

The MCC needs YOU!

NOMINATING COMMITTEE. This is the season when the MCC gears up to organize for next year. The first priority will be electing a new board of directors for 2012, and this begins with the **selection of a nominating committee**, which must include several current board members and several MCC members who are not directors. Qualifications for the nominating committee include being a paid-up MCC member and having a variety of acquaintances in the community who might be potential board members. **Persons who are interested in serving** should contact the MCC by e-mail at ericereaves@aol.com or mceaton@aol.com; or by phone at 938-8831.

BOARD MEMBERS. The nominating committee will be looking for potential board members. **If you would like to volunteer yourself or suggest someone else for a place on the MCC board**, send messages to the same e-mail addresses or phone number as above. The list of nominees for the MCC board of directors must be completed by mid-September.

RANK AND FILE MEMBERS. The MCC also needs **members**, to provide income through their dues (\$10 per year) and show support by swelling the ranks of MCC adherents. The MCC will be sending out renewal notices to current members in September. When you get your notice, don't fail to respond. Furthermore, **at the July board meeting, the MCC directors voted to take on the job of canvassing the block or two around their own homes**, so at least some Miller neighborhoods will be experiencing a door-to-door solicitation for the first time in many years. **When an MCC representative comes to your home to enlist your support, BE THERE – don't hide.**

Miller's unending conflict -- property tax problems persist

Last month's Miller Message described two situations which dramatically increased land assessments in the neighborhood north of Oak Avenue. **The first involved changing the assigned neighborhood code of many properties east of Union Street from code 2500, with a land value of \$1,500 per front foot, to code 2512, with a land value of \$3531 per front foot.** With prodding from Jim Cooper and others, Assessor Jackie Collins agreed that this was a mistake which she would correct. All of these properties are being returned to the previous neighborhood code, without requiring individual property owners to attend appeal hearings.

The second situation involved “influence factors”, which reduced the land value assessments for properties which did not actually abut the beach. These factors, ranging from -40% to -70%, were arbitrarily eliminated, causing properties on Oak Avenue, as much as two blocks away from the beach, to be assessed as though they were beach-front locations. Collins is NOT replacing these “influence factors”, and is requiring the affected property owners to file appeals and wait for them to be heard – which will take several years at the current pace.

So far, efforts by the MCC Tax Group have not identified any easy solution for this latter problem. For instance, a meeting with County Assessor Hank Adams was friendly and informative, but did not identify any new path of action. **What Adams did advise is paying close attention to the pattern of land values developed for the general re-assessment of properties in 2012, which will have a continuing affect on overall property assessments for years to come.**

Duly noted

“HANGING WITH CHANUTE”. The Aquatorium Society, which maintains and operates the Aquatorium in Marquette Park, will hold its annual meeting and fundraiser on **Saturday, August 13, beginning at 7:30.** Food and drinks will be contributed by local businesses – the Flamingo, the Beach Café, Miller Pizza, Armans, Ming Ling, Ono’s Pizza, Amore, Kidstuff Playsystems and the Marquette Perk. Before the festivities start, Simme Short will sign copies of her biography of Octave Chanute, who is known in this neighborhood as the man who invented flying right here in the dunes. Ticket pricing for the event is complicated, so for details, check the website www.Aquatorium.org, or stop in at 607 S. Lake Street.

AQUATORIUM CONSTRUCTION. The western half of the Aquatorium will be finished as part of the Marquette Park renovation project, with a new and larger meeting room and kitchen facilities. Contracts for this segment of work are to be awarded in October.

LAKE STREET GALLERY STAYING. **Contrary to the report in the June Miller Message, the Lake Street Gallery is NOT moving away.** A good deal from her Miller landlord, coupled with concerns about the proposed deal in Chesterton, have convinced Joyce Davis to keep operating at 613 S. Lake Street, and this leads to . . .

GALLERY OPENING. The Lake Street Gallery will present an exhibit of paintings, "Abstractions" by Illinois artist Deanna Piskor, from August 6 to September 10. To open the exhibit, **the public is invited to an artist's reception on Saturday, August 6 at 7:00 pm.** Do come and show support for this local business.

THE NEXT BOARD MEETING OF THE MILLER CITIZENS CORP. WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, AUGUST 8, AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. Members are invited to attend and participate.

Contact the MCC between meetings at P.O.Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403, or call 938-8831 or e-mail mceaton@aol.com. You can also visit the MCC website at www.millercitizenscorp.org.

GARDEN WALK. About 350 visitors enjoyed the 2011 "Secret Garden Tour", sponsored by the Miller Garden Club. This year's twelfth annual tour featured five of the hidden gems which typify the garden scene in Miller. Congratulations to the Garden Club selection committee for finding and presenting beautiful places which the public would otherwise never see.

OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM. The Purdue Calumet Theatre Company is looking for amateur actors and singers to perform in the world premier production of "*Dreamland Burning*", a play with music by prominent playwright John Lisbon Wood and songwriter Tevin Thomas. The drama centers around America's worst race riot, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1921. Performances are scheduled on weekend evenings from November 19 to December 3. **Auditions will be held on Friday, August 26, Friday, September 2, and Friday, September 9 from 2:00 to 4:00 pm in the Student Union Library Building at Purdue Calumet in Hammond.** Producers of the play are hoping for a good turnout of aspiring performers to try out for parts. For more information, contact Corya Channing at 219-989-2267 or by e-mail to channing@purduecal.edu.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS WANTED. The Charter School of the Dunes (CSOD) has been operating in Miller for nine years, and is currently serving over 400 students in grades 1 through 9 with a staff of 60 persons. **The CSOD is looking for a new member of their Board of Directors, who would be available to attend board meetings on the third Tuesday of each month**

at 5:30 pm. (This is an unpaid position.) The charter school would especially like to recruit a person with experience in either marketing or building/construction management, to round out the current board. If you are interested in helping to lead this alternative public school in Miller, contact Danielle Sleight, CSOD Board President at daniellesleight@sbcglobal.net.

RAILCATS GAME. Nichole Botsford reports that we sold 15 more tickets than last year for **Miller Night at the Railcats**. Those who attended enjoyed excellent weather and an exciting game, which ended with a Railcats victory in the tenth inning.

Park renovation progresses

Work on the Marquette Park renovation project is moving forward on a revised schedule. Operations were late getting started and were slowed by a work stoppage, but everything is now moving ahead and Phase I, including the renovation of the pavilion, reshaping the area around Fr. Marquette's statue, and restoring the oak savannah, should be completed in November. With luck, the facility will be ready to accommodate the MCC Valentine's Day Dance in 2012.

We are NOT expecting the hall to be available for a Halloween Dance this year, although some thought has been given to holding the Halloween event in a big tent.

TRAFFIC OPTIONS THROUGH THE PARK A well-attended public comment session was held in June, to discuss various options for combining auto-mobile traffic, parking, biking and walking paths through the renovated Marquette Park. Although a vote was taken, in which persons at the meeting expressed their preferences, it is not yet clear what final traffic plan will emerge. **However, the planners' basic principle was not to widen the total road space allocated to all the desired functions.** Therefore, none of the proposals included all four activities side-by-side, and it sounded as though the walking paths might wander through the thinned-out woods (between Oak Avenue and Marquette Drive), and not parallel the road.

Mail processing may change

The US Postal Service is considering changes in mail processing in Indiana, due to declining volume of mail, consequent declining revenues, and excess mail processing capacity. The proposed transfer of outgoing mail sorting from Gary to South Bend is part of a reorganization which would combine nine facilities in Indiana into three. For the most part, mail delivery

schedules would not change, although mail from Gary would take a day less getting to north-central Indiana but would take a day more getting to Lafayette.

Incoming mail would continue to be processed at the main Gary post office, as at present. The MCC was represented at the public hearing on this subject, and sought clarification about bulk mail processing and “hold” mail. The main Gary post office would continue to accept bulk mail, and bulk mail to 464 destinations would **not** be sent to South Bend, since it is already sorted by five-digit ZIP code.

Objections to the proposed change came mostly from postal workers and others who are concerned about the loss of jobs here in Gary, where 25 positions would be eliminated. However, no current employees would be laid off, since the postal service always has job openings to fill as a result of retirements and employee resignations.

The MCC board voted at the July meeting to oppose the transfer of outbound mail processing, because of the loss of jobs in Gary and lack of confidence that mail delivery would not be affected. Because of opposition from the public (and from Congressman Visclosky), no final decision has been made on the mail processing issue and other ways for the postal service to save money are being considered.

This year’s Fest-in-the-First is set for Saturday, Sept. 17

Miller’s annual Lake Street festival, Fest-in-the-First, sponsored by the First District Precinct Organization, is scheduled for a rerun on **Saturday afternoon, September 17**. There will be food booths from local and visiting vendors, clowns, arts and crafts, and an afternoon of entertainment. Featured performers include:

The 28-piece Emerson Jazz Tornados	12:30
The Wirt-Emerson Drum Line	1:30
Tumblers	2:00
The McKinley Boys Drum Line	3:00
Dancers, singers and music	3:30 to 6:30

Bring your kids and join your neighbors for a fun time in downtown Miller on September 17.