission of Citizen Stewardship of Milwaukee County Parks. Dan, you can always consider the 150 Parks your home!

Welcome to Sue Spoerk as TPP President and Chuck Rozewicz as Vice President

At its Annual Meeting on June 18, 2013, The Park People sadly said farewell to our very committed Board President, Dan Cody. With Cody's departure, he leaves the board presidency in the very capable hands of Susan Spoerk, JD. Sue has served on the board of directors of The Park People since 2006 and as Vice President since Fall 2008. In her time on the board, Sue has served as Chair of the Friends Group Committee, as well as initiating and continuing to publish the annual Park People wall calendar. Sue is an avid swimmer and runner and loves the Milwaukee County Parks. Sue is very focused on maximizing organizational efficiencies and hopes to continue the great work of The Park People.

In addition, The Park People welcomes Chuck Rozewicz as our incoming Vice President. Chuck has served on the board since 2010 and has helped initiate our annual Run for the Parks (now in its fourth year!) and Story Time in the Parks series.

The Park People wishes both Sue and Chuck success in their new roles and looks forward to their leadership.
