

# GLEN ELLYN



**PRESENTED BY KAREN LIPPOLDT  
OF RE/MAX SUBURBAN**

*From its volunteer fire department, to its annual Cardboard Boat Regatta, Glen Ellyn exudes a sense of community*

**W**hen you want to know what's really happening in a place, you talk to some of the people who are most involved. And if you want to know where to go and what to do, you look for someone experienced to serve as a guide. With that in mind, we asked more than a dozen Glen Ellyn community leaders to give us their thoughts about the town in which they work and/or live. Following are some of their insights, recommendations, nuggets of useful or unusual information, and hopes for the future.

## **WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT LIVING OR WORKING IN GLEN ELLYN?**

*Ruth Wright, President of the Glen Ellyn Historical Society:* Glen Ellyn is a small suburb with large ambiance, attitude and action. A central business district with generally similar period architecture and décor reflect the New England heritage from which the early Glen Ellyn settlers came, and provide a quaint setting for the type of shops which the structures house.



*Barbara Rozgonyi, Principal CoryWest Communications, Publicity Chair, District 41 PTA Council:* It's a place where although you're busy, you're relaxed at the same time. Not having to worry about traffic makes a big difference, and my kids feel safe enough to bike or walk downtown to the library. When we moved to Glen Ellyn our realtor told us we'd love living here — and we do!

*Janie Patch, Executive Director, Glen Ellyn Economic Development Corporation:* Working downtown is the best of all worlds. All the conveniences and necessities are within a short walk. Downtown has such an inviting hometown atmosphere with lots of flowers in the summer, great architecture, unique store windows and friendly people. It just feels good to walk down the street!

*Ted Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster, Glen Ellyn website and*

*Multimedia Consultant:* The fellow residents I get to work with. All of them are extraordinarily competent professionals who — whether paid or not — amaze me with their heartfelt dedication to the people of the village, as well as to their respective causes.

*Dr. Pi Irwin, Superintendent Glen Ellyn School District 41:* The commitment of community members to volunteer on behalf of improvements throughout the community. There is a strong focus on the part of residents to giving back. For example, Glen Ellyn still maintains a volunteer fire department.

*Raymond J. Whalen, President, Ray Whalen Builders, Inc.:* Working. The time-honored small town sense of work ethics based on strength of character, high principles and values that translate in a long range basis on personal conviction, interpersonal relationships and commitment to community versus a self serving rat race mentality.

### **ANY INTERESTING TRIVIA ABOUT GLEN ELLYN THAT MOST PEOPLE WOULDN'T KNOW?**

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* I have a feeling the downtown Horse Trough is falling into this category. The trough, located at the center of the intersection of Main & Crescent streets, is an authentic piece of Glen Ellyn history. Surrounded by flowers in the summer, it is probably mistaken by many as a planter. And for those under 30, it's no longer a case of, "What's a horse trough?" but "What's a horse?"

*Jan Langford, Executive Director, Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce:* Glen Ellyn has a fascinating history, which is readily evident in historical markers and period architecture. Stacy's Tavern, built in 1846, still stands in its original location, and serves as a historical museum. Also, the four-time Grammy Award-winning Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus (see related article on page 30) is world-famous and serves as a model for other children's choruses around the country.

*Patch, Economic Development Corporation:* Glen Ellyn is located at the geographic center of DuPage County. The floral clock on Main St. is radio-linked to the atomic clock in Utah and is self-correcting. Also, McChesney & Miller Grocery and Market known regionally for its fine butcher shop was established in 1862 and is the oldest grocer in DuPage County.

*Greg Mathews, Village President:* Our train station is used by more people than any other on the Union Pacific west line.

*Norton, Police:* The Mary Knoll area used to be a nine hole golf course on the grounds of the old seminary.

*Gail Drury, Drury Design Kitchen and Bath Studio:* Lake Ellyn used to be a vacation destination for people who wanted to get out of the city. The village also was once a Pony Express stop.

*Wright, Historical Society:* A Glen Ellyn resident, Mrs. Emeline Hall, is thought to have been the model for the character Emeline in the book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

*Welles, Library:* Money for the first Glen Ellyn Library was solicited directly from Andrew Carnegie by a member of the Library Board who travelled to New York in 1912 to secure the \$10,000 to construct the building.

# Glen Ellyn

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT GLEN ELLYN?

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* It's not our wine. That's Glen Ellen, in California — "e," not "y."

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications:* Although our village is picturesque in places, we're not small and quaint like Mayberry or Bedford Falls. Our geographic borders stretch out over 4,000 acres; the village spills over south of Butterfield Road and east past I-355.

*Drury, Drury Design:* People not familiar with Glen Ellyn's geographic location confuse it with Glenview and think it is in the northern suburbs.

*Jan Langford, Glen Ellyn Chamber of Commerce:* People often remark that it is expensive to live here. Although many larger homes have recently been built, there remains a variety of affordable housing opportunities.

*Wright, Historical Society:* The perception that Glen Ellyn is an ordinary, small, rich commuter suburb. While there are traces of the latter three adjectives, these do not represent the heart of the village. While "keeping up with the Jones" might be found here, it is the exception rather than the rule.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE HIDDEN TREASURES (PERSONS, PLACES OR THINGS) WITHIN GLEN ELLYN THAT OUTSIDERS MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT?

*Norton, Chief of Police:* The annual Cardboard Boat Regatta and picnic each July.

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* The College of DuPage. Not the obvious fact that it's the nation's largest two-year community college, but because of all of its other offerings that can benefit virtually any interested resident. Great resources like the McAninch Arts Center, the greenhouse store, and the extraordinary luncheons and dinners prepared by the culinary creators at the Hospitality School.



While functional on the inside, the Civic Center reflects the village's historical ambiance on the outside.

Even though the main campus is right here in the Village, it amazes me how many residents aren't aware of its many programs.

*Irwin, School District 41:* Hidden treasures within Glen Ellyn are the many three and four generation Glen Ellyn-ites.

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications:* Diversity in businesses and people; cottage industries, everything from reproduction of antique fabrics to custom jewelry to greeting cards; and the YMCA, recently renovated to include a climbing wall, KidZone play center and fantastic wellness center. The skate park and skate camp rocked my 10-year-old's summer.

*Wright, Historical Society:* Despite the fact that the senior population represents 11% of the village's population, the community involvement by this segment of the population is worthy of note. This group generally sees their retirement as a chance of new opportunity and they seem to seize it with an unexpected gusto. For example, a group of five persons with no experience in publishing researched, wrote, edited, created and marketed a book on the history of Glen Ellyn — a project that took seven years — and donated the proceeds to the historical Society. Four of the five were between 76 and 80 when the book was published.

## IF YOU HAD OUT-OF-TOWN GUESTS, WHAT TWO OR THREE PLACES IN AND AROUND TOWN WOULD YOU BE SURE TO BRING THEM?

*(The following is a composite tour, based on the responses of our panelists.)*

Start with a stroll through the downtown area to check out the quaint shops and soak up some of the village's ambiance. Stop for lunch at one of the many restaurants ("Favorite Restaurants for specific recommendations later in this article) or head over to nearby Lake Ellyn for a picnic with a view. Get out the bicycles for a ride along the Prairie Path or take a short drive over to College of DuPage. Along the way, check out the village's many grand and historic homes. For those who like history, head over to Stacy's Tavern Museum. Both kids and animal lovers will enjoy a stop at Willowbrook Wildlife Center, while golfers will definitely want to tee it up at Village Links. In the evening, catch a movie at the old Glen theatre, listen to some jazz at Michael's, or take in one of the many artistic offerings at the McAninch Center at College of DuPage.

## MOST SCENIC SPOT IN GLEN ELLYN?

*Raymond Whalen, Owner, Whalen Custom Builders:* Lake Ellyn, no doubt. Incredibly picturesque throughout our changing seasons — radiant in fall as the leaves are changing, crisp and cool in the icy hollows of winter as a skater's backdrop, fresh with blooms in the spring, and cast aglow on the 4th of July by the reflections of fireworks in the water.

*Patch, Economic Development Corporation:* Pan Fish Park just off of Park Boulevard and south of Roosevelt Road. It's so beautiful with graceful old willow trees next to the stream that many newly-wed couples have their photos taken there.

*Drury, Drury Design:* The Lake Ellyn view from the bleachers at Glenbard West High School.

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications:* Glenbard West's gardens are worth the climb up the hill.

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* Our own backyard. Flowers, veggies, chipmunks, birds, butterflies . . . and we are not alone in enjoying the environment we have created outside our doors. There are times when I think Glen Ellyn is "The Village of Delightful Gardens."

## **MUST EVENT OR PLACE TO SEE AND BE SEEN BY LOCAL "MOVERS AND SHAKERS?"**

Many of our panelists included annual Chamber of Commerce events like the Snowflake Ball, golf outing and steak fry as places to see and be seen. Other hot spots included the 4th of July festivities including the parade, fireworks and Cardboard Boat Regatta. Others noted:

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications:* Depends on who move and shakes what in your world. Sit on the sidelines at Ackerman Park during soccer season; check out who's who in your pew on Sunday mornings; line up with 3,000 ladies (and a few hundred men) for Infant Welfare's house walk, run in Hoof it for Hepzibah race or the Freedom Four run; play bingo at a Glen Ellyn Women's Club luncheon; dine at the Glen Ellyn Historical Society's annual diner and plug into PTA Council for the latest in school news.

*Langford, Chamber of Commerce:* The Busy Bee Barber Shop is one bastion of moving and shaking.

*Norton, Chief of Police:* The Christmas walk, where the "movers and shakers" sit on Santa's lap.

*Bill McCormack, Owner, Balloon Buddies:* The Taste of Glen Ellyn.

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* Durned if I know — I didn't know we even had any "movers & shakers. "We just do what we gotta do."

*Welles, Library Director:* Participation in Glen Ellyn Rotary is a time-honored tradition with many civic-spirited citizens of Glen Ellyn.

*Minogue, Park District:* My children say if

you are a real Glen Ellyn-ite you would be a walker or a jogger. Everyone likes to be out and enjoying their community.

## **FAVORITE RESTAURANT(S)?**

*The current dining hot spots, based on consensus of our panelist's responses, are Shannon's Irish Pub, followed by Cab's Wine Bar & Bistro; Barone's, for its pizza and Italian fare; and the "quirky and unpretentious" Curly's. Other local favorites, among the more than 50 restaurants in and around town, include Myhka's, specializing in Vietnamese cuisine with a southwestern flare; the Glen Ellyn Brewery for its casual fare and home brewed libations; Michael's for its food, music and ambiance; the newer Sweetwater's; and the oldtime Alfie's, for its locally legendary burgers.*

## **FAVORITE SHOP(S)?**

*Irwin, School District 41:* My favorite shops are The Bookstore and Little Hands Toys. I love to read and love to buy gifts for little people.

creative inspiration. It is a delightful "outside of the box" place to shop.

*Drury, Drury Design:* Environments for its unique clothing.

*Wright, Historical Society:* Cottage Gardens for its products, services and class options; Environments for "fun" clothing; Katy's for evening wear; Gieshe Shoes for its great sales; Bath & Body Works at Baker Hill; McChesney Miller for meats; and Trader Joe's for its product line.

*Patch, Economic Development Corporation:* The home accessories shops are great and there's a cluster of them downtown like Enchantments, Robyn Parker Home, GoodWorks Gallery, Askim'N Evi, Drury Design and Daffy Down Dilly. All are owned independently so each is unique, which adds to the fun of shopping. In all, there are 28 shops or studios in the downtown alone that offer home design, decorations and furnishings.

## **HOW TO BE A REAL GLEN ELLYNITE?**



*Scenic Lake Ellyn is a natural gathering point for community residents and visitors alike.*

*Whalen, Ray Whalen Builders:* Cottage Gardens, for Michael Darin's floral ingenuity. The shop both exudes friendly comfort and

*Langford, Chamber of Commerce:* Volunteer! The volunteer opportunities in this community are astonishing. I don't know a

## AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO Glen Ellyn

single Glen Ellyn-ite that doesn't volunteer in some capacity.

*Norton, Police Chief:* Live in Glen Ellyn, shop in Glen Ellyn, and obey all traffic control devices!

*Whalen, Ray Whalen Builders, Inc.:* Shop and dine locally, volunteer your time and talents passionately, be active in your faith, live with personal humility and integrity to better our community and frequent the farmer's market often.

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications, District 41 PTA Council:* Join the Newcomers Club when you move in and you'll make 200 acquaintances in three months or less. Say hello to three or more people at McChesney's every time you go in. Be extravagantly giving of your time and talents, because you get back so much in return.

### **BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING GLEN ELLYN IN THE NEXT 10 TO 20 YEARS?**

*McCormack, Balloon Buddies:* Growing with the world, but maintaining the hometown feeling.

*Eselgroth, Volunteer Webmaster:* Continuing to maintain the balance between the quaint look-and-feel of Glen Ellyn's charming downtown with the need for retailers to have modern facilities that will continue to appeal to shoppers. Glen Ellyn has been more successful than many other DuPage communities in maintaining a viable downtown business district, but it hasn't happened (and won't continue to happen) by accident.

*Patch, Economic Development Corp.:* The village is physically built out, especially in the commercial areas. The ability to renew, continue to grow more productive, and stay competitive relies on redevelopment, which has far more hurdles than the development of open land.

*Rozgonyi, CoryWest Communications:* Retaining our history and welcome. Some charming older homes are being torn down for their lot size or location. As more and



Glen Ellyn's infamous Cardboard Box Regatta is a community tradition.

more are replaced with larger homes, we limit affordable housing options for the single and starter home market.

*Wright, Historical Society:* Housing! Teardowns are quickly gobbling up affordable housing for two populations — starter and senior housing. Not to properly address this issue will result in the loss of Glen Ellyn's ambience and one of its treasures.

*Minogue, Park District:* One of our concerns is the lack of open space. We have many new families and a lot of children. We will need to continue to meet their recreational needs.

*Langford, Chamber of Commerce:* I think our biggest challenges are maintaining diversity, funding infrastructure improvements and retaining good leaders and volunteers to guide our community.

### **IF YOU COULD SNAP YOUR FINGERS AND CHANGE, ADD, OR DO ONE THING TO MAKE GLEN ELLYN BETTER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

*Norton, Chief of Police:* Convert the railroad tracks to underground, eliminating noise,

accidents and traffic delays.

*Wright, Historical Society:* Make the Union Pacific Railway line a subway beginning somewhere after Taylor Avenue and ending after Prospect Avenue. Resituate the commuter station to the north side of the tracks at the old Patch Brothers property, where the potential for a parking lot is good.

*Whalen, Ray Whalen Builders, Inc.:* Create additional greenspace at Lake Ellyn for the cultivation of period-inspired botanical gardens.

*Minogue, Park District:* I'm not sure what that would be, except to snap my fingers and "freeze" the good things we have right now. ❖

*Presented By Karen Lippoldt  
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