

Shoreline Committee helps plan for summer at the beach

In keeping with immemorial tradition, the MCC Shoreline Committee is bringing together all the parties who are involved with beach safety and maintenance, in preparation for the upcoming summer season.

The committee will host a planning meeting on March 22 from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm at the Woodson Library on Lake Street. Local and county public safety personnel, the Gary park superintendent, and others involved in beach activities will come together to plan for making the Miller beach a safe and attractive place to play and relax. **The public is invited to attend.**

Emphasis at the meeting will be on beach safety, including the number, distribution and working procedures of policemen; displaying the rules for beachgoers; location signs to guide public safety workers; availability of emergency equipment; and arrangements for cleaning up afterward. An area of special concern is under-age drinking on the beach and the attitude, formed over many generations, that at the Miller beach anything goes.

A community meeting will be scheduled in May, to discuss beach plans with local residents in general.

In the background, John Pickford has been aggressively seeking out sources of funds for beach and park maintenance, to supplement the pitiful funding available from the city.

Duly noted . . .

LITTLE LEAGUE SIGN-UPS. The Miller Little League is conducting registration for the 2012 season on **Saturdays through March 17 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm** at the South Shore Dance Alliance, 665 S. Lake Street. Registrations will also be accepted on-line anytime through March 31 at www.millerlittleleague.com or on March 24 and 31 at the Little League Field. Children ages 4 to 12 who live in Gary east of I-65 are eligible to enroll. Bring a birth certificate and proof of residence to register. For additional information, call 938-0013 or 938-5253. Coaches, umpires and other volunteers are also needed.

GATHER AT THE TEMPLE. On **Friday, April 13**, the Haggadah Service at Temple Israel will begin at 6:30 pm and will be followed by a **Peace and Justice**

Seder, to which the public is invited. A traditional festive meal will be served, for a cost of \$20 for adults or \$10 for students. Children under six are free. Tickets **must** be purchased in advance no later than April 8 – send a check with your reservation. For additional information, call the Temple at 938-5232.

WIRT/EMERSON STUDENTS EXCEL. Band members from Wirt/Emerson school who participated in the district Solo and Ensemble Contest came away with 68 gold medals and 40 silver medals. As a result, 38 solo and ensemble members qualified for the state competition in Indianapolis. In a different type of competition, both the boys and girls basketball teams were victorious in the City-wide Middle School Basketball Tournament. Congratulations to the players and their coaches, Ralynn Crockett and Darryl Hutson. The girls' team had an undefeated season, while the boys' 6-3 record included a win against Roosevelt. In the African-American Superbowl at West Side, the Wirt/Emerson team only came in second.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MILLER CITIZENS CORP. BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, MARCH 12, AT 7:30 PM 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 e-mail mceaton@aol.com. You can also visit the MCC website at www.millercitizenscorp.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

FISH FRY at Bethel Lutheran Church on Montgomery Street, Friday **March 9** from 10:00 to 4:00, \$7 per person.

POP-UP ART Saturday evening, **April 14**.

AIR SHOW WEEKEND will be **July 7 and 8**, right after the Fourth of July.

MILLER GARDEN WALK will follow the weekend of **July 14 and 15**.

WITCHING DAY. The MCC is planning a **Halloween party on October 27, 2012**, with the expectation that renovation of the Marquette Park Pavilion will certainly be completed by then. Mark the date on your calendar! The traditional MCC Valentine's Day dance will also be back on the schedule for 2013.

PLANS FOR SHELBY STREET. A new owner has purchased the commercial property at 925 Shelby Street, which was formerly the Beach Mart and Curves. She is currently making repairs to stop water leaking in from the dune in back and from the roof. Once the repairs are complete, she plans to open the Miller Beach Market Place, with two commercial spaces where residents and visitors can gather and shop. If you have suggestions, warnings, or advice to offer, contact MillerBeachMarketPlace@gmail.com.

GARDENING SEASON IS HERE! The Miller Garden Club will hold its first meeting of the year on **Saturday, March 17 at 10:00 am** at the Aquatorium. The guest speaker, Marsha Bradley, will describe what it means to be a “Permaculturist”, and she will also talk about medicinal herbs and foraging for edible native plants. The public is invited to hear the discussion and become acquainted with area gardeners. Garden Club meetings are held on the third Saturday of every month from March to October (except July, when the Miller Garden Walk will be on July 14 and 15.)

CURVES FEEDS THE HUNGRY. The Curves location on Lake Street is having its annually Food Drive from March 12 to March 25, when new members can join without paying a service fee if they donate a bag of groceries. All the groceries go to Sojourner Truth House.

Latest tax developments

GENERAL REASSESSMENT. Miller residents noted with alarm that employees of the township assessor were at large in our community, measuring and photographing properties. **This activity is not a plot against Miller residents by the assessor’s office.** It is part of the general reassessment of property which is required by law, which will affect all property taxes for 2012, payable in 2013. Local residents may not like the results of reassessment, but the procedures are routine and what they see are the employees of the assessor’s office doing the work for which they have been hired.

FIXING BEACH-AREA ASSESSMENTS. **In the background, Lake County Treasurer Hank Adams reports that the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) approved his proposal for Miller properties north of Oak Avenue but not fronting on the beach.** All of these properties will be included in neighborhood code 2500, with a land value of \$900 per front-foot, compared with the current value of \$1,500 per front foot. This arrangement will be part of the general reassessment, and will apply for 2012 taxes

payable in 2013. The Calumet Township Assessor could try to undo this change, but Adams can override her.

2012 TAXES. The assessments for taxes payable this year are still uncertain. However, whatever the property assessment may be, the tax **rate** should be about 1.3%, rather than 2% or more, since the Distressed Unit Appeal Board will no longer be authorizing exceptions to the constitutional limits on property tax rates.

LAKE COUNTY INCOME TAX? Meanwhile, the MCC Government Committee has been discussing **whether to support an income tax for Lake County residents.** At present, this is the only county in Indiana which does not have such a tax. The arguments in favor of the income tax are: 1. Our government units need the money, and 2. If we had such a tax, we would get half of the tax money paid by persons who work in Lake County but live in other counties. (We would also lose half of the taxes paid by Lake County residents who work elsewhere, but they are thought to be less numerous.) The argument against supporting an income tax is that the MCC has spent the past ten years opposing taxes. The income tax would bring about \$6 million to \$8 million to the city of Gary. At present, the Committee is doing more research concerning support for an income tax at the county level and how the income tax money would be distributed, before making a recommendation to the MCC board.

MCC Directors support pleas of Education Committee

The Gary Public Libraries are faced with a budget reduction from \$5.6 million to \$2.6 million in the current year. To operate with drastically reduced revenues, the Library board has decided to close the main library on Fifth Avenue and to provide service to Gary residents through four local branch libraries in Brunswick, Glen Park, Midtown, and Miller. Plans are being developed to convert the Main Library for other uses, including a South Shore Cultural Museum, a cyber café, space for special collections, museum exhibits and administrative offices, all of which would require only a few employees. At the recommendation of the Education Committee, the MCC directors have voted to send a letter to Library Director Otis Alexander and the Library Board, **supporting their decision to keep the four branches open** and inviting Mr. Alexander to speak at a future MCC board meeting.

The Education Committee continues to promote college credit courses for Gary high school students. The MCC directors authorized a letter to Tom Snyder at Ivy Tech, **urging him to ease the cost of dual credit enrollment**

at New Tech High School by offering two or three free classes or by waiving the fee for sending a teacher to the school. The committee will also invite Ms. Goods, the New Tech principal, to explain the school's programs at a future MCC meeting.

In the background, the Committee is still seeking support for safe sidewalks near our schools. As a personal initiative, Committee member Jason Arndt has made contributions of \$50, in the name of the MCC, to Lew Wallace High School and to Bannecker elementary school to fund science projects. All MCC members are invited to participate in the Education Committee, which meets each month at Marquette Park United Methodist Church in the hour before the MCC board meeting.

Marquette work progresses

The latest completion date for work on the Marquette Park Pavilion is May 6 – but this is by no means a sure thing. In any case, the outside areas of the park will be in a state of turmoil all summer, with parking areas being developed and other parking areas eliminated. At the same time, cost overruns on the Pavilion will probably require cutbacks in work planned elsewhere in the park.

Several elements in the park renovation plan remain controversial. Preliminary **plans for the roadways around the park** call for bike lanes, walking paths and parking spaces which would limit the through traffic to a single lane, while many Miller residents feel strongly that two lanes of traffic are needed to avoid congestion. The plans also call for an **asphalt trail through the dunes** from Lake Street to Marquette Park, which is raising strong objections from local residents who believe it is expensive, unnecessary, and would degrade the most natural lakefront area still remaining in Indiana. We can expect to hear more about these issues later.