



Issue number 27, Winter 2009



The Great Escape

Story by Steven Fryer, WFPNA Free-lance Writer and Resident

It was the opening for which she had long been awaiting.

So there it was. The gate was slightly opened. And only one thought occupied her mind: "Escape!"

The escapee got as far as three addresses away. That might not seem far. But for a tortoise? "It's amazing how fast a turtle can go when it sees an opening," said Jerry Sheeter, owner of this reptilian speedster.

Thanks to the great neighbors and networking available here in our West Floral Park Neighborhood Association, Jerry got the tortoise back. An announcement of a found tortoise was emailed to all WFPNA members when the animal made its break two months ago.

Becky Sheeter, Jerry's wife, saw the email and told him about it. "So I'm thinking, 'I'd better check around,'" Jerry said. "I know all his hiding spots around the yard, and sure enough I couldn't find him anywhere."

Actually, this desert tortoise is a she, but Jerry and Becky have always referred to it as "he." And turtle/tortoise can be interchangeable names – tortoises sometimes are called "land turtles." It can be challenging to determine the sex of a tortoise – one has to examine the tail, and know what to look for – but better clues have been left by their turtle (and we'll go with turtle the rest of the way here, since that's the Sheeters' description).

"We always say 'he' but we believe it's a she," Jerry said. "Every couple of years, we find a couple of eggs in the yard." The turtle has never had a name (hey, perhaps this anonymity emboldened its plans for that escape ...). Other types of turtles are prominent in our neighborhood, too. The turtle is the mascot of our local elementary school, Santiago.

Age of the Sheeter turtle remains a mystery. It was owned by Jerry's second wife, and he kept it when she passed away. When Becky married Jerry, and even before they moved to West Floral Park in 1983, the turtle already was part of the family. "I know I've had it since 1981," Jerry said. "He must be 40, 50 years old." Turtles are famous for their longevity.

The confirmed longest life span of a turtle – 188 years. A turtle, named Tu'I Malila, was a present from explorer Captain Cook to the Tongan royal family, in 1777, and remained with the family until the turtle's death in 1965. There are many stories of turtles living beyond 100, even 200, years.

The Sheeter turtle seems healthy enough to live a lot longer. Its diet consists of Romaine lettuce, carrot tops, hibiscus flowers, and grass. Lots of grass. "He'll be in one spot," Jerry said, "spin around in a circle and eat all the grass around him down to the root." Recently, the turtle began eating more vegetation than usual. Becky and Jerry knew what that meant – hibernation was coming.

"In October he gets panicky and eats a lot of grass to build up his reserves," Jerry said. "Then he'll hide in a corner of the yard for two or three days. That's when I know it's time." It's like clockwork – almost literally. When we push the clocks back in the fall, it's hibernation time for the turtle. When we move the clocks forward in spring, hibernation is over. The Sheeter turtle spends these hibernation months in a box in the garage. "It's very interesting," Becky said. "No food, no water. He doesn't do anything."

And one thing for certain about this hibernating turtle – it isn't making another of those daring escapes.

Calendar of Events

December

5 Garage Sale Weekend
6 Holiday Party
13 Holiday Light Judging

WFPNA Board Meetings

2 December

The Great Pumpkin Weigh-Off

By Danny Quon

The final conclusion of the West Floral Park Halloween Pumpkin Growing contest was a success, even though many would-be contestants lost their pumpkins during the inconsistent weather change. Nearly 25 people attended the weigh off at the Quon's on October 31. The trophies were made by Danny Quon and consisted of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places. Award winners also received a pumpkin recipe book as part of their prize. Donna Layne provided the refreshments. Grace and Maryann of W. 21 St. won Second and Third Place with 2 pumpkins, weighing 31 and 30 lbs. The 1st Place Winner was Bruce and his son Adam on Rosewood with 2 entries, the largest and winning weight was 55 lbs. Honorable mention went to Patt on Rosewood who brought the leaves, roots and pumpkin, right out of the ground, Donna on Westwood who says hers was still putting out good growth and didn't pick it to bring to the weigh in and Joanne on Baker who entered her good sized pumpkin for her granddaughter, Kate. It was a fun time.

Start planning now for next year when we'll have our 2nd Annual West Floral Park Pumpkin Growing Contest at the end of October. Let's see if anyone can outdo the 55 pounder.

Thanks to everyone who participated with the effort to grow, and coming over for the weight-in and yummy homemade muffins, Pumpkin Pie Crunch and hot apple cider.



And here is the delicious Pumpkin Pie Crunch receipt as requested:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13 x 9 inch cake pan.

One 14 oz. can pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
2 eggs
1 1/2 cups evaporated milk
1 1/3 cups granulated sugar
1 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
1/2 tsp salt
1 pkg yellow cake mix
1 1/4 cups coarsely chopped pecans
1 cup melted butter

Whipped cream (if desired)

In a large mixing bowl, stir together pumpkin, eggs, evaporated milk, sugar, spice and salt until smoothly blended. Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle dry cake mix evenly on top. Scatter nuts over cake mix. Drizzle melted butter over nuts, moistening dry mixture as much as possible. Bake 50-60 minutes or until set and golden. Cool at least 1 hour in pan on a wire rack before serving. Serve with whipped cream. Store leftover dessert in refrigerator.

Richard J. Politiski

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Holly Berry Tea

Presented by the Victorian Tea Society
At the Heritage Museum of Orange
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Saturday, December 5, 2009

11:00 a.m.

\$27

Proceeds benefit the Heritage Museum
and their children's programs.

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eventsandtickets](http://www.heritagemuseumoc.org/eventsandtickets) for more information
and to purchase tickets.

The Holiday Season is Just Around the Corner!

...And we want to get you involved in our neighborhood decorating!

Neighborhood Light Contest and Tree Decorations

Keeping with tradition, the Beautification Committee will be judging our neighborhood light displays. Awards will be presented to the best lighting display, the best entry display and the best window display. New this year is a block award for most lit up block (or most houses with light displays). Judging will be done on Sunday, December 13 after sunset.

The Beautification Committee will decorate the neighborhood entrance at Bristol and Santa Clara. But we want your help with decorating the rest of the neighborhood. We want residents to decorate the parkway trees in front of their houses. This can include simple bows tied around the trees or tree wreaths. Or it can include anything your imagination comes up with. Just don't harm the trees! To step it up a notch, get together with your neighbors on your block to coordinate tree decorations. Whether you do it as individuals or as a block, we hope you will join us in dressing up our neighborhood for the season. So get out your creative drive, talk with your neighbors and then dedicate a couple of hours to decorating your parkway trees.

Most Beautiful Yard Award

Congratulations to the Davey's at 2312 Rosewood whose yard was designated as the "Most Beautiful Yard" in West Floral Park. This yearly award reflects not only the landscaping but the hardscaping and general maintenance of the property. This award is normally given by the City; however, this year because of budget cuts, this program was suspended. Therefore the Beautification Committee with the WFPNA Board's approval voted to present our own award. Great job Paul and Denise!

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WEST FLORAL PARK Garden of the Month

December: 2410 Baker Street
Home of Don Winn



November: 1027 19th Street
Home of Steve Tancredi and Judi Fine

2009 Beer Crawl Wrap-up

by Steven Mendoza

The Social Events this year were brought to you by a team of Volunteers that took time from their busy days to make their neighborhood a little bit more welcoming, a little bit more fun and a little bit more social. As social chairman, these events could not have occurred without the assistance of the Volunteers.

Below is some wonderful quotes about Volunteerism:

The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.
~Everett Mamor

Wherever a man turns he can find someone who needs him.
~Albert Schweitzer

Unselfish and noble actions are the most radiant pages in the biography of souls. ~David Thomas

The breeze, the trees, the honey bees - All volunteers!
~Juliet Carinreap

There are two ways of spreading light - to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it. ~Edith Wharton, Vesalius in Zante

Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.
~Author Unknown

We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude. ~Cynthia Ozick

You may not have saved a lot of money in your life, but if you have saved a lot of heartaches for other folks, you are a pretty rich man.
~Seth Parker

I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks.
~William Shakespeare

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. ~Sherry Anderson (Thanks, Kathy)

During the recently held Beer Crawl and Chili Cookoff, the neighborhood gathered together to taste wonderful California Beer along with Chili from the kitchens of our neighbors. Venison Chili, prepared by Mr. Alan Layne was the big winner of the Chili Cookoff. The event, organized by President Jason Saenz, was pulled together with the generous assistance of the host homes, the McLeans and the Chantelle's. Of course, the event could not have been such a success without mentioning the Volunteers who assisted in the Planning, Set Up and Clean Up of the event:

- Steve and Cathie Fryer (Towner),
- Mr. Ed Flora (Rosewood),
- Jessica and Steve Brownsell (Towner),
- Donna Layne (Westwood),
- Steven Mendoza (19th)
- Jeremy Mendoza (19th),
- Dean Guzman and Aldo Gonzalez (Santa Clara)
- Matt Speer (Flower)
- Steve Tancredi (19th)



Michelle and Joe Chantelle gather with neighbors Rod and Carole Hull.



West Floral Park neighbors gather to share the wonderful raffle prizes won during the annual Chili Cookoff and Beer Crawl. Thanks have to go to Ms. Cathie Fryer for coming up with the wonderful prizes.





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