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BOWMANVILLE
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Bowmanville Bee

Newsletter Fall 2023

The Bowmanville neighborhood is bordered by Foster, Rosehill Cemetery, Ravenswood and Western.
Visit our website at www.bcochicago.org.

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president@BCOChicago.org

Jeff Graves

VP@BCOChicago.org

Colleen Scroll

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Patrick Brandell (co-treasurer)

treasurer@BCOChicago.org

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news@bcochicago.org

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gardening@bcochicago.org

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President's Message

Fall 2023 will last just about a week more and we are getting the Fall Bee to you just under the wire. This issue was planned for early October, but unfortunately got waylaid by me. A bunch of people put in a lot of work and some great articles so we wanted to still get it out despite the lateness. I hope you still enjoy the summer, fall and Halloween content even though the winter holiday season is upon us!

Speaking of winter holidays, the BCO held our first, hopefully annual, outdoor Santa Social on December 10 at the Greenspace. Kids and adults drank hot cocoa, created pine cone bird feeders, decorated cookies, ran around outside, and of course, talked with Santa. We're so happy Santa was able visit our little corner of Chicago! We hope everyone enjoyed themselves, and we can repeat the event again next year.

In October we had our semi-annual Open Meeting at Spiteful Brewing with food by Ka Cafe. Our representatives really showed up — our community should appreciate how visible and willing to be present our various representatives are. State Representative Hoan Huynh, State Senator Mike Simmons, Alderman Andre Vasquez, Democratic Committeewoman Maggie O'Keefe, and Representatives from Senator Quigley's office all spoke to the room full of Bowmanville neighbors. It was a great night and hope you all can make our next Open Meeting in March. Keep an eye out for details in social media and the email newsletters starting in late February or early March.

Another item to note on your calendars is the gardening plot application which will open on February 1. For anyone interested in a garden plot in 2024, we will be sending emails starting in January with information about the application. If you want to get on the mailing list for information, please email

gardening@bcochicago.org—we may not respond right away, but will add you to the distribution list. We have been refining our application procedures such that gardeners in good standing will confirm their intent to continue for 2024 prior to the application opening for all others. The applications will be for interested new gardeners and gardeners not in good standing. Again, if there are any questions, please email the gardening team.

Lastly, we are still looking for 2 new Board members for 2024. Please reach out to me if interested in joining the Board—it's a great way to meet more of our neighbors and help this area continue to be the hidden gem it is!

Alysia



Hot Fun in the Summer Sun

By Seth Captain, BCO Board Member

On Saturday, August 19, the BCO hosted the 21st Annual Summer Social on the sleepy west side of Ravenswood Avenue between the Gateway (to Bowmanville naturally) Garden and the Berwyn Tunnel.

Many people ask, "What's the deal with the ice cream? Like, you know, why is it free?" We call it Bowmanville socialism. Well, not exactly. The original owners of that diner favorite, Pauline's, who lived in Bowmanville, would donate ice cream for our summer social. Despite having new owners, Pauline's continues to generously donate several tubs of ice cream every year as a good neighbor. We really appreciate that.

But if not for the dedication of one local resident, Mr. Bob Nicklas, the treat would all be "cream soup," with crazed children snorting it up out of melting cardboard. Bob stores a dedicated ice cream cooler in his garage, and each year remains on call to harbor these tubs (Pauline's delivery day is several days prior to the Social) until showtime, when he dutifully shows up with the ice cream scooper in hand. Be sure to thank him if you see him in the neighborhood.



Other Goodies, Too

It wasn't just ice cream though. Both local breweries, Spiteful and Half Acre, each donated a keg of beer (Spiteful threw in additional cases for the thirsty masses demanding more). And our local firehouse donated a few coolers worth of ice. We feel very fortunate to be a small neighborhood with two of the city's best breweries who never hesitate to help out.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Hot Fun in the Summer Sun



Con't from page 6

Cafe Libra, set to open shortly (we hope) on the southwest corner of Wolcott and Foster, surprised everybody with their dee-licious homemade Serbian dishes, including their main hits – burek (a phyllo-dough pie encasing cheese or meat) and cevapi (grilled sausages). When the owners were asked why their portions were so big, they responded with a simple, “This is how we feed our family. We treat customers like family.” And Side Practice Coffee, operating in their step-down space at Foster and Damen, showed up with their custom-bike coffee cart serving a variety of nitro coffee brews. Many exhausted parents share their thanks.

Rogers Park Montessori sponsored a towering dual racing waterslide that let kids burn off their hourly ice cream cones. And Patrick, a Summerdale local, surprised everybody by powering the inflatable behemoth with his electric truck. A bounce house remained on standby for those needing some additional sugar burn.

By late afternoon, the crowd had grown to a couple of hundred people spread comfortably throughout the street while two local bands entertained. Yoo-Soo Kim, a

sound engineer and composer who lives steps away from the “main stage,” brought together two other musicians to play some deliciously melodic pop-rock. Repeat Summer Social performers, Big Sadie, all Bowmanville natives, delighted everybody with their soulful bluegrass sounds, and wonderful tribute to Robbie Robertson.

If you missed it, you really need to prioritize better! But no worries, Summer Social will be back for its 22nd year next August. We’d love to see you there.



Benches in Bowmanville: Inviting, Friendly, Comforting

By Kathleen Mullen

Taking a walk in Bowmanville is a great way to experience the beauty and pleasant vibe of our neighborhood. You get to look at — and often marvel at — different front and side gardens. You might meet and chat with neighbors or tell someone what a beautiful child or dog they have. Maybe you walk to mull a concern, get some healthy exercise or see what's happening on different blocks. In fall, you may take a walk to look at the colorful leaves, perhaps stopping to pick up one that calls out to you, or delighting in the crunch they make when you walk over them, which adds another dimension to your experience.

As you walk, you may notice that there are some benches along the way, like those shown here. These are just a few, I'm sure there are more. In passing them, I sometimes wonder: Why do some neighbors have them? Do they wish to invite us into their space and see the neighborhood from their point of view? Perhaps they'd like us to appreciate their garden. Maybe they want to give us a place to rest before moving on our way. Or maybe they want to give themselves a place to be still and reflect on things. Whatever the reason, their benches enhance our streetscapes with their charm.



Benches along a sidewalk create a space that's both private and public. When you sit on them, they become your space. But they're out in the public, where you can see others, others can see you, and you can take in the nature of your surroundings. Taking a rest in nature goes way back, as old pastoral paintings show. Images of a gate to a field with a large stone to sit on and watch the sun rise come to mind. Sitting still is a sacred time to connect with nature, yourself, and your community.

I myself frequently sit on a bench halfway from home when returning from shopping or running errands. I place my bags on the bench beside me and pause to notice the nature around me: manicured lawns, lovely gardens with shrubs and flowers, even some inviting butterflies. I take in the activity of cars, bicycles and people passing by or walking their dogs. In these moments I feel and appreciate both the vitality and tranquility that Bowmanville has to offer. We have a shared values here, for sure.

I'm grateful for the benches of Bowmanville and the caring neighbors who put them out for us as a place to sit and rejuvenate, reflect, reminisce, or think about the future. When I sit on one, I feel welcomed and connected with others in a timeless way. It's comforting to know that someone put them there for you and me, which makes Bowmanville such a nice place to live and walk.

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Benches in Bowmanville: Inviting, Friendly, Comforting



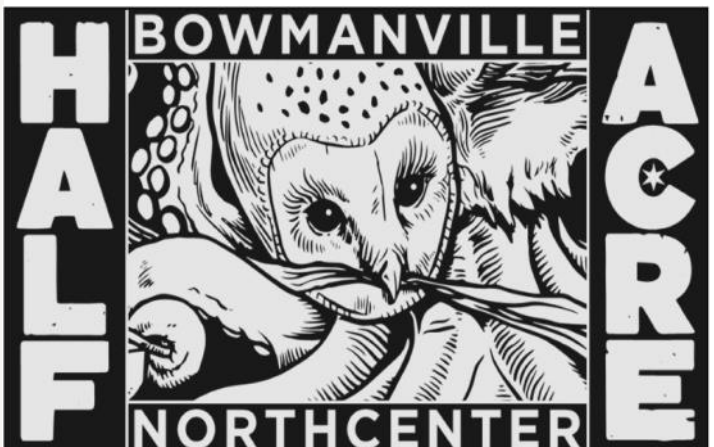
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Help Spread the Word!

Maybe you miss your old newspaper delivery route. Or maybe you've never seen an actual newspaper but want to experience what it's like to deliver news on paper to somebody's front door, as your parents or grandparents did. If so, the BCO has a great opportunity for you.

Bowmanville is unique for many things (yes, including having no churches but five bars). It's also one of very few Chicago neighborhoods to publish a home-delivered quarterly newspaper, the eagerly awaited Bowmanville Bee. But it's only with the help of many, many neighborhood volunteers that the Bee makes it to your mailbox. Almost 1,500 are delivered every quarter. And if your building or home isn't getting one, please let us know!

We're now looking for a few volunteers (at least four) who would like to make their neighborhood walks more meaningful by taking on one of our delivery routes, usually a full four-sided block. There are currently two delivery vacancies near Summerdale and Leavitt and two near Berwyn and Damen. Please email comm@bcochicago.org to let us know if you are up for a route.

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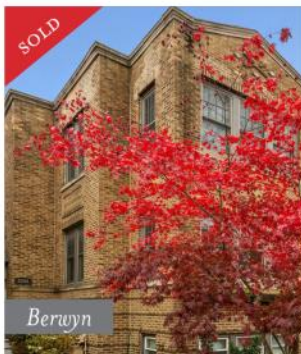
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BOWMANVILLE ADVICE

Ask Aunt Bee

Please submit questions to news@bcochicago.org. Aunt Bee would love to hear from you!

Dear Aunt Bee,

I'm having a disagreement with my friends (neighbors) about Halloween and need an impartial point of view. I love this holiday! We go all out with decorations, carved pumpkins and a lot of candy. I love seeing all the kids in their costumes. But we always get teenagers, as well as older people, who don't wear costumes. Why should they get candy? All they do is walk around and knock on doors. And it's a holiday for kids!! I've been told I'm wrong, what do you think?

Signed, Miffed About People with No Costumes

Dear MAPWNC,

It is so fun to think about Halloween! I appreciate that you contribute to the festive mood of our neighborhood. Bowmanville pulls out all the stops! Our neighborhood is a fun, safe and friendly place for trick-or-treaters. It is also welcoming and inclusive. I enjoy seeing all the costumes as well, and the best part is seeing people having fun.

I have a few thoughts to offer. While Halloween indeed includes kids, it's a holiday for everyone, however they show up. The time and money required to gather a costume may not be available to everyone. Sometimes all people can do is get out the door as a family. That fun togetherness is something to celebrate. Teenagers have one foot in childhood and one in adulthood, and they're not always clear about where they stand. So they deserve compassion if their kid side wants candy but their adult side doesn't want to wear a costume.

I can remember my teenagers deciding (sadly) that they had outgrown the fun and weren't going to go trick-or-treating. At the last minute when some of their friends showed up, I almost needed sunglasses to keep from getting blinded by the delight radiating off their faces as they grabbed my (good) pillowcases and rushed out to get some candy. I wouldn't shut down that joy for anything!

Thanks for writing in!

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Community Seminars on Health and Wellness

By Kathleen Mullen

Would you like to learn more about how you and people you care about can get and stay healthy? Swedish Covenant Hospital at Foster and California offers a variety of in-person, virtual, and hybrid classes on ways to do exactly that. For example, there are seminars on senior wellness, breast cancer awareness, nutrition and fitness, and pregnancy and parenting, as well as a new-mom's support group. Some are free, some are paid.

I took a CPR/AED one-hour seminar at Swedish in the spring. CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and AED, for automated external defibrillator. Both are for people in cardiac arrest.

There were about 15 of us. We heard about the importance of knowing CPR/AED and were then given instructions on how to do that. After that we were divided into groups of two for hands-on CPR training, after which we were shown the AED unit and how to use that. We were able to ask questions throughout the seminar. It was a good experience, and I would recommend it to anyone interested in learning or re-learning about these

potentially life-saving techniques.

Classes being offered by Swedish Covenant Hospital this fall include healthy cooking, mental health first aid, smoking cessation, mindfulness, preparing for hospital birth, genetics and your health, and CPR/AED. To find out what's offered when, as well as to sign up for the classes you'd like to take, visit swedishcovenant.org/classes-events or call 773-878-6888 x 3.



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BOWMANVILLE EVENTS

Bowmanville Community Organization Open Meeting

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Meeting Starts 7:30 p.m.

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100+ Years and Counting

By Seth Captain, BCO Board Member

Buildings make a city. Literally. They are eye candy for our morning dog walk. They captivate us while waiting for the bus. They are windows into history. The typical Bowmanville structure now averages at least 100 years old with many reaching 125 years. Do you ever wonder who lived in your house during the *last* Pandemic? Or what shop(s) used to be in that converted storefront?

For one iconic Bowmanville property, on the northeast corner of Foster and Winchester, a defrosted cryogenic Spanish-American war vet would find nothing changed. Well, almost nothing. The frog legs have been replaced with frozen pizzas (yes, so sad!), but the beer still flows at K's Dugout, just as it did back in 1900 when it was Otto's.


A Chicago neighborhood could not exist without a tavern. The many northern Europeans in the area recognized that being uptight all day wasn't good for them, so there would often be one tavern per block. Decompressing is especially important for first responders, and Swedish Covenant Hospital employees didn't have any options west of Western (thanks a lot, King Gustaf!). So, nurses, doctors and staff came to Otto's. As did the men of Fire Engine 110, and those at the pre-infamy Summerdale Police Station across the street.

Otto's is known to have served frog legs, but nobody left in the neighborhood is old enough to remember why he didn't sell a tavern pizza, or what exactly he did to keep the bar open during Prohibition. Sometime after the second World War, Otto's became Reggie's. That was the time period it became known as the "cop bar." As one neighbor put it, "if you weren't a cop, or a friend of one, you stayed the f#!* out." The 90s kicked off with a new owner who christened the pub K's (for their surname, Kuhlmann), and worked hard to diversify the crowd.

Opens Early, Closes Late

K's has always been a "sunrise bar." If you worked at a building in the Loop, you'd get cocktails at 6:00 pm. But if you worked the 3rd shift, you needed a place that would serve you at 7:00 am, because the end of the workday is still the end of the workday. K's affable bar manager for nearly 25 years, Kathy, said that some mornings were busier than many bars on a Saturday night. The corner storefront's multiple windows would shine the day's first light on a collection of ER docs and nurses, cops and fireman, factory workers from nearby Tempel Steel, and various trade workers.

Con't on back page.



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Photo of K's Dugout



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Con't from page 10

Kathy is the bartender everybody wants as *their* bartender. She makes you feel welcome. She listens. She doesn't seem judgmental or condescending. She can see you need another while playing the "middle" to a pair of barstool strangers. And she knows how to cut somebody off with such finesse that they will manage a genuine *thank you* as they stumble out the door. This was all witnessed firsthand in a single afternoon.

Bartenders represent an admirable trifecta of humanity: The Psychologist, The Historian, and The Diplomat. Not necessarily the busy nightclub bartender, or the modern mixologist. But the one who tends shop at the corner tavern. Have you ever tried to empathically entertain a disparate group of daytime drinkers on a Tuesday? It is no coincidence that monks and brewing were an item. And while Chicago has no shortage of confessionals, Bowmanville only offers four-legged "pews" and an assortment (five, precisely) of gently rounded wooden "altars" where your elbows rest while the un-ordained minister delivers a stiff Jeppson's and secular comfort.

Truly Friendly

People who don't go to bars, as well as those who require exotic cocktail menus, share a common thought:

neighborhood bars are scary places. Kathy disagrees. She counts on one hand the number of fights in 25 years. And to prove the friendliness of the place, she cites a Suit & Tie welcomed into conversation by two painters. A newcomer to the neighborhood looking for a stool when the kids went to bed who ends up with a diverse group of Thursday night friends. A parking lot tent that becomes a welcoming pandemic refuge for cabin fever runaways.

There must be something she was holding back on... Ah ha! Harassment! How can a female barkeep escape the inebriated male ego? Apparently, she didn't. She simply embraced it. Sometimes her husband would be at one end of the bar while patrons were flirting from the other end. Kathy turned it all into a laugh. And when the rare customer who didn't understand the game crossed the line, there was no shortage of regulars who quickly explained the rules with a complimentary escort outside.

Kathy did share one scary story: property taxes. She was an area resident for over 20 years but recently fled to Indiana, a territory most Chicagoans don't exactly fantasize about. For a 50-minute commute, she now saves \$10,000 a year in taxes. But let's not open the black hole of the Illinois property tax here. For that, head over to K's, where that kind of conversation will win you a roomful of friends.

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