



City Currents

Fall 2015



Congratulations are in order to the West U Little League (WULL) Senior Boys team who recently won the World Series Championship in Bangor, Maine. Their win in August 2015 is even more remarkable in that it is a back-to-back World Series Championship title following their win in 2014. The titles in 2014 and 2015 are coupled with a World Series Championship in 2009, making the WULL Senior Boys team the first league to win three world titles in Bangor.



Reflecting on the success of the league, it occurred to me that this success would not have been possible without the support of parents, coaches, managers, other players and the community as a whole. While we have every reason in the world to be proud of the WULL Senior Boys team, I feel it is also important to recognize the many other West U youth athletic teams — girls' softball, soccer, Little League baseball and swimming — that consistently excel on the local, regional and state levels.

Local support is incredible. The backbones of Tri-Sports and the West University Aquatics-Piranhas swim team are the parents who unselfishly serve in the planning and management of these leagues without financial compensation. The City of West University Place, Houston ISD and a number of area businesses assist in underwriting the costs. West U, along with a monetary contribution of \$125,000, provides athletic field space, electricity and water. The benefit to the City far outweighs these costs. If you had to put a price on hiring personnel to manage and develop the leagues, purchasing equipment and supplies, maintaining athletic facilities, and hiring and scheduling sports officials, while at the same time providing the oversight necessary to meet the requirements of national governing bodies, the cost would probably be upward of \$500,000.

And how does that figure impact the community? The Tri-Sports Association serves approximately 900 community youth, while West University Aquatics serves another 300 — 1,200 of our community's children are impacted annually. When you look at the investment being made in these children, the cost per child is only about \$11 annually. I can't imagine a better investment with a bigger return. Not only do we have championship teams, but we also have a strong sense of community pride, wholesome leisure activity, bonding of neighbors in support of our youth and the invaluable life lessons of teamwork, sportsmanship and physical fitness.

The entire City Council and I thank and salute the young athletes, their families, the coaches and managers, the boards and volunteers, the officials and the sponsors who contribute their time and money. Working together — making West U youth sports the absolute best and making our community proud.

It is a privilege and honor to again be elected to serve the citizens of West University. As I had previously served as Mayor from 2007 to 2011, many of you asked why I ran for a Council member position this time around rather than for Mayor. The reason was I had served as Mayor and believed it was best to let someone else have that opportunity.

Further, the tasks of taking the necessary steps at City Hall to restore openness in City government and recover from the attempted implementation of the Super Block/Land Swap could be accomplished as a Council member. The fact that I received the largest number of votes of anyone running for a Council member position, making me the Mayor Pro-Tem, is a testament to the continued trust and confidence our citizens have in my ability to accomplish those tasks.

I assure you that City Council is implementing steps at City Hall that will return our City government to being representative and protective of our citizens. There will be a few who are critical of these steps. However, I'm confident that our citizens will continue to support our efforts as they did when they elected us with a 2 to 1 margin over our opponents whose agenda was to maintain the City Hall status quo.

West U is a great place to live and will continue to be a place we are proud to call home. I promise you we will represent and protect your interests.



From Mayor Pro-Tem Bob Kelly

Low-Hanging Vegetation Is a Problem for Motorists and Pedestrians

Can you answer the following questions?

- Who is responsible for the care and maintenance of the trees in the City's right-of-way?
- Who may be held responsible for any damages caused by low-hanging tree limbs and vegetation over the roadway and sidewalk?
- Who may be held responsible for knowingly allowing the vegetation obstruction of a regulatory sign that results in an accident or damages?

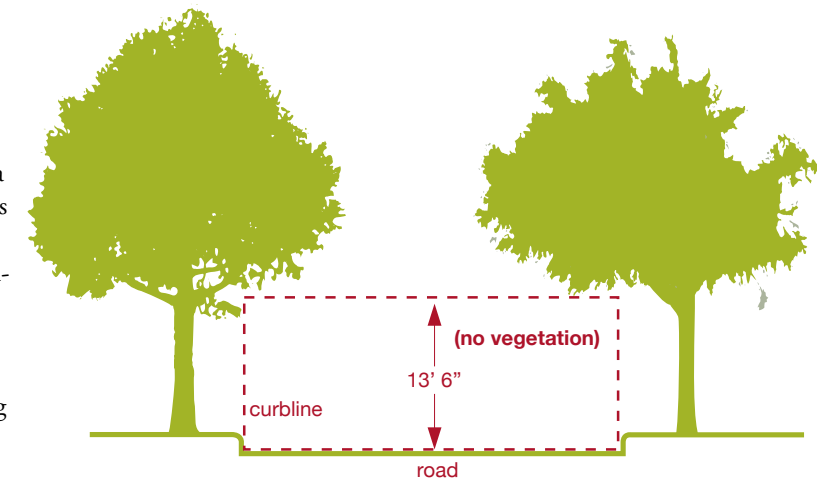
The stark reality is that YOU, the property owner, may be held responsible for all of the above. Fall is a good time to look at the trees around your property that are growing over the streets and sidewalks to ensure that proper clearance is maintained and to trim any trees or shrubs now in anticipation of next year's spring bloom.

Current Requirements for Clearance

Tree Height Clearance over Roadways:

The City requires the vegetation over the roadway be maintained at a minimum height of 13'-6" extending from curb to curb. This ensures adequate clearance for all types of vehicles (fire trucks, ambulances, garbage trucks, street sweepers, etc.) that are on the road daily providing essential City services or simply passing through.

Not sure how high 13'-6" is? A good rule of thumb is: if your trees extend past the curb below the height of the streetlights located along your street, then they need to be trimmed. The top of the light is approximately 15 feet above the street.



Minimum Road Clearance

Sight Obstructions of Regulatory Signs:

If there is a regulatory sign (stop, speed, school or park zone, etc.) located in front of your property, please keep in mind that regular trimming is needed to ensure that vegetation does not obscure the sign for the motoring public. A good rule of thumb when deciding if vegetation needs to be trimmed is: if you cannot see the full sign from 3 to 4 property lots away (approx. 150-200 feet), then the vegetation needs to be trimmed. Please see the photographs at the right.



Before and after photos of a stop sign sight visibility obstruction

Tree & Shrub Clearance and Sidewalks:

Another issue that needs to be addressed, sometimes more frequently, is the vegetation growing around sidewalks. The City and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require a clearance height of at least 80 inches over the sidewalk and a minimum of 36 inches of clearance side to side. Please see the photographs at the right.



Before and after photos of a sidewalk clearance obstruction

Please help keep West U friendly for pedestrians and motorists by maintaining the trees and shrubs around your property at the required height. If you have any questions concerning road, sidewalk or sign clearance, please contact the West U Public Works Department at (713) 662-5839.



Fathers & Flashlights 2015

This highly anticipated event is another sellout as campers prepare to gear up and pitch tents under the stars when the Friends of West University Place Parks Fund, Inc. and the Parks and Recreation Department host the ninth annual campout on October 3 and 4 on the fields surrounding West University Elementary School. The Butler, Martinez and Schaefer Families, along with all of the wonderful volunteers, promise a fun and memorable event. Highlights of the campout include pony rides, Putt Putt golf, Kid Fish and stargazing just to name a few. Thank you to ALL of our underwriters, sponsors and in kind donors, plus the many volunteers and staff who make this event possible. Our generous donors include: The Holt Family, The Vellano Family, Frost Bank, Kristine Martinez/John Daugherty Realtors, Chick-fil-A at Holcombe and Buffalo Speedway, Goode Co. Restaurants, Cornerstone Home Lending, Inc. — The Jackson-McClellan Team, Maggie Garza-Keller Williams Realty/Old Republic Title, Children's Memorial Hermann Hospital, Lauren DeFrehn Photography, Massage Heights Vanderbilt Square, Monica McNeill/RE/Max Metro, Edloe Street Café and Catering, and Tiny Boxwoods & Tinys No. 5.



Thank you especially to our 2015 Fathers & Flashlights Camp Boss,



For a complete listing of the generous underwriters and sponsors, and more information on the event, please visit westuparks.org. Fathers & Flashlights continues to be a very popular and successful fundraiser for Friends of West U Parks. It has become a neighborhood favorite.

25th Anniversary Park Lovers' Ball Celebration



The 25th Anniversary Park Lovers' Ball Celebration will be held on February 13, 2016, at the Omni Hotel at Four Riverway. Event co-chairs Judy and Comfort Cheng and Michele and Paul Marvin are dreaming up a memorable evening full of fun and surprises. The gala will honor all past Park Lovers' Ball chairs. Help us spread the word.

Look for your invitation to arrive in the mail in early January. Meanwhile, please visit westuparks.org or call (713) 662-7430 for information on becoming an underwriter, sponsor, auction donor or volunteer.

While Fathers & Flashlights and Park Lovers' Ball are the largest Friends events, there are other opportunities for involvement. Friends fundraising continues year-round with the stork program, business partnerships, memorials and honorariums, pavers, benches and tree sales. For more information, please visit www.westuparks.org or call (713) 662-7430.

Important Reasons to Follow the Leash Laws

West University Place has laws regarding animals running in City parks or "at large" within the city limits. Running "at large" is generally defined as free; outside a secure enclosure; and without a securely attached leash held by a person of competent strength to hold and control the animal. Basically, the law requires any animal outside of a secure enclosure to be leashed. Further, animals are prohibited within the perimeter sidewalks and fencing of the city's parks.

Here are good reasons to follow the City's leash laws:

- 1 It is the law.** At the risk of stating the obvious, there is a law that requires your dog to be leashed and under your control (not one or the other), so put the leash on the dog and keep it on at all times to avoid a ticket.
- 2 When your dog is under your control (on a leash), he's less likely to get into something he's not supposed to.** Off leash and romping unfettered, the dog can get into trash placed out for the night, enter your neighbor's property and dig in the flower beds or run into the street.
- 3 Your dog may misbehave in unexpected situations.** The best-behaved dogs can react unpredictably in new situations, especially if they're scared. Even if you're alone on the walk, others can show up and change the scene in an instant. Children, vehicles, animals and even bad weather can cause a dog to forget what "come" means.
- 4 Not everyone you meet on the walk is physically able to withstand a dog jumping on them, even a nice dog.** What if your dog encounters a family with children or the elderly? There could be scratches or even injury from the dog knocking down a person.
- 5 People have the right to walk in public without being confronted by loose dogs.** In contrast, dog owners do not have the right to let their dogs run loose within the city limits. All dog owners think their dog is the friendliest, greatest dog in the world, and that everyone else should love their dog the way they do. Remember, not everyone likes animals and so may be unfriendly to a loose dog, which may cause the animal to become aggressive.
- 6 Loose dogs can trigger fights with on-leash dogs.** It's common for on-leash dogs to feel vulnerable when approached by off-leash dogs. The result can be fearful or protective behavior, which may set off a "fight or flight" instinct in your dog. If your dog chooses "fight," you could end up in hot water. Legally, you'd be held responsible for injuries to humans and pets and damage to property. If your dog really needs to run free, take her to an off-leash dog park. This helps ensure she only comes into contact with other friendly dogs who can handle themselves on their own.
- 7 It protects your dog.** Even if your dog has perfect manners and you can control her every move from 100 feet away — you can't control the world around her. The leash is there to protect your dog from the world as much as it's there to protect the world from your dog. A leash provides emergency control over your pet. Bad things are simply more likely to happen if your dog is running loose.

Being a responsible dog owner is more than just feeding the dog a grain-free diet or debating the merits of positive training methods. If you own a dog, you need to obey the laws or you will receive a ticket. Also remember to register your dog with the City and always make sure your dog has a tag and a microchip with your current information. That way you can count on a quick reunion should you become separated. The intent of the law is to protect the health and safety of the public and to protect your pet. The use of a leash will benefit you, your neighborhood and your pet.

Movies in the Park

Grab your picnic blankets or lawn chairs, bring the family, and enjoy an outdoor movie shown on a huge inflatable screen! The movies are complimentary, and refreshments will be available for purchase.

Time: 7:00 pm

Location: Colonial Park Pavilion, 4130 Byron Street

October 16: *Hotel Transylvania*, Rated PG

October 23: *Monsters University*, Rated G

Full Moon Fest

The West University Place Parks and Recreation Department will host the third annual Full Moon Fest, at 5:30 pm on Friday, October 23, at the Colonial Park Pavilion, located at 4130 Byron. Join us for an evening of pumpkin decorating, costume contests, carnival food (for purchase), face painting and more. The costume contests will be for separate age groups, so make sure the entire family comes in their spookiest attire. This year, everyone is in store for a special treat with the unveiling of the first Little Free Library in West U's Parks and book readings by special guests. Stay after the event and enjoy the featured movie *Monsters University*, Rated G, as part of the Movies in the Park series; showing begins at 7:00 pm!

Colonial Park Little Free Library

The Little Free Library movement, which seeks to promote literacy and community through free book exchanges, is coming to West University Place. Steward and local author Chris Cander, in partnership with the City's Parks and Recreation Department, will unveil the first of a proposed six Little Free Libraries during the Full Moon Fest on October 23 at Colonial Park. Designed to look like West University Elementary School, the Colonial Park Little Free Library will be a free-standing structure where neighbors of all ages can "take a book, return a book" and help spread the love of reading. *Special thanks to Roger Martin Properties for the sponsoring the inaugural Little Free Library in West U's parks!*

Swim with Santa

Anyone can get a picture with Santa on a sleigh, in the mall or even in the snow, but not too many people can have their picture taken with Santa underwater! You can be one of those lucky individuals on November 7, 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, at the West U Rec Center. To make this event even more memorable, you will receive a gift bag to go with your photo. So, come out to get a unique and memorable photo of you swimming with Santa and his elves. The fee is only \$10 with preregistration and \$35 on the day of the event. For more information on registration for this event, contact the West U Recreation Center at (713) 662-7420.

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

Come one, come all! Get into the holiday spirit with the 27th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony when the City of West U heralds the season by lighting the Christmas tree. Join us with your cameras in front of the Community Building, 6104 Auden, on Monday, December 7. Activities include arts and crafts, cookie decorating, live reindeer and a professional photographer to take individual or family photos. All activities will start at 5:30 pm, and the tree lighting will start at 6:00 pm. Santa will be available for photos at the end of the ceremony!

For more special events, see [back page](#)



Rapid Entry Systems



What is a Knox Box?

The Knox Rapid Entry System is a secure emergency access program developed for property owners and first responders. The West University Place Fire Department has utilized the Knox Box Rapid Entry System for the past 15 years to prevent costly entry damage while

protecting lives and property. Property owners store entrance keys and access cards in high-security Knox Boxes mounted near the building entrance to be utilized for emergency access. West U currently has 61 Knox Boxes installed within the City.

How does it work?

Residential or commercial property owners purchase a Knox key box and provide the Fire Department with keys to access the property. Once the Knox Box is installed, the Fire Department will come out to the property to place your keys in the box and lock it. To gain access during emergencies, each



fire department response vehicle houses a Knox Master Key Retention Unit, which controls access to the master key that can open the Knox Box on your property.

Is it safe?

Yes. To release the master key, response personnel must make the request to Dispatch over the public safety radio system, identify themselves, the address of the building to be accessed and provide a valid PIN code. Upon returning the master key to the retention box, response personnel must announce over the radio system that the Knox Box and master key have been resecured. The Knox master key can only be accessed by fire department personnel.

How much does it cost?

Knox offers key boxes for both residential and commercial applications. Residential boxes start at \$159 and commercial boxes start at \$255. Please contact Fire Marshal James Novak at (713) 662-5837 to obtain a Knox Box Authorization order form.

WUPD's House Watch Program

The West University Place Police Department (WUPD) provides a special service to our residents called the House Watch Program. This service allows for added patrol and security checks of private residences during times of extended absence when your home will be left unattended.

These types of checks are available for private residences only. Business properties, locations not being inhabited or those under construction do not qualify. All House Watch requests can be placed through the WUPD Communications Office either in person, by telephone, by request card or via the City's website. A House Watch can be placed on a residence that is currently occupied but will be temporarily vacant for a period of three (3) days or longer under the following conditions:

- a. If no other arrangements have been made for someone to check the property on a regular/daily basis in your absence, such as a house sitter or pet watcher, or if the residence will be regularly attended to by a service provider such as a housekeeper or construction worker.

Note: A reasonable exception to this condition would be during instances of extended absences lasting five (5) days or more. During extended absences, periodic visits for the purposes of plant care, interior checks, mail collection, etc., are permissible; however, information regarding the person(s) conducting these visits, their vehicle(s), and the times and frequency of these checks will need to be provided at the time the House Watch request is made.

- b. House Watch requests may not exceed durations of 30 days. Should the period of your absence exceed the 30-day limit, the House Watch may be renewed so long as you contact the WUPD and update all of the information required before the expiration of the original watch.

Having this type of information provides our officers with the added awareness of your absence and greatly assists them in performing their duties by having current contact information for you and a designated emergency contact person in the event it is needed.

As a friendly reminder, before heading out the door on your next vacation or extended business trip, follow these simple steps:

- Submit the information needed to initiate a House Watch for your residence to the West U Police Department's Communications Office;
- Take the time to properly secure your residence by checking and locking all of your windows and doors
- If you have a security system, ensure its proper operation and be certain to set your home's alarm; and
- Make your neighbors aware of your absence. More often than not, these folks will be your first line of defense against home burglary and will be more likely to call the police should they see something suspicious if they know you and your family are away.

Caps On or Off?



There seems to be a controversy brewing over whether or not you should keep your caps on or off. No, we are not talking about wearing a cap to church. We are talking about when you recycle your plastic beverage bottles. When you throw the bottle in the bin for recycling, should you keep the cap on the bottle or not?



PET

Let's start with the bottle. It is PET (or Polyethylene Terephthalate to you techies), the most widely recycled plastic in the US. About 1.7 billion pounds were recycled last year, roughly equivalent to 29 billion bottles. Most of that stayed here in the US to support jobs and make new items such as Under Armour, Nike and other brands of clothing; heavy duty strapping for transporting bales, loads of bricks, lumber, machinery, etc.; and of course new CSD (Carbonated Soft Drinks) bottles.



HDPE

The cap used to be made from PP (Polypropylene), but today most of the caps are made from HDPE (High Density Polyethylene). HDPE is the second-most widely recycled plastic in the US and it is made into many new items also.

The real question is whether PET recyclers want the caps with the bottles. The two major organizations that over 90% of the recyclers in this country belong to are the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR), and The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers (APR). Both organizations have publicly said that they want the caps left on. As they go through the normal bottle sorting and washing process, the caps come off. Since they are lighter than water, they float in one direction, while the PET, which is heavier than water, sinks. The PET continues through the process and is made into nice clean new pellets, while the caps float off, get collected and are sold to HDPE recyclers. PET recyclers actually do not get any true additional value for the caps. Each cap left on lowers the yield on the bales of PET bottles they buy and process each day. Their margins and profits would be higher if people left off the caps. However, caps that are not left on the bottle fall through as the recycling is loaded onto the conveyer belts and end up as trash collected from the recycling plant floor. It is important to note that since the caps are truly recyclable, everyone now agrees, LEAVE YOUR BOTTLE CAPS ON, so they too can be recycled.

What about the lids on glass jars and bottles? Take them off. You can save metal caps and lids for heavy trash day or place them in your blue bin for sorting at the recycling facility. Aluminum caps? Think creatively!

Heavy Trash And Recycling Day!

Here is your chance to dispose of those unwanted items in your home at no charge. We will take almost any item, EXCEPT for Household Hazardous Waste (HHW). Items that are too large or heavy for curbside pickup (i.e., bricks, concrete, junk iron, lumber, etc.) will be accepted.

If you are disposing of any items that have freon (refrigerators, air conditioners, etc.), you must provide a certificate indicating the freon has been removed from the unit. Goodwill will be on-site to accept usable household and clothing items.

We will also be recycling E-waste (computers, printers, cell phones, laser & ink jet cartridges, batteries, monitors, etc.) and mattresses.

City staff will be available to unload your vehicle. Please approach the facility from the intersection of University and College Streets.

To learn more, please visit the City's website at www.westutx.gov/335/special-events or email recycle@westutx.gov.

When: Saturday, October 31
Time: 7:00 am – 3:00 pm
Where: 3826 Milton
(West U Public Works
Maintenance Facility)

Available to West U Residents only. No business trash will be accepted.

Save The Day With Free Shredding!

Protect yourself from identity theft with FREE document shredding provided by SHRED-IT and the City of West University Place. To learn more, visit www.westutx.gov/335/special-events or email recycle@westutx.gov.

When: Saturday, November 7
Time: 9:00 am – Noon
Where: 3826 Milton
(West U Public Works
Maintenance Facility)

Limit: 5 banker boxes

Available to West U Residents only. No business documents will be accepted.

Holiday Trash And Recycle Collection Schedule Reminder

Thanksgiving Schedule

In observance of Thanksgiving, there will be no curbside collection of recycling and trash on Thursday, November 26. Trash and recycling normally collected on Thursday will be collected on Wednesday, November 25. There are no service changes to Monday, Tuesday or Friday routes.

Christmas Schedule

In observance of Christmas, there will be no curbside collection of recycling and trash on Friday, December 25. Recycling normally collected on Friday will be collected on Wednesday, December 23. Please hold your trash until the next regularly scheduled day (Tuesday, December 29). There are no service changes to Monday, Tuesday or Thursday collection routes.

City Currents

A Newsletter for the citizens of
City of West University Place

Fall 2015



City of West University Place
3800 University Blvd.
West University Place, TX 77005

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Mayor Pro-Tem Bob Kelly
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GENERAL INFORMATION (713) 668-4441

CITY WEBSITE www.westutx.gov

City Currents is a quarterly publication and is printed on recycled paper.

For questions and comments about *City Currents*, contact Anna Evelyn at (713) 662-5812 or aevelyn@westutx.gov.

Design by Minor Design

West University Place Welcomes Interim City Manager

West University Place welcomes M. Christopher "Chris" Peifer whom the City Council recently appointed as Interim City Manager. A familiar face, Peifer has been serving residents of the community since 2006 as both the Director of Public Works and the Assistant City Manager.

A native of Pennsylvania, Peifer received a Bachelor of Science degree from Albright College in Reading, PA, before making his way to Texas. Residing in the Houston area for more than 35 years, Peifer initially worked in the development industry before working under contract with the Department of Treasury for 10 years. The last 20 years have been spent in municipal government with almost 10 of those years in our City. While at West University Place, Peifer oversaw the completion of the Infrastructure Replacement Program, the Sidewalk Replacement Program and the College/Bellaire Improvement Projects. He was involved in the expansion of the Municipal Building as well as construction of the West University Recreation Center and Colonial Park Pool/Facilities.

Peifer said his goals for his new office are simple — "provide clear and appropriate direction in facilitating the vision of the City's elected officials and provide its taxpayers with the greatest possible value in services for their tax dollars."



Santa/New Year's Eve Night Out

Need a break from the kids? Let the West U Rec Center help! On December 11 and 31, let us entertain the kids while you enjoy a night out on the town or finish last-minute shopping. Santa's Night Out begins at 5:30 pm and ends at 11:30 pm, so register your children for this fun-filled night of activities that include science experiments, arts and crafts, games, pizza and tons of FUN for ages 5 – 11 years! Of course, all activities will be in the spirit of the holidays to help get the kiddos excited for this time of year. This year, all activities will be led by Kara Cooney Galli. Mrs. Galli has had success programming many different events throughout the area, and one West U event received a state programming award! The fee is \$95 for West U Residents and \$105 for Non-Residents.

Winter/Spring 2016 Class Registration

Discover a new craft or polish a skill for great benefits without investing a lot of time or money. Most winter/spring classes begin in January. They include dance, tennis, Pilates, yoga for adults, youth swimming, gymnastics, CPR and so much more!

*Priority Registration

(for those enrolled in classes within the past 30 days)

Tuesday, December 1, through Monday, December 7

*Online registration is not available.

Resident Registration

Tuesday, December 8

Non-Resident Registration

Thursday, December 10

Complete your registration online at www.westutx.gov/reg or come by the Recreation Center, 4210 Bellaire, to sign up. Visa, MasterCard, Discover, personal checks, and cash are accepted. To view a copy of the "West U at Your Leisure" guide, visit www.westutx.gov/parks or call (713) 662-7420 for more information.

Festival of Arts at Community Building

Mark your calendars, Saturday, October 17, for the Festival of Arts. Local artisans will be showcasing and selling their paintings, gourmet chocolates, jewelry and skilled artistry in crafts. Looking for some early holiday gifts? This is an excellent place to find something unique. Tell your friends and neighbors.
10:00 am – 1:00 pm.

