

**OVGPG's Finest - Tim Parks/Alan Gibson**

If it has anything to do with giant pumpkins, you're bound to see Tim Parks and Alan Gibson together. One, extremely articulate with never a loss for words, the other, soft spoken but highly skilled at organizing and motivating the people around him. They make a perfect blend in managing one of the best giant pumpkin organizations in the world, the Ohio Valley Giant Pumpkin Growers (OVGPG).

They stage a GPC weigh off every year with Tim as master of ceremonies and Alan as the official scorekeeper at Park's Garden Center in Canfield, Ohio. They've weighed world records there, and they've cultivated an atmosphere of mutual respect for anyone who dares to plant giant pumpkins. They have one of the tightest group of growers in the world – sharing seeds, new ideas, and seemingly limitless enthusiasm.

There are six inductees as *Heavy Hitters* from the state of Ohio in this book, all of who owe some debt of gratitude to Tim Parks or Alan Gibson for their unwavering support of the sport of giant pumpkin growing.

My hat is always off to those willing to do the work of administering a world class weigh off of giant pumpkins. It's not an easy task organizing an event of the magnitude in which the OVGPG presents each year. They've turned Canfield into a mecca for giant pumpkin growers, where every grower knows well in advance that they'll be efficiently weighed and duly recognized. This is no accident, and Tim Parks and Alan Gibson have much to do with the success of the GPC weigh off in Canfield.

This alone is worthy of the designation of *Heavy Hitter*, but each, in his own right, has produced world class giant pumpkins as well.

**Tim Parks**

Tim is one of the original steering committee members of the *Great Pumpkin Commonwealth* (GPC), and in this role, has shown a cool mind and keen vision, and has done it in a spirit of friendship without alienating people or other groups. This is no easy task when you're trying to coordinate more than 20 other sites, scores of strong personalities, and weigh offs geographically dispersed all over North America.



Park's Garden Center

After family, Tim splits time between managing a highly successful garden center business, with growing giant pumpkins, and a long list of other interests.

His best pumpkin to date is an 816 pounder in 1998, and his accomplishments have been many. His enthusiasm has lit a fire under many a Ohio grower, and his dogged persistence at making the Ohio weigh off run smoothly has paid handsome dividends to anyone associated with the OVGPG. He helped design and build a crane system for weighing giant pumpkins on weigh off day – something that makes the day a lot more enjoyable for all concerned with moving the monsters. He organizes an annual picnic that brings pumpkin growers from all over North America to Canfield for a weekend of patch tours, networking, beer drinking, and eating – and he's at the epic center of all that's going on. If you've never been to a OVGPG picnic in July, you've missed a whole lot about what giant pumpkin growing is all about, and if you have been to an Ohio picnic, you owe a lot to Tim, Alan and the OVGPG members.



Above: Tim and Nick Parks with a 609 pound pumpkin.  
Right: Tim Parks and Alan Gibson direct the GPC Weigh Off at Park's Garden Center in Canfield, OH.