

Valentine's Day disguised as Halloween for MCC dance

For the past 31 years, the MCC dance has brightened the dark days of winter and has given Millerites a chance to visit with friends and neighbors whom they don't see in the cold months. This year, Miller's big annual party has been rescheduled because its traditional location – the Marquette Park Pavilion -- will be closed for renovation from November until next summer.

The date of the dance this year is Friday, October 29, from 7:00 to midnight, and the event has been recast as a masked ball, to fit the Halloween season. The dance remains a dressy affair, but guests are invited to come in costume if they like, and they are expected, at the least, to wear masks.

Tickets for the dance cost \$45, including an open bar, full service for dinner with a buffet for dessert, and music for dancing. Tickets are available from Ayers Realty (938-1188), Lake Street Gallery (938-4566) and the Marquette Perk (938-0820). You can reserve a table for yourself and your friends by purchasing ten tickets.

This year, the dance will also include a silent auction and raffle.

BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

The cutoff date for ticket sales is October 18.

Duly noted

BRATS AND BULBS. The Miller Garden Club will present its annual fall party on **Saturday, October 16, from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm.** A wide variety of bulbs will be for sale—daffodils, tulips, aliums and others—to be planted in the fall so everyone can enjoy the flowers in the spring. While you're making your selection of bulbs, you can also enjoy grilled brats and soft drinks, with a background of live music by the popular Oxcart Ramblers. **The event takes place at the Aqua-torium in Marquette Park.** Stop by and enjoy!

SAVE-THE-DUNES FUNDRAISER. The Save-the-Dunes Council is sponsoring a Beerfest at Bartlett's restaurant on Rt. 12 in Beverly Shores, on Sunday, October 17 from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Tickets, which you can purchase at the door for \$25, will get you a sampling of beer from local breweries, appetizers from Bartlett's, music by the Katie Sullivan Band, and access to a silent auction. Enjoy a fun afternoon and help out an important local cause.

CLEAN UP MILLER. The Miller Improvement Group is organizing another community cleanup, on Saturday, October 9 starting at 10:00 am at the former GUEA building on Miller Avenue and Grand Blvd. Please bring your own work gloves. For information on future cleanups and other activities, check on [Facebook](#) for "Miller Improvement Group."

FIRE STATION CLOSING. For the past year, rumors have circulated that Fire Station 11 on Randolph Street will be closing, and it was occasionally shut down, only to spring back to life after a few days or weeks. Now, it appears as though the station is really history. Councilwoman Krusas notes that the city has not made any official announcements of a closing, but 31 firemen are on layoff, and money to hire them back is not in sight.

MCC president Eric Reaves has commented to the press that the population of Gary may have shrunk, but the area of the city has not, so many residents will now be further away from emergency assistance.

MILLER IS SOCKED IN. MCC President Reaves has also complained to the Post Tribune about the extended closing of access routes to Miller. Old Hobart Road is closed for several months at Miller Avenue while the train overpass at that location is rebuilt, and the crossing at County Line Road and Rt. 20 is now closed for emergency track repairs. Getting in and out of Miller has become a challenge, but all we can do about the situation is hope they finish the work fast.

FARMERS' MARKET CONTINUES. Due to strong demand, the farmers' market at the Marquette Park United Methodist Church on Grand Blvd. is continuing on **October 3 and 17**—the first and third Sundays of the month. New vendors include **Cecil's BBQ Ribs and Chicken** and **Chocolate Divas** who offer chocolate covered strawberries and cheesecake. The Emerson Jazz Band will also be there. If you have questions or want to be included as a vendor, call Sandra Rodriguez (938-7720) or Nichole Charlene (219-951-0151).

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MILLER CITIZENS CORP. AND THE OCTOBER BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH ON GRAND BLVD. The meeting will include the election of board members and officers for the coming year. Members are invited to attend and participate in the election and the meeting.

Contact the MCC between meetings at P.O.Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403, or call 938-8831 or e-mail mcceaton@aol.com.

WHO IS LARRI? The Lakeshore Regional Recovery of Indiana (LARRI) has been offering assistance to home-owners whose property was damaged in the floods of 2008. When residents have exhausted all other sources of aid and still have damage that is not repaired, LARRI has stepped in to help. **The executive director of LARRI will speak at the upcoming MCC board meeting, to explain how his organization is helping our city.** So far, the organization has aided 4,000 home owners, three-fourths of whom are Gary residents, but there are only two volunteers from Gary helping with the work, plus a few others who have recently been donating a day of labor.

BUILDING CHURCHES. The MCC opposed a special use variance for the New Beginnings Church, located next to Walgreens on Lake Street, even though the church will be renting the property and its owner will continue to pay property taxes on the site. The MCC is concerned that it would be hard to dislodge the church if renting morphed into ownership and the property became tax-exempt. The church in this prime commercial location is also seen as an impediment to other economic activity. In spite of MCC opposition, the variance was approved by the Gary city council. Another church group wanted to buy and occupy the former Tops building on Rt. 20, which would become at least partly tax-exempt. This request faced more opposition, from the MCC and from First District Councilwoman Marilyn Krusas, and it was eventually withdrawn before coming to a vote by the Board of Zoning Appeals.

On-going membership drive seeks support for MCC

The Miller Citizens Corporation has sent out membership renewal notices to more than 700 persons on its

mailing list, and responses are beginning to flow in. The MCC has also solicited members at public events, like the Fest in the First and the Sunday farmers' markets at Marquette Park Methodist Church. In addition, MCC board members have been asked to sign up five new members among their neighbors, friends and relatives. However, we are still far from our goal of 500 paid members for the year ending in October 2011.

The MCC has been a significant force in the Miller community for the past 39 years, and it is financed almost entirely by the dues paid by its members. It has helped Miller people work together for the betterment of their neighborhood in areas such as law enforcement, property taxes, education, recreation, zoning, and other facets of community life.

IF YOU'RE NOT AN MCC MEMBER, NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN! All you need to do is send a note showing your name, address, phone number and e-mail address with \$10, cash or check, to **MCC, P.O. Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403**. Dues have been kept low on purpose to encourage broad community support. Besides, this is an entirely volunteer organization whose main expense is for postage, so it doesn't spend much money.

Marquette Park conservancy planning makes progress

For the past year, the MCC Lakeshore Committee has been warning that Gary's Marquette Park will need funds and oversight from non-governmental sources to operate and maintain the facility once the current \$27 million renovation is completed. This is also the view of the Regional Development Authority (RDA) which is financing the renovation. The Marquette Park East Board of the RDA has therefore established a subcommittee to work out the details of a Park Conservancy to perform these support functions.

Eric Reaves, representing the MCC on the subcommittee, has been allied with Jerry Kanies from the Miller Business Association, Councilwoman Marilyn Krusas, and Spero Batistatos of the Lake County Visitors' Bureau in defining an organization which is independent from political control and can attract financial and managerial support from private sources. He reports a significant agreement, to establish a Conservancy Board of Directors with 27 members, representing business, civic organizations and government, in which no one group predominates.

The Conservancy Subcommittee will next establish criteria for board members and will draw up articles of incorporation, including by-laws that define the responsibilities of the conservancy organization, which will include both financing and management functions. They will then ask the RDA to approve their proposal, and the RDA will finally release funds to permit the park renovation work to proceed.

MCC elections on the horizon

Last month, the Miller Message reported that the MCC Nominating Committee was recruiting candidates for the board of directors, prior to the election which will take place at the **MCC Annual Meeting on Monday, October 11 at 7:30** at the Marquette Park United Methodist Church. **This month**, the committee is still working on the list of candidates, which is not yet ready for publication. The official slate of nominees will be completed by October 6, and it will be posted on the newly improved MCC website as soon as it is available. Just visit www.millercitizenscorp.org to see who is being recommended for a position as MCC director.

Vote YES for tax caps

Many years ago, when local property taxes rose to record levels, the MCC spearheaded the movement for property tax caps at the state level. The tax bills for individual residential properties reached a high of \$35,000 per year, and residents all over Gary were outraged. MCC representatives met with Governor Kernan personally to plead for the initial “2% cap”. The MCC was also instrumental in making the tax caps a part of state law. Unfortunately, the law includes the Distressed Unit Appeal Board, which has allowed Gary to levy taxes above the state-wide caps.

Now, a vote is coming up at the November 2 election which will make the caps part of the constitution and will eliminate the Gary exemption. The MCC urges all voters to support the constitutional limits on property tax rates.

Window signs which promote the tax caps have been printed by the Indiana Association of Realtors and a limited number are available from Ayers Realtors on Lake Street for anyone who has a good place to display them. Just stop by the office and pick one up.

Vote YES for tax caps