



JUST ASKING

BY MARY KLEST

What is your favorite social network in the Barrington area?

I asked Nina Stephenson, Joan and Bill Bowyer, and D.D. Gallagher-Johnson why their networks are so much fun.

Nina Stephenson of Barrington Hills is the area's social ambassador. She is president of Barrington Newcomers & Neighbors, an organization that welcomes newbie and long-time residents alike. Anyone in the 60010 or Barrington 220 can join weekly, monthly, seasonal, and casual get-togethers with the simple intent of having fun. "Our motto is 'Make friends, have fun,'" Nina said. "You'll meet people you wouldn't meet otherwise."

Everything from bowling to Bunco to bridge, scrapbooking, gardening, hiking and dining is covered under this umbrella organization. "You never know what will happen next. Who will show up? There's a new adventure waiting," she said. Nina enjoys the spontaneity and diversity of the group that includes people of all ages, single, married, empty-nester, and from all areas of the world. To participate in any event all that is required is a \$30 annual fee and an RSVP. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.barringtonilnewcomers.org>. If an activity is not listed, you can start a new group and see who it attracts.

North Barrington residents Joan and Bill Bowyer live near the east side of Honey Lake. On the west bank of the lake is Biltmore Country Club, a place that expanded their social life in unexpected ways. They discovered that activities at the club were family and friends-oriented. "We can join in on a volley ball game or barbeque at the lakefront, enjoy a game of golf, and play tennis with little planning ahead," Joan said. Bill found a group of guys who like to play golf and share ideas. "We've met people from all the Barrington area there," said Bill. Their two sons play tennis, fish and swim. The couples' favorite time is relaxing poolside or sitting on the clubhouse back patio taking in the view and talking with friends. "There are trees, grass, flowers. No cars. It's nice," said Bill. Their friendships have extended beyond monthly dinners to include out-of-state trips and excursions downtown together.

D.D. Gallagher-Johnson likes to run. Her friends were not runners but they started a running group any way called Miles for Marines. They don't collect money – just memories. D.D.'s husband, Bruce Johnson, is a Marine stationed in Afghanistan. Their friends thought that running together three times a week through Cuba Marsh would help the time pass. "I love the tranquility of the marsh. The fresh air, the birds, deer, colors and texture all signal to me that time is passing. It clears my head," she said. The group has a "no cell phone" rule and follows each run with a good chat during breakfast together. Bruce is scheduled to return to Barrington in June. "We will include him when he gets back," D.D. said.

Looking for a social network? Try the Barrington Area Library website. At the Home page, select the Local Info tab, then Organizations by Type, then Social. Enjoy.

* Mary Klest is a Barrington-based writer and owner of Klest Communications, a content solutions company. For more information, visit www.maryklest.com.

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