

Greetings! As we begin this new year we have exciting news.

First of all, we will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of our organization! What a great experience it has been. I see so many groups (not just giant pumpkin clubs) struggling for memberships, resources, etc. and here we are 225 members strong, fiscally stable and well-focused on our future. What a great group of people we serve.

Next, as of January 1, 2020, Alan Gibson will be officially retiring from all pumpkin club duties. As we celebrate our 25th year I remember back when I first applied to be an official weigh-off site for the GPC. One thing I knew for sure was to have a successful weigh-off at the Garden Center we would have to have the support of the Growers. To do it right, it wasn't going to be a one man show.

That said, the charter members sat down to discuss the possibility of a pumpkin club and it's structure. We all knew to be successful, we had to have multiple contributors, hence the original club directors were chosen; Dick Baird, Ron Moffet, Alan Gibson, Jack Lanterman and myself. These gentlemen's legacy lives in the success of our club today.

Fast Forward 25 years and we are immensely different today than we were then. As we grew, we split up the work load, but we leaned on Alan for a lot of the functions. Being as passionate as he was for the hobby, he obliged, and will always be a cornerstone for the club's growth and success.

As we move through Alan's last year of service, be assured that the directorship has been working to make sure the club transitions seamlessly into the next 25 years. The responsibilities have already been divided up, and each director is working with Alan in their area. Our founders gave us the structure, now it is our job to execute the plan. It's an exiting time for our club, we so look forward to the future.

In the spirit of keeping things exciting, we made changes to the format of our annual summer patch tour and picnic. To freshen it up, and see something different, we thought it would be fun to do a "Road Trip". We began as a local club, and over the years have become a more regional group. We have been well supported by our Michigan and New York members over the years. They consistently travel to our meetings, weigh-offs, and other events. We thought it would be great to see some of their pumpkin patches. About a year ago we engaged Todd Cotterman, and some of the other Michigan growers about doing a regional tour and picnic. They liked the idea as much as we did, so it's on for the last Saturday of July! (7/27/19)

We will be touring the pumpkin patches of Don Barron, John Kaminski, and John Harnica, all great growers that bring something different to the table!

Details to follow, but they all live within 30-45 minutes of one another in Southeastern Michigan. There happens to be a Cabela's in Dundee, Michigan, just on the other side of Toledo, and we won't be far from there at all. There are lots of good hotels, and restaurants right there in Dundee. It is about a three hour drive from Canfield. We hope you can take a long weekend and come join the fun!

Well that's about enough "New News" for now. We hope to see you at the seminar as we begin our 25th year together!

In your service,

Tim Parks