

Mayfair Messenger

A publication of the Mayfair Civic Association
Neighbors making a difference since 1945

November 2015
Volume 19, Issue 3

Concerned About How Mayfair Looks?

The next MCA meeting will be held **Thursday, November 19**, at 7:30 p.m. at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox. The meeting will focus on various issues that deal with rules and regulations that are not being observed in the Mayfair area, causing the appearance of our main streets to be less than ideal. If you have suggestions or observations that you feel need to be addressed, the MCA invites you to voice them at the November meeting. By coming together as a community, Mayfair residents can make a difference. Please invite your friends and neighbors, and join us on Thursday. We look forward to seeing you then!



Civic Association Officers

- President:** Ron Duplack,
rduplack@rieckcrotty.com
- Vice President:** Tom Keating,
keatingtj@gmail.com
- Vice President, Community Relations:**
Walter Eliassen, wjebde@aol.com
- Treasurer:** Gavin Chase,
gavinmargie@yahoo.com
- Membership:** Margie Scannell,
margiegavin@yahoo.com

Committee Heads

- Zoning/Development:** Christopher Lambesis, chris@lambesis.net
- Traffic/Safety:** Vittorio Gomez,
vmgomez21@yahoo.com
- Beautification:** Tom Keating,
keatingtj@gmail.com
- Newsletter Editor:** Carol Kroskey,
mayfair.messenger@yahoo.com

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Letter from the President

Ron Duplack

Many thanks to Elizabeth Corrado, of Elevate Energy, who led a discussion at our October meeting on smarter energy use. She described available programs that may enable homeowners to lower heating costs, protect the environment, and ensure efficiency alternatives. To pinpoint the best ways to do that, she outlined Elevate Energy’s home inspection program, which reveals areas of energy loss and suggests ways to achieve up to a 15% increase in heating efficiency and cost savings.

She also addressed questions and concerns regarding the upcoming installation of Commonwealth Edison’s smart meters and how they will play a part in city-wide energy-grid improvement plans. Please visit the Elevate Energy website at elevateenergy.org for more information.

We heard about the recent improvements in the shopping center located on Pulaski just north of Montrose from Tom Thai, who runs Nick’s Billiards at that location with his brother, Don. They have operated the business for more than 10 years. The Thais noted that a new landlord has modernized the store facades, giving them the incentive to install new furniture, fixtures, and equipment in their own venue.

As a result, they presented their plan to apply for an on-premise liquor-consumption license so they may offer wine and craft beers to customers. Operations have been BYOB for several years, they said, and they noted there have been few incidents of unruly behavior. They attribute that to their billiards-focused clientele, their attentive presence and monitoring, and an on-premise surveillance system, as well as close proximity to the 17th District headquarters. They invited Mayfair residents to come in for a game of pool, and to check out their facilities.

Finally, there was a lengthy discussion regarding street sales and signage that has spread throughout Mayfair. Particular disgust was expressed regarding sidewalk and out-of-truck sales at the old Blind Duck Lounge located in the 4200 block of West Lawrence. Photos of this nuisance were circulated, along with photos of signs placed in sidewalks, crosswalks, and on the streets, creating safety issues and a “Maxwell Street” appearance. Because of the degree of concern expressed, these issues will be the focus of our next meeting, scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2015. We have invited a city official to attend.



Update from the Alderman

Margaret Laurino, 39th Ward

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank everyone who attended the 14th annual Mayfair Remembrance Day: A Salute to American Heroes event at the Mayfair Veteran's Memorial at the intersection of Lawrence and Keeler Avenues. It was both humbling and inspiring to learn about the lives and careers of our neighbors and honorees.

Although we recognize the sacrifices of all our servicemen and women, and our first responders, this year Mayfair's honorees were Robert "Bob" Holbach, United States Army, World War II; Matthew Voegtle, posthumous, World War II; Sergeant Clifford R. Gara, posthumous, Operation Enduring Freedom; Peter "Pete" White, Gulf War and Operation Enduring Freedom; Officer Peter Toldeo and Officer Matthew Rogus, Chicago Police Department, 17th District; Ms. Cindy Rosasco, educator, St. Edward's elementary school, and Chicago Fire Department Engine 69, first and third shifts. We thank them all for their service and dedication.

A better way to dispose of leaves

With the change from summer to a windy Chicago autumn, leaves have been steadily falling from the trees. Please remember that if there are leaves on the parkway in front of your home or property, it's your responsibility to remove them (burning is not permitted). However, the Department of Streets and Sanitation has established a dedicated leaf and yard waste collection system to assist you in clearing your yard, parkways, and storm drains of leaf debris.

Please rake and bag the leaves. Then, you can call 311 through November 27 to request a separate pickup. Place the bagged leaves and other yard waste right next to your black garbage carts in the alley or at the curb. (Don't place yard debris in your blue recycling cans. Yard waste contaminates the other recyclable materials.)

Don't rake or blow leaves into the street—and make sure landscapers don't either. Doing so results in clogged water drains and street-sweeper trucks.

If you have a storm drain in front of or alongside your home, please clear leaves and other waste to prevent flooding during foul weather this fall and winter.



When drains are blocked, rain water and melting ice or snow can't run off from the street, creating a nuisance (wet shoes) at best, and a potentially dangerous hazard (slippery slush or ice) at worst.

Overnight parking ban set to resume December 1

Please remember that on Tuesday, December 1, Chicago will reactivate its winter overnight parking ban at 3 a.m. for the most critical arterial streets. Signs for this seasonal restriction are permanently posted, so check to make sure your vehicle will be moved before 3 a.m. each night until April 1.

In the Mayfair area, these streets include 1) Foster (Central to Clark); 2) Central (Bryn Mawr to Harrison); 3) Kedzie (Bryn Mawr to Irving Park Road); and 4) Milwaukee (Foster to Kinzie), but there are additional streets throughout Chicago that also have posted seasonal overnight restrictions. Cars parked on these streets between the hours of 3:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m., will be ticketed and towed whether or not there is snow on the ground.

Also, don't forget to plan ahead if snow is in the forecast; cars may be towed if parked on busy streets when snow accumulation is over 2 inches.



Sidewalk snow removal starts with the first flurry

No one wants to think about it, but we live in Chicago, and with winter comes snow. We're fortunate to have good options for public transit, but many people rely on walking to the buses and trains as their primary way of getting around. So, it's important to keep your sidewalks shoveled.

Without a wide, clear path through snow and ice, it's especially difficult for seniors, small children, and people with disabilities to walk safely. According to the Municipal Code of Chicago, it's the responsibility of homeowners and occupants to remove snow and ice from the sidewalks. Please be considerate of your neighbors.

Irish American Heritage Center 4626 N. Knox Avenue

Kathy O'Neill

Kick off your holiday season at the Irish American Heritage Center. Join old friends or meet new ones as you gather to spread the joy—and enjoy the spread.

Christmas songs and more set the mood

Irish Fest favorites—and internationally acclaimed folk musicians—Makem & Spain will be making an appearance at the IAHC on Friday, December 4, to bring attendees their special interpretation of Irish folk music. Their Christmas concert will feature not only classic holiday songs and new arrangements of old favorites, but also original tunes composed by this superbly talented trio.

These much-admired performers embrace and uphold the legacy of Tommy Makem and the Clancy Brothers, while making the music their own. Rory Makem and the Spain Brothers, Mickey and Liam, have taken the international arena by storm with their engaging stage presence, the vocal power of their three-part harmonies, and superb instrumentals on the guitar, banjo—and bouzouki, taking traditional Irish folk music to a whole new level.

Born in County Louth, Rory continues the lineage of an Irish music dynasty begun by his grandmother Sarah Makem and carried on by his father Tommy, an icon of Irish music known as the Bard of Armagh. Meanwhile, Mickey and Liam learned Irish songs from their father while growing up in New Hampshire. Mickey's rich baritone voice and Liam's mastery of stringed instruments found a home when they met Rory and combined talents to drive Irish folk songs into the 21st century.

Their Christmas performance at the IAHC will start at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, December 4. Tickets are \$20, and can be purchased in advance by visiting www.irish-american.org or calling (773) 282-7035, ext. 10.

Left to right: Mickey Spain on guitar, Rory Makem on banjo, and Liam Spain on the bouzouki create a unique interpretation of Irish folk music that has won international recognition for the last two decades.



Breakfast, the Bears, a bazaar—and Santa too!

You'll really get into the holiday spirit when you come to the annual Christmas Bazaar at the IAHC. This year's bazaar is scheduled for Sunday, December 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. You can start your full day with Mass, then enjoy breakfast, a craft sale, a bake sale, and a visit from Santa Claus. To welcome Santa and his elves, The Fifth Province Pub and first floor of the IAHC will be transformed into a winter wonderland.

Before all the festivities begin, Mass will be celebrated in the auditorium at 10:30 a.m., with music provided by the Irish Heritage Singers. After Mass, you can enjoy a traditional Irish breakfast in the Erin Room. Tickets for the breakfast are \$8 for adults and \$4 for children, and reservations are required.

The Fifth Province Pub will be open from 12:00 noon until 6:00 p.m. In addition to the usual libations, you'll be able to view the Bears vs. 49ers game, which will be shown, starting at noon.

Meanwhile, the bazaar will feature a kids' activity zone in the main hall, including a coloring and craft table and two children's Christmas movies. That will keep the young ones busy, freeing mom and dad to shop for unique gifts at the craft sale, and for treats at the bake sale.

There is no charge to browse and shop the craft and bake sale, so plan to stop by early and stay awhile to enjoy all the handcrafted items prepared by Chicago artisans. You may be the lucky winner of the Irish-American quilt, which will be raffled off.

The selection of goodies offered in the bake shop will include tea, coffee, homemade pies, breads, scones, cakes, and cookies. You can enjoy them during your visit, and buy extras to savor again at home.

Of course, no Christmas bazaar would be complete without a visit from Santa Claus. This year, the jolly old elf will be visiting all good children at the IAHC from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Bring a camera to memorialize your child's visit, because Santa will pose for photos with each child.

Please bring a canned good for the IAHC's Holiday Food Drive for the Greater Chicago Food Depository; you will receive a coupon for 15% off a future food bill when you visit the Fifth Province Pub in 2016. To purchase tickets for the breakfast, visit www.irish-american.org or call (773) 282-7035, ext. 10 by December 1.



Replace Ash Trees to Regain Shade and Save Energy

In recent years, the Mayfair area has lost a lot of trees—mostly ash trees too damaged by the invasive emerald ash borer to be saved. In fact, most ash trees will eventually die; vaccinations are only staving off the inevitable, because there is no way to completely eradicate the emerald ash borer, or to help an ash tree regain its health completely.



Next year, Chicago will have to inoculate the same trees that were treated two years ago, and repeat the treatment on the rest of the trees that were injected last year. This will continue until the city has enough money to deal with the dying trees.

However, through a partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation,

Commonwealth Edison is giving away 1,800 trees, which can help to replace an ash tree you've lost. ComEd notes that by planting trees, you can increase your home's energy efficiency for decades to come. In addition, planting a tree can provide tangible benefits, including stormwater runoff reduction, improved air quality, shade on those hot summer days, and beautifying your home and the neighborhood.

The best time to plant a tree is 30 years ago

The next best time is right now. ComEd's Power Planting website, www.arboday.org/comed, has a tool to determine where the best location is in your yard to plant a tree to save energy. To receive two trees for free, please enter promo code COMED15 during the checkout process.

The online tool estimates the annual savings the trees can generate as they grow. In exchange, you should care for the trees and plant them in the location provided by the online tool. Your free trees will be delivered between November 15 and December 1, at no charge, courtesy of ComEd.

To prevent the potential need to cut down trees of the same species if another disease or bug invasion occurs, the website offers your choice of Eastern Hornbeam, Red Buckeye, Sargent Crabapple, or Saucer Magnolia.

Community First Medical Center Programs

The Community First Medical Center, 5645 W. Addison St., will offer the following no-cost health events in December. To register for an event, please call (844) 236-2362.

Low-cost cholesterol screening

A cholesterol screening, via a blood draw, will be held on Wednesday, December 9, from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. For accuracy, the test requires a 12-hour fast before the blood draw, which checks HDL, LDL, and total cholesterol, and also triglyceride levels. Test results will be mailed to the address you provide. A \$10 fee is payable in cash or check at the screening, but advance registration is required.

Free blood-pressure screening

Free blood pressure screenings will be offered on Friday, December 11, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in the hospital's main lobby. Registration is not required, and a healthcare professional will be available to answer any questions.

Support groups for diabetics and arthritis sufferers

The diabetes support group meets Tuesday, December 1, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This no-cost support group aims to provide mutual support and education. For information, please call (773) 794-8329.

The arthritis support group meets Thursday, December 17, from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Free; registration is not required.

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Mayfair Beautification

Tom Keating

Lady Bird Johnson must be spinning in her grave. Not only are Mayfair and Jefferson Park residents fighting to keep Wilson Avenue from being completely closed down on the west side of Cicero Avenue because of a gigantic electronic billboard that is supposedly going to be installed there, we also have to sacrifice our trees so people driving on the expressway can't possibly miss the existing billboard that's on the roof on a building on Montrose Avenue, near the Blue Line El station.

On October 27, MCA vice president for community relations, Wally Eliassen, discovered a crew on the landscaped path that runs from Montrose to Agatite Avenue, between Kenton and Kilbourn, which provides a convenient shortcut for neighbors who use the CTA Blue Line "L" and the Metra trains. The crew was cutting off the tops of some of the trees in that area, on the highway side of the fence. When he questioned what they were doing, they told him they had a permit to "top" the trees because they were blocking the view of the large billboard on the nearby roof.

Evidently, the company that put the billboard up there wants people driving to be able to see the sign from down low on the expressway. Wally checked with both alderman Marge Laurino and alderman John Arena, and was told that the Illinois Department of Transportation had given permission to cut the trees.

Top left: Path on the way to Montrose as it appeared before "tree trimming"; bottom left: trees were "topped" to clear the view for the billboard; top right: path as it appears now; bottom right: view from Montrose Avenue Blue Line "L" station.



Pre-rush hour traffic on eastbound Wilson at the Mayfair Pumping Station; the proposed billboard would be installed in the road at the curve. Earlier construction was halted, and the road filled in.

Not only do the trees now look ridiculous from the street level, but also "topping" a tree is unhealthy for the tree, not to mention the loss of shade and aesthetic appeal. In addition, the residents who live near there said the loss of the evergreen foliage allows more sound from the expressway to filter into their homes.

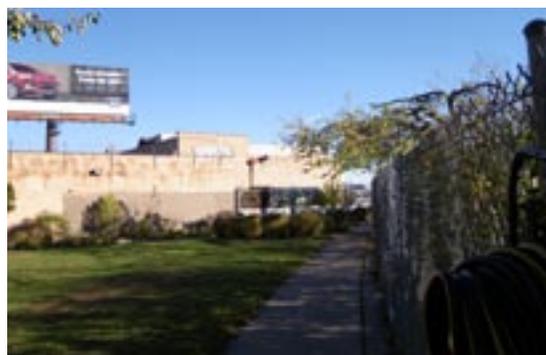
The fight for Wilson/Lamon Avenues continues

As the *Nadig Press* recently reported, residents also are not happy about the plans to install a digital billboard in the middle of Wilson and Lamon Avenues. Digging had already commenced when residents alerted alderman Arena, who was able to stop the construction, which would have completely closed the street, cutting off a route that many Mayfair residents use to avoid rush-hour traffic congestion on Lawrence and Cicero Avenues.

Currently, the city is planning to install the billboard in the same location, but has proposed to make Lamon Avenue one-way southbound, and Wilson Avenue one-way eastbound in front of the Mayfair Pumping Station.

No one seems to have taken into consideration the fact that the infrastructure surrounding the pumping station is about 100 years old, and that the station provides water to the northwest

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Mayfair Beautification

Tom Keating

Photo from Northwest Chicago Historical Society; nwchicagohistory.org



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side and numerous surrounding suburbs from Lake Michigan. The consequences of installing this billboard could have more far-reaching effects than just light pollution and worse traffic jams.

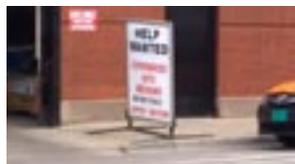
Despite Lady Bird Johnson's good intentions in getting President Johnson to push for the highway beautification bill in 1965, it seems that today, billboard companies take precedence over the appearance and comfort of communities. It makes you wonder if these billboard companies (or the owners who rent space to them) pay extra property taxes on all the additional money these billboards bring in. What about the loss of property value that having huge billboards looming over a neighborhood can bring? And, despite warnings about distracted driving, certainly large signs that are meant to catch the attention of drivers cause a distraction.

Sign, sign, everywhere a sign...

Meanwhile, numerous businesses are ignoring city ordinances that say it's illegal to obstruct the streets, parkways, and sidewalks with temporary or "sandwich"



Signs that block streets and sidewalks are illegal and potentially hazardous.



type signs. This is especially frustrating when I remember all the trouble we had working with the city when the MCA wanted to put the planter stands along Elston Avenue to help beautify our major business streets.

MCA officers have talked to alderman Laurino's staff about these signs, and the staffers have confirmed that such signs are not legal. Although they noted they'd look into the matter, the signs are still in position as of this date. The MCA has been making an effort—and will continue to do so—to try to remove the "Maxwell Street" look that has taken root on our business streets.

As a result, we have invited the city to send a speaker to our meeting on Thursday to address this topic, and to fill us in on what can and should be done about having the signs removed, and keeping them from popping up again.



"Sidewalk sale" gets a new meaning

And speaking of Maxwell Street, I received a reply from the alderman's office after I sent copies of pictures from the front and rear of a store selling junk on the sidewalk and from trucks on Lawrence Avenue. The staff said a citation was given for the junk in the alley; they also are going to check to see if the store has a business license.

A sign on the building near the front door lists a management company at 4461 W. Lawrence, which is a barber shop in the large triangle building whose owner recently made a presentation to the MCA for a zoning change. We welcome businesses that enhance Mayfair, but the rules—including operating a business legally—should be applied equally to everyone. Please alert the alderman's office if you observe similar activities in the future.

Don't get a Ticket!

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is no longer mailing vehicle registration renewal reminder notices. However, the office can still mail the actual renewal stickers, titles, and license plates to vehicle owners who renew online. If you own a vehicle, you need to be aware of when your plate or sticker expires. You can sign up

to receive reminder notices via e-mail at www.cyberdriveillinois.com; you'll need your registration ID and PIN (located on your Illinois Registration Identification Card). Or keep it simple, and just get your sticker at the driver's license facility at 5401 N. Elston Ave., or 4642 W. Diversey Ave. (Bring your driver's license and cash, checkbook, or a credit card; expect to pay an extra "convenience fee" if you use a credit card.)

Arts in the Mayfair Area

As the days grow shorter and the weather gets more blustery, we all need an excuse to get out of the house. Why not enjoy some of the great entertainment in the area?

Josué Tacoronte with Ensemble Español at NEIU

If you enjoy flamenco guitar—or would like to learn more about it—plan an evening out at Northeastern Illinois University on Friday, November 20 at 7:30 p.m. Cuban guitarist Josué Tacoronte crosses genres of classical and flamenco styles, while maintaining the essence of Cuba.

Josué will perform at NEIU's Recital Hall, 5500 N. St. Louis. Tickets are \$17.50 and \$25; please call (773) 442-4636 or buy online at www.neiu.edu/university-life/arts-northeastern/jewel-box-series/josue-tacoronte/.

"Good for Otto" at the Gift Theater

Haunted by his own childhood, a psychologist tries to minister to distressed souls who find their way to the doors of his rural Connecticut health center. The *Chicago Tribune* calls Good for Otto as "remarkable...heartfelt and even-handed a theatrical look at the issues surrounding mental illness in America as you ever are likely to see."

This play is at the Gift Theater, 4802 N. Milwaukee Ave., through December 20. Performances take place on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are \$35; please call (773) 283-7071, or buy online at <http://thegifttheatre.org/>.

"Chapter Two" at the Windy City Playhouse

When is it time to let go after losing your wife and to let love back in? Find out in Neil Simon's sparkling romantic comedy, Chapter Two. After spy novelist George Schneider lost his wife, and let his pushy younger brother set him up with a few girls, he knew he would never date again. Enter Jennie, a soap-opera actress with a sensitive side who just might be able to bring George back into the light.

Performances of Chapter Two will take place at the Windy City Playhouse, 3014 W. Irving Park Rd., through December 20, at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday, 8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and at 3 p.m. on Sunday (evening performances at 7 p.m. on November 29 and December 6). Tickets are \$25; call (773) 891-8985 or buy online at <http://windycityplayhouse.com/>.

Sean Cleland at Chief O'Neill's

Award-winning Irish fiddle player Sean Cleland will perform at Chief O'Neill's Pub and Restaurant, 3471 N. Elston Ave., from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Sundays in November. As founder and director of the Irish School of Music, Cleland knows a lot of other Irish musicians, who show up to perform at Chief O'Neill's "hooley" gatherings. Come and see who shows up to perform with Sean.

Happy Holidays from the MCA!

You and your family and friends are invited to the Mayfair Civic Association's annual Holiday Party on **Thursday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m.** at the Irish American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox.

Invite the neighbors, and come to share food, fun, and festivities! Kids, come for the crafts and gifts. Older kids, come for the conversation and a chance for great raffle prizes. Besides the delicious treats, you'll enjoy the good company, entertainment by the St. Edward's orchestra—and maybe even a visit from Santa's elves. Please join us for this neighborhood tradition. See you there!



Will your teen want a summer job next year?

It's never too early to plan ahead. The Chicago Park District is hosting the One Summer Chicago job fair at Soldier Field, on Saturday, December 19, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

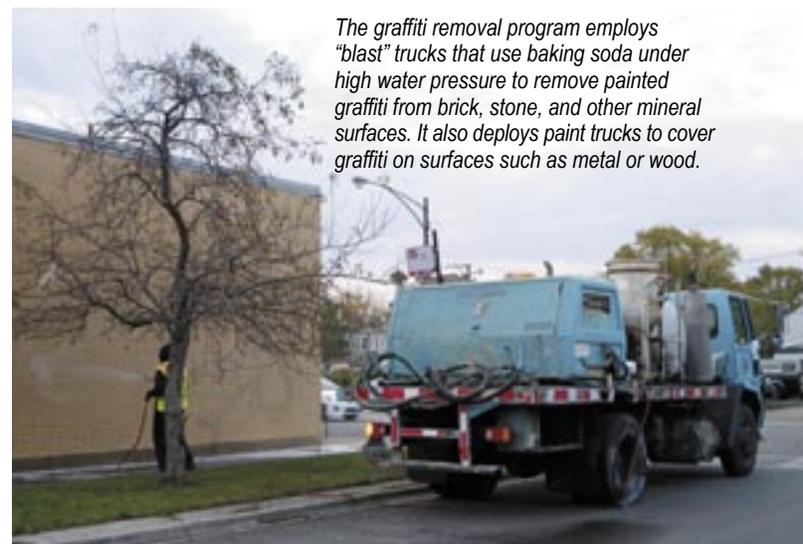
Teens between 14 and 18 can get resumé-writing tips, participate in mock interviews, and learn about employment opportunities.



Advance registration is necessary; tickets must be turned in at check-in. For more information, visit <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/events/One-Summer-Chicago-Job-Fair-at-Soldier-Field/>.

Graffiti Blasters to the rescue, after a call to 311

Thanks to the Graffiti Blasters, "tags" that were defacing this building was promptly removed—twice. If you see graffiti, please call 311 to report the location, so Mayfair stays clean, safe, and free of gang symbols.



The graffiti removal program employs "blast" trucks that use baking soda under high water pressure to remove painted graffiti from brick, stone, and other mineral surfaces. It also deploys paint trucks to cover graffiti on surfaces such as metal or wood.

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Halogen Supply Company, Inc.
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Laborers International Union of North America—Local #6
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We Wash Car Care Center
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Yemen Restaurant
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39th Ward Alderman
Margaret Laurino and
Illinois 15th District State Rep
John D'Amico
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Happy Thanksgiving
from the
Mayfair Civic Association

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4500 N. Elston Ave.

Schuham Builder's Supply Co.
4640 N. Elston Ave.

The Fish Guy
4423 N. Elston Ave.

X Sport Fitness
4677 N. Elston Ave.

Go Green: Get the *Mayfair Messenger* via e-mail

Reading a paper copy of this newsletter? Have access to the Internet? Please consider reading an e-mail version instead (we won't share your e-mail address with anyone else).

To receive the *Mayfair Messenger* via e-mail, please send an e-mail to mayfair.messenger@yahoo.com. Thanks for helping us stretch your membership dues!

A note from membership

To keep your membership current for the following year, renewals will be billed in January and July. If you joined the association between May and October, your renewal will be billed in July. If you joined between November and April, you'll be billed in January.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation!

A note from the editor

Please submit articles of interest or announcements of upcoming public and community events to mayfair.messenger@yahoo.com (the editor reserves the right to edit submissions for space and content; items may not appear if they're past the publishing date).

If you're already a member, please pass this on to a neighbor.

Mayfair Civic Association Membership Application
\$10 per household; \$6 for senior citizens

Name _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Please fill out the above information, and return with your check to:

Mayfair Civic Association
c/o Margie Scannell
4731 N. Kilbourn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60630