



ParkPeopleNews

Creating Citizen Connections to Our Parks

Winter 2015 Park People Newsletter

President's Perspective

2015 is destined to be an amazing year for The Park People. This past holiday season brought us an angel donor who provided a substantial donation to The Park People's Operating Budget. This anonymous donor could have given money to a park project and asked for recognition, but instead noticed the good deeds of The Park People and saw how The Park People needed help with operating funds to serve our mission.

Our donor recognized that The Park People protects parks (we don't sell parks by the way), cleans up parks (anyone want to help John Lunz pull weeds?), exercises keen oversight over donor funds (have I bragged about our JD/CPA treasurer lately?), noticed how we work hard to make "Friends" (we have nearly 50 park Friends Groups we support), acknowledged that we have a hard working board of volunteers giving of their time and talents and gave homage to our hardworking (and underpaid) Executive Director. Our pledge to our donor is we will invest these funds strategically and wisely to grow our organization allowing us to stay true to our mission stated in our bylaws to "Preserve, support, and enhance Milwaukee County Parks while building an effective volunteer organization."

This fund is named The Acorn Fund and at our holiday gathering, each board member received an ornament of an acorn to remind them of this turning point in our organization and that we are all a part of something special that we can leave behind to future generations. We were joined at this celebration by Parks Director John Dargle and his key staff members who continue to demonstrate their support to our mission. We are thankful for their active partnership. And my sincere thanks to each and every donor who contributed to the Acorn Fund and our loyal members who renewed their membership.

I spent time this holiday season reviewing all our key documents, policy, strategy for 2015 and setting goals and timelines for our organization. I am always happy to meet with any of our members (pick your favorite



park) to review our strategy for growth and how we can stay true to our mission. I have no doubt that acorn will turn into a hearty Oak!

Sue Spoerk, President

The Park People (TPP) Continues to Serve as a Conduit for Charitable Donations for our Parks

- **New picnic tables**

As we did two years ago, TPP is in the process of purchasing much needed picnic tables for our parks. TPP first identified \$30,000 in our accounts for the purchase and we then applied for a 100% match through the Parks Amenity Matching Fund. The request was granted which grew our fund to \$60,000. With this amount we will be able to purchase 260 new picnic tables that will be distributed throughout the Park System.



- **South Shore Beach - MillerCoors donation**



Much like the work done to revitalize and enhance Bradford Beach a number of years ago through funding from MillerCoors, the Park People will again receive funding for the revitalization of South Shore Beach. For many years the beach has been unfit for swimming for weeks at a time due to poor water quality. To address this situation Parks Department staff sent a grant request to MillerCoors last year identifying the work they want to do to eliminate polluted runoff entering the beach area of South Shore Park. MillerCoors truly understands and appreciates the need for clean water and agreed to fund the work of the Parks Department through TPP. The \$500,000 grant will be distributed over five years at \$100,000 per year. TPP will be working closely with the Parks Department as the fiscal manager of this project.

- **Traveling Beer Garden - Sprecher Brewery donation**

Last year the Park Department initiated a new concept, a Traveling Beer Garden. They partnered with Sprecher Brewery on the initiative. The Beer Gardens were operated by Park staff and served only Sprecher products. The program was so financially successful that this year there will be two Traveling Beer Gardens visiting parks throughout the System.



The good people at Sprecher were so struck by the poor condition of many of the locations used last year, especially the restrooms, that

this year they will be donating \$32,000 for improvement projects at the parks on the 2015 Beer Garden itinerary. In addition they will donate \$4 for each quarter barrel of Sprecher product sold through the Beer Gardens. TPP will be partnering with the Parks Department and Sprecher by accepting and managing the donations and ultimately expending them for identified park improvement projects.

With a Little Help From Our Friends

It's no secret that our Park System has been underfunded for many years. The Park Department budget has grown by 4.2% over the last thirty years while inflationary forces have driven up the cost of doing business by 120%. Had the Parks Department budget stayed equal with the rate of inflation over this thirty year period the Parks budget today would be over 97 million dollars instead of its current 46 million. Think about it: in 1985 the average individual income was \$22,100, the average price of a new car was \$9,000, a postage stamp cost \$.22, and a movie ticket was \$2.75.

Through these years the costs related to maintaining our parks have escalated close to the rate of inflation. Wages, commodities, utilities and contractual services have all risen considerably and still our parks are relatively well maintained. Kudos to our Parks Department management and staff for the almost miraculous work they accomplish on a budget that is less than desirable!



The Parks Department, through necessity, has come to rely on volunteer efforts to assist in bridging the gaps in their budget. The 2015 adopted Parks budget narrative places a value of \$1,275,000 on the volunteer work that will be performed this year by citizens who care about their parks.

A great number of these citizen volunteers are members of Friends Groups for individual parks or volunteers that the Park People solicit for its programs

From the beginning the Park People have recognized the critical importance of volunteering in our parks. That is why we have crafted our core programs - Weed-Out, the Friends Group Initiative and the Park Market - to engage the good people of Milwaukee County to not only volunteer but also raise dollars for much needed park enhancement projects.

Friends Group Spotlight

There are great things happening in Humboldt Park. That's the reason Humboldt Park Friends are the Park People featured friends group this winter.

The Humboldt Park Friends started as the Humboldt Park Watch in the late 1990s. They have been holding a number of annual events including Tree Day in fall (where area school children come to the park and help plant a tree and do tree-related activities), a corn roast fundraiser, as well as an Easter Egg Hunt. In 2014, Humboldt Park Friends held Bocce Fest for the first time. They raised over \$1000 through player registration and sponsorships.



The ice rink is a major project for a committee of the Humboldt Park Friends. There is a lagoon in the park, but the rink is carefully maintained by a dedicated group of volunteers who remove snow by shovel and machine, flood and squeegee the ice on a regular basis. They post regular rink updates to the Humboldt Park Friends Facebook page, as well. On the

Humboldt Park Friends website, you can find an indicator (a green or red light) whether or not the ice is safe for skating

<http://www.humboldtparkmilwaukee.org/park/ice-skating>

The group's dedication to the park and neighborhood does not stop with hosting and maintaining an ice rink. The Friends recently held a neighborhood meeting, a listening session, for a Humboldt Park Master Plan. The neighbors shared their thoughts with the organization where their suggestions ranged from new bathrooms and more garbage cans to more sporting activities.

The Humboldt Park Friends are a membership-based organization. The board members of the organization are Tim Richter, President; Steven Blank, Vice President; Zeno Franco, Treasurer; Jane LaCapitaine, Secretary; and Laureen Stirmel, board member.

Find out more at <http://www.humboldtparkmilwaukee.org>

and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/254760581281450/>

2015 Oak Leaf Discovery Tour: NEW Full Size Maps

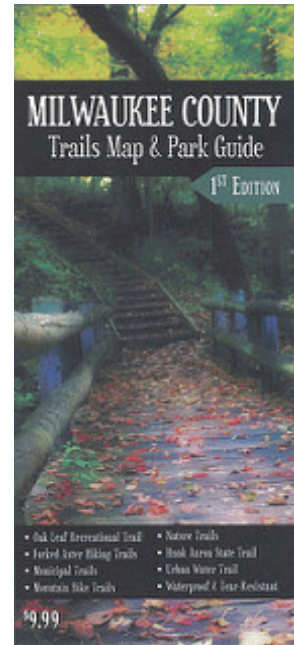
The Milwaukee County Parks Marketing Department is designing a new and improved full size map to accompany the Oak Leaf Discovery Passport. These maps will be designed to help people better navigate the Oak Leaf Trail and discover even more treasures in our Milwaukee County Parks.

The full size map will feature details with street names and clear markings to follow the Oak Leaf Trail and colored overlays on the trails will designate the different corridors of the Oak Leaf Discovery Tour Passport. The map will also include a legend which will show the trailhead for the Forked Aster Hiking Trails system, cultural destinations, parking and bathroom locations, mountain biking starting locations, the Hank Aaron State Trail, golf club houses, and more. Also included will be an insert defining the route between Lakeshore State Park and the Hank Aaron State Trail to help riders navigate this puzzling multijurisdictional street area.

The map and passport project is a joint effort of The Park People, Friends of the Trails (formerly, the Oak Leaf Discovery Tour (OLDT) Committee) and the Milwaukee County

Parks Department. Amelia Kegel from Wheel and Sprocket will again be working her magic in cooperation with parks department staff to produce our Fourth Annual OLDT Passport with trail corridor maps.

Beginning on April 10, 2015 at the Wheel and Sprocket Bike Expo at State Fair Park, you can pick up an OLDT Passport and the new full size map for a \$10.00 donation, which will go towards the Friends of Milwaukee County Trails and The Park People. Group rates will be available for Friends Groups, Sponsors, and wellness or civic projects. On Friday May 1, 2015, stamping stations and keyword stations throughout the park system will be available for you to start your 2105 OLDT adventure.



Welcome new Park People Members!

The Park People would like to cordially welcome the following new members who joined us during the final quarter of the calendar year:

Christy and Christopher Adams	Julie and Rand Martin
Vincent Adesso	Susan Robertson and John Machulak
Frederick Bartkowski	Brian and Carol Morello
Natalie Beckwith	Kathleen Mulligan-Hansel
Jonathan Berkoff	Elizabeth Onufrock
Kathleen Bond	Joseph Selep and Mary Otterson
Susan Brennan	James and Sharon Petrie
Doris and Robert Brosnan	Miriam Reading
James and Diane Brown	Colleen Reed
Jennifer Charpentier	Allen and Pat Rieselbach
Carol and Daniel Chew	Joel Rittle
Gilbert and Sinikka Church	Judith Hall and Donald Sargent
Ann Demorest	Jack and La Ree Savlan
Rhonda and T. Arthur Downey	Janis Scherr
Bruce Thompson and Laurie Geisel	Mary Ann Smith
Marilyn Gordon Ross	Cary Solberg
James Hempel	Martha Spencer
David Hetzel	Way and Jackie Thompson
Patricia Hintz	Raymond Vredenbregt

Suzanne Spenner-Hupy and Michael Hupy	Terri Weiss
Marylyn and John Kaishian	Carole Wenerowicz
Alice Kehoe	Charles and Nancy Wilkie

We sincerely thank you for your membership and support of your Milwaukee County Parks. Cheers to another year of enjoying all your county parks have to offer!

Welcome new Park People Board Members

The Park People is pleased to welcome aboard three new Board Members.

Jim Ciurlik, an independent CPA and parks advocate is a returning Board Member. Naomi Michel, J.D. joins the board from Quarles and Brady where she practices law in the areas of business and taxation. Kathryn Ciurlik joins the board as a longtime park volunteer and is a freelance marketing executive. [Click here](#) to read the new members' full biographies.
