

Miller night at the Railcats

Join your neighbors for an evening of family entertainment at the Railcats versus Schaumburg baseball game on Thursday, August 6 at 7:00 pm in the US Steel Yard. For \$10, you get good seats for the game, plus a hot dog, soft drink and chips. In addition to the game, attractions include the McKinley Boys Drum Corps and the Famous Chicken, plus Patti Shaffner singing the national anthem. The MCC is selling tickets which can be purchased at the Marquette Perk, the Lake Street Gallery, or Ayers Realtors. SEE YOU THERE!

Garbage is major news

THE LEGAL BATTLE. On July 9, the City and the MCC appeared in court before Judge Thomas Webber, to deal with two issues: the contempt citation against the City and granting the MCC lawsuit class action status. This time, Mayor Clay appeared in court (along with his retinue) and the judge therefore absolved him of the contempt ruling for not showing up at the previous court date. On the other hand, the judge decided that the case should be a class action, since it has dragged on much longer than he originally expected and it is unreasonable to expect the original plaintiffs to bear the cost themselves. If the MCC prevails in the suit, the City will have to pay the lawyers' fees.

The parties are scheduled to appear again before Judge Webber on August 20. At this time, we expect the City to claim that they have met all the Judge's demands and the case is therefore closed. The MCC is still questioning the legitimacy of the City's bid specifications for the garbage contract, which effectively excluded any bidder except Allied Waste. In addition, there is a question whether making the garbage fee retroactive to January 23, 2009 can override Judge Webber's order to repay the money ratepayers have already sent in to pay the illegal fee. There are also several other issues which the MCC might raise.

On July 22, MCC lawyer John Reed deposed the Allied General manager for this area, Chris Kentopp, and learned that the price quoted in the new Allied contract, (\$14.96 per month per household) was the same as the price in the original, voided contract (\$21.17) except that landfill fees and recycling were eliminated from the scope of work to be performed.

THE GARBAGE FEE AND THE ALLIED CONTRACT. On July 7, the Gary Common Council finally voted on the proposed garbage collection fee. The

MCC opposed the fee as it opposes any new taxes, as long as the City fails to undertake the major restructuring that is necessary to live within its means. We also believe that the contract with Allied will greatly increase the cost of garbage collection in the city, so that the income from the fee will mostly go to pay Allied and not to reduce property taxes. In addition, 47 employees who were Gary residents were laid off and replaced by mostly non-Gary residents. Language in the Allied contract specifically states that it will not go into effect unless the Common Council approves the fee; **so the Council had the deciding voice on both the unpopular fee and the unfavorable contract.**

For the long-awaited vote, the council chamber was filled with interested citizens, many of whom spoke during the public comment period. For the first time, a number of the fired Gary garbage collectors appeared and made their voices heard. In addition to the MCC representatives, there were also many participants from the Central District Organizing Project (CDOP) based in midtown. In the end, the councilmen voted six to three against imposing the fee. Only Stanford, and Brown, who work for the Sanitary District, and Ronier Scott voted in favor. Roy Pratt voted against, but indicated he would vote for the measure if he could see a signed copy of the Allied Contract. Marilyn Krusas voted against, emphasizing her opposition to making the fee retroactive.

Mayor Clay reacted by having the Sanitary District board, which he appoints, instruct Allied to stop collecting garbage in Gary, effective July 12, a move which was intended to pressure the council members to change their vote.

The specter of garbage piling up in the streets and alleys of our city brought out a legion of television and newspaper journalists, to report on community meetings and council meetings, as well as press conferences and demonstrations sponsored by the MCC, the CDOP, and the Glen Ryan Neighbors. Even national media, like the Wall Street Journal, CNN, and National Public Radio came to report on the crisis. (The reporters had a difficult time understanding the complexity of the situation and distinguishing between approving the fee and approving the contract. People closer to the scene had trouble with these issues as well.) MCC President Doug Grimes, who took the lead in presenting the MCC case, appeared on TV screens around the world.

At its next regular meeting on July 21, the City Council again took up the issue of the garbage collection fee. Without new public comment, the council voted to reconsider the previous vote. This time, they voted five to four in favor of adopting the garbage fee, with Roy Pratt and Kim Robinson changing their votes from two

weeks earlier. (Many persons think the Council got tangled up in the intricacies of parliamentary procedure and didn't actually vote to pass the fee ordinance, just to reconsider the previous vote. We will see.)

Once the Council voted, Allied was supposed to spring into action and immediately resume garbage collection, but in Miller they didn't arrive until the usual Tuesday collection day, July 28.

CANS AND BINS. Although Allied Waste has the contracts to collect, recycle and dispose of trash, the garbage cans and recycling bins still come from the City. **To replace unusable trash cans, call General Services at 882-8445. For new recycling boxes, call 977-0918.** If you don't have a pink recycling container, you should still be able to put out recycleable materials in cardboard boxes or paper bags marked "recycle". If you have problems with normal trash pickup, call Jerome Prince at 219-712-0933.

Duly noted . . .

AQUATORIUM EVENT. The 20th annual Aquatorium Event will take place at the Aquatorium on **Saturday, August 8**, starting at 7:00 pm. Contributions can be \$50, \$75, \$100 or your age. Whatever you contribute, you can enjoy food from local restaurants, plus beer, wine and pop and can consume in the garden, in the Tuskegee Room, or upstairs. You can also dance to the music of DJ Mike Sangerman. Tickets are available by mail or in person from the Aquatorium Society, 607 S. Lake Street, Gary, IN 46403

DOUGLAS CENTER OPEN FOR BUSINESS. The **Douglas Environmental Education Center on Lake Street is open to the public every day this summer (MF/9A-4P; SA/10A-2P; SU/1-4P).** Upcoming activities include picnics at the Miller Woods every Saturday from 10 to 2 (bring your own lunch and join in a hike); Saturday, August 15 only, Fire in the Oaks to learn how fire is involved in the history of the savannahs; and Open House every Sunday through September 6. For more information, call 938-8221.

REPORT UNSAFE BOATING. If you're at the beach and witness boats engaged in unsafe actions, especially those that endanger swimmers or other boaters, report what you see to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement, District 10 at 219-879-5710 or to the Lake County Police Marine Unit at 219-398-9033.

FARMERS' MARKETS CONTINUE. The bi-weekly markets at the Marquette Park United Methodist Church

on Grand Blvd. will continue on the second and last Sunday of each month through October. Stop to pick up green groceries, food to go, craftwork, and to learn about local services. The markets for August will be on the 9th and the 30th from 11:30 to 2:30.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE MCC BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL BE HELD AT 7:30 PM ON MONDAY, AUGUST 10, IN THE DOWN-STAIRS MEETING ROOM OF THE MARQUETTE PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, ON GRAND BLVD. MCC members are invited to attend and participate.

To contact the MCC between board meetings, write to MCC, PO Box 2645, Gary, IN 46403; send e-mails to mceaton@aol.com; or phone 938-8831.

JAZZ IN THE (GLEASON) PARK. The Gary American Jazz Association is sponsoring a jazz festival at Gilroy Stadium on Saturday, August 9 from 1:00 to 8:00 pm. Headliners include Hal Tsuchida Trio, Dr. Odis Williams Quartet, and Billy Foster Quintet. Tickets are \$5 in advance or \$8 at the gate. Call E. Heffner at 219-985-1510 for advance tickets.

CLEAN WATER CELEBRATION. The Gary Storm Water Management District (GSWMD), the Gary Department of Environmental Affairs and the Park Department are hosting the fifth annual Gary Clean Water Celebration on Saturday, September 5 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Marquette Park Lagoons. The festival aims to provide information to the public related to reducing pollution by separating storm sewers from sanitary sewers. To make a presentation or have a booth at this event, contact B. Scott Henry at 219-882-3000 or e-mail bscotthenry@aol.com.

COACHES NEEDED. If you would be interested in coaching boys or girls biddy basketball (ages 5 to 14), call Marc Witcher, league president, at 219-487-0985 or e-mail marcwitcher@att.net.

Public safety is still a concern

The **Eyesore Team** continues to identify derelict properties in the First District of Gary and is working with owners, the Gary Code Enforcement Department, and the City Court to correct their deficiencies. According to Barb Hansen, the MCC public safety chairman, the next court date for these cases is August 26 at 1:30 pm, in Judge Monroe's City Court.

During July, Miller has experienced a rash of break-ins, vandalism, robbery and attempted robbery. The C.O.P. office reminds everyone to be on the lookout for suspicious individuals and to keep the doors to their homes closed and locked, including garage doors that lead into the house. Call the police at 911 if an immediate response is needed or at 881-2635 if low-priority follow-up is required; and **also** report criminal acts to the C.O.P. office (**938-0281**) so they can record and chart criminal activities.

The C.O.P. office is pleased that two new neighborhood groups have scheduled formative get-togethers: a group in the Glen Ryan area and the Hemlock group will both be hosting events on August 26. Every area is encouraged to start a Block Club or Neighborhood Watch. The C.O.P. office and Councilwoman Krusas will assist in getting organized and in planning summer events.

Lakeshore getting attention

The Lake Michigan Shore is an important asset of the Miller community, and demands our attention to deal with day-to-day issues and long-term plans. The MCC Lakeshore Committee is getting organized to provide citizen oversight of planning and spending for lakefront development occasioned by the grant of \$28 million from the Regional Development Authority (RDA), which specifically provides that the MCC and the Miller Business Association be included on the advisory committee for the project. The grant requires a series of public meetings as plans progress, and these, in turn, require prior study, discussion and preparation by committee members.

With Lee Botts as chairman, the committee had an initial meeting during July with about 10 people in attendance. Everyone is charged with reading the planners' report and helping to recruit more committee members prior to the next meeting on **August 20 at 6:30 pm at the Wildermuth library.**

Issues such as beach cleanup, boat launching and boat mooring might be referred to a separate sub-committee. Questions and comments about lakeshore issues should be referred to Lee Botts at 938-2863.