

THE PROFILE

*PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XXVII NUMBER 1

PHONE 364-8466

DECEMBER 2001

The Plainfield Charter Township Clerk's office is now a passport agency for the US Department of State. The hours are 9:00 am until 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Every effort is made to keep the office open during these hours, however, there are occasions when the office must be closed. It would be wise to call 364-8466 to confirm that the Passport Agency is open on the day you wish to come.

When you apply for a passport, please bring the following information:

- **Proof of identity** (driver's license)
- **Proof of citizenship** (Original proof of birth – sealed certificate, not hospital certificate)
- **Two passport photos** (Walgreens and Meijer

are two stores in the township which take the photos. The cost is about \$8.00 for a set.)

Clerk's Office is PASSPORT AGENCY



- **Two checks;** one for \$45.00 to the US Department of State and one for \$15.00 to Plainfield Township. The township will accept cash instead of a check but the DOS will not.

Each applicant must come to the office to complete the form and sign it in person. There are no exceptions. There are special rules for children, expedited applications, and unusual circumstances. Please call to ask your questions before coming to the office. It takes up to six weeks to get a passport so early planning is a good idea.

The Clerk's office staff is happy to assist you with your application and

your questions; call them at 364-8466.

Plainfield Township employees wish everyone

Happy Holidays!

Evolution and change is common in our lives and in the life of our community. Indian trails became two-tracks for wagons. Two-tracks became gravel roads. Gravel roads were paved. Basic two-lane paved roads have become four-lane arterials. The place where there was no bridge over the Grand River at Belmont Avenue now sports a modern four-lane bridge with a new north-south thoroughfare through the heart of Plainfield Township. Farms and farmhouses have given way to modern subdivisions – many with three homes to the acre. Little drive-through, roof-covered filling stations have disappeared, and Thrifty Acres have taken their places. Even the steep hills rising from the Grand River valley have shrunk and have changed their shape, having been mined for their valuable sand and gravel.

**It's Not Easy,
and It's
Not Cheap
– Part One
(Updating
Plainfield Township
in the 21st Century)**

many changes, and there are many more to come.

These are a few of the more visible changes, but there are many less visible changes happening that are every bit as important and very significant in the lives of our people, our neighborhoods, and in the metropolitan area. Plainfield Township would not be what it is without the public water and sanitary sewer systems that support it. Our water system is more than forty years old, having grown from small private neighborhood systems to a public system serving not only Plainfield Township, but Alpine Township, and parts of Grand Rapids Township and the City of Walker. This year we'll pump more than one and a half *billion* gallons from sixteen wells. Our sewer system was established in 1968 at a cost of millions and expanded at a



If someone walking Plainfield Township's rolling plains and beautiful fields had sud-

denly been transported away in 1920 and then magically materialized at Plainfield Avenue and Northland Drive today, he surely would not have recognized the place — a huge lake where there had been only a pond, and now \$300,000 condos being built on its banks. The Blythefield embankment had been cut long ago into Wolverine Boulevard. In the early 50's, Wolverine Boulevard became the new US-131, bypassing Rockford. And now, would you believe it: North Kent Mall, built just yesterday, it seems, is being transformed into something quite different. Yes indeed, there have been

cost of many more millions to serve five communities covering 70 square miles of service



area. Within a space of less than six years, we will have replaced many miles of large diameter sewer transmission mains and pumping stations at a cost of 15 – 20 million dollars. The new stuff is better engineered, has been constructed with better materials, and will provide better service for years to come. Drainage systems continue to be planned and built at no small cost and with no small effort.

Managing these changes, which made us what we are and which will enable us to be what we

are becoming, is a large portion of what we in local government do on your behalf. This is not easy, and it is not cheap. Often, it is not even enjoyable. One might think it should be enjoyable. After all, think of the importance and the value of these major components of our modern infrastructure to all of us. Where would we be without them? Building and improving these systems is rewarding. Plainfield's elected leadership and those whose task it is to make it happen are honored to serve the community in this way. But it is no simple task. Let me explain.

As we evolve and progress toward our future, old things that were once new must eventually give way to change. Many private wells for drinking water that were fine forty years ago are not fine any more. Public water systems are great. They provide a dependable and safe source of drinking water – with fire protection as a bonus. Backyard septic systems that were okay decades ago have given way to public sewers for public health and environmental protection. Our public water and public sewer systems serve well over 90% of our citizens. There are small pockets of non-sewered areas, and there are even fewer neighborhoods that are not served by public water. Gradually, the old private systems deteriorate and fail. Many property owners nurse those systems along. Some take very conscientious care of them, and they last for a long time. Some fail in spite of good maintenance. Eventually, as we see it happen, people want public water and sewer. Unfortunately, it isn't easy, and it isn't cheap for that to happen.

After the initial creation of our water and sewer systems in the 60's and 70's, often aided by federal and state grants, these systems were expanded by new developments and by what are called Special Assessment Districts (SADs). The SAD is a mechanism for getting public water or sewer into an area by following state law and the procedures that the law provides. I will discuss "SADs" in the NEXT ISSUE of the *Profile*.

—Robert Homan, Township Manager

Plainfield Township Water Department

The Water Department is reviewing security to continue to assure you of a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. While we cannot discuss our security measures, some of them are obvious, such as the new fence at the Water Department buildings. We also have internal equipment and procedures to make it difficult for unauthorized persons to have access to our water. No system is perfect. We still depend on our water consumers to alert us to any change in the water. If you notice a sudden, unexpected change in the taste, odor, appearance, or pressure of your water, CALL US IMMEDIATELY! The Water Department phone number is 363-9660. If there is no answer at that number, call 257-8021. They will get a message to us.

During the cold weather months, no one except Fire and Water Department personnel are allowed to operate fire hydrants. Opening fire hydrants may seem to be a simple prank. In fact, it is a dangerous crime that could cause damage to the system, traffic accidents, or water contamination. It could be someone attempting to sabotage the system or cause contamination of the water. If you see anyone tampering with a fire hydrant, call us immediately. If you can't reach the Water Department, call the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

No one is allowed to enter our tanks or fenced tank sites unless they are accompanied by Water Department personnel. If you see anyone inside a tank site, in or on one of the tanks, and there is no Water Department vehicle present, call us immediately.

Closing Abandoned Wells Protects Groundwater

By AliciaMarie Belchak, Kent/Ottawa Groundwater Technician

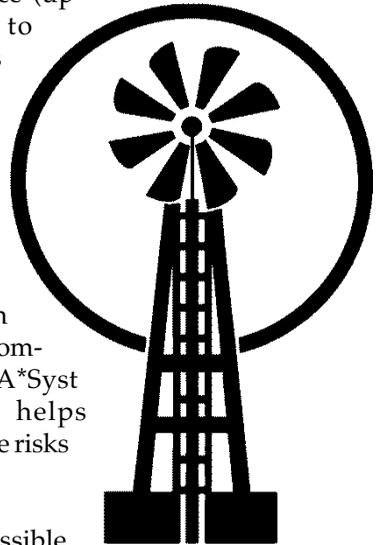
Abandoned or unused drinking wells in formerly rural residential areas pose a serious threat to the quality of groundwater, but properly closing these wells can prevent future contamination of Michigan's rural drinking water supply. Like Plainfield Township, many of West Michigan's growing cities and townships are expanding into rural areas. Many residents in these areas who once relied upon wells for clean drinking water may now utilize municipal water supplies being piped into these rural areas. The result may be hundreds of new unused or abandoned wells that need to be correctly sealed.

"Protecting the groundwater aquifer is a community problem that needs to be addressed with a community effort," said Dr. David Lusch of the Institute of Water Research at Michigan State University. Old, unused or improperly maintained wells can potentially provide a direct connection between the surface and the water table. Pollutants like petroleum, pesticides, fertilizers, and even disease-causing bacteria can potentially enter the groundwater flow and thus, the drinking water supply, through this connection. The result may be the contamination of water many miles away, Lusch pointed out. "Wells are often recharged from water passing through other lands far from the well we drink from," he said. "Many of us (in rural areas) will use water that has passed through lives far removed from us."

Plugging an unused well is the only way to ensure the safety of the drinking water and the health of everyone in the watershed area, according to experts like Lusch. "The solution is to stop problems (at the surface) before they happen," noted Lusch. "Groundwater has no processes to 'clean up' contamination, and it may take many generations even with highly

expensive remediation." Fortunately, the solution is simple and help is available.

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program offers technical and, in some instances, financial assistance (up to 100 percent) to homeowners wishing to plug unused wells. Homeowners in rural, zoned-agricultural areas may become eligible for financial assistance through the program by completing a Home*A*Syst evaluation that helps identify and reduce risks to groundwater.



Although it is possible for homeowners to plug their own wells, groundwater stewardship technicians strongly recommend hiring a registered well driller to do the work. Often, there are specific guidelines and paperwork for well closures required by local health departments or the Department of Environmental Quality. Most wells cost under \$500.00 to close, depending upon the well and the driller, and for qualified homeowners, much of that may be covered through the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program.

Plainfield residents wishing to close their wells through the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program should contact the groundwater technician for Kent and Ottawa counties, AliciaMarie Belchak, at (616) 336-8868 or (616) 847-8770 x5 for more information.

New Voter Registration Cards Required

As a result of the 2000 census and redistricting, all registered voters in Plainfield Township must receive new voter registration cards. Please discard your old card when your new one arrives. We must wait for authorization from the state to mail the cards, but as soon as it is received, the cards will be mailed. We will also be adding one or two new precincts. Please watch carefully for voting information to arrive. The new boundaries will affect future municipal elections and polling places. Here are some of the changes you will notice:

- New congressional district number
- New state senatorial district boundaries and number
- New state representative district boundaries and number
- New county commission district number

If you have any questions about your new card or precinct please call the Clerk's office at 364-8466. We would appreciate the chance to correct any error prior to an election day. Thanks for your help.

Susan Morrow, Clerk

Traffic Improvement and Changes at Plainfield and Coit

As of mid-November, drivers making left turns on Plainfield Avenue at Coit Avenue have different lanes from what were placed with the paving this past summer. The offset lanes have been replaced with the conventional face-to-face lanes, thus allowing left turns into driveways from other than the thru-lane. Please exercise caution and be aware of this change.

In the spring of 2002, a traffic signal is scheduled to be installed by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The installation will include a signal head for the Riverview Athletic Club driveway. The service road connection to Coit Avenue by Choice One Bank will be eliminated. It is too close to Plainfield Avenue, and it would cause traffic congestion when the traffic signal is in operation.

Plainfield Township residents have been concerned about a traffic signal at this intersection, and our efforts, along with the Kent County Road Commission have resulted in this improvement.

5

Commodity Distribution Dates

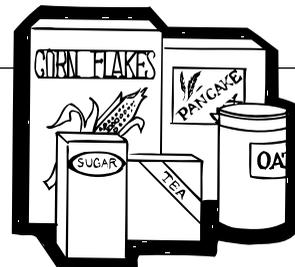
Commodities will be distributed to qualified low-income persons on the following dates:

February 21, 2002

May 23, 2002

August 29, 2002

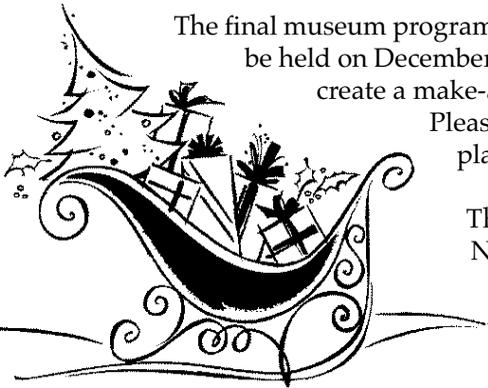
Distribution takes place at 6156 Belmont Avenue, between the hours of 9 am and 1 pm. New families wishing to qualify for food may call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to our distribution site on the above dates.



NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

It has been a busy and rewarding year for the Historical Preservation Committee. The Hyser Rivers Historical Museum has been spruced up. The back porch has been rebuilt, the front porch reinforced, a new museum sign installed, a new sprinkler system installed, and a damaged tree replaced.

The Committee has sponsored some great programs: The Civil War Re-enactment Group, Great Lakes romance author Donna Winters, a genealogy program, and a program on railroading and interurban transportation which was co-sponsored with the Friends of the Library. The Committee entertained 105 Brownies, Girl Scouts and their leaders.



The final museum program will be “An Old Fashion Christmas Celebration” to be held on December 9th, from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Those attending may create a make-and-take craft item and decorate Christmas cookies.

Please RSVP to Sharon, 784-7062, or Jan, 784-6783, if you plan to attend.

The Committee sadly accepted the resignations of Nancy Rosendall, an original charter member, and E.J. Ericksen, who have both relocated. If you are interested in serving on the Historical Preservation Committee, please submit a letter of interest and resume to the Plainfield Township office, or you may call Sharon, 784-7062, for more information.

IN 2002, THE HYSER HOUSE WILL CELEBRATE ITS 150TH BIRTHDAY! A planning committee will start meeting every two weeks in January, at the 5 Mile Library, to plan a gala festival to take place during the summer months in 2002. If you would like to help plan this event, please call Sharon, 784-7062, or Jan, 784-6783.

After the holidays, the Community Patchwork Quilt will go back on display at the Township Hall, as well as a display case to showcase township memorabilia. The display case will be changed periodically, so if you have any items of local historical interest, please give the committee a call.

Take advantage of
Our Libraries’
Many Fine Programs

No matter what the winter brings to Comstock Park and Plainfield, the libraries promise to keep you warm inside and offer more than a good book to curl up with. There are many programs planned to enlighten and entertain, and friendly staff to help you find what you need. Stop in or call!



WHITE PINE TRAIL UPDATE

Currently the White Pine Trail is paved from the pedestrian bridge at West River Drive to Russell Road, 4 miles north of Rockford; a total distance of 9¹/₂ miles. Due to a change in the route, the DNR was unable to complete the trail pavement from the bridge southwest to Comstock Park as planned this season. At this writing local governments, including Plainfield Township and the City of Walker, are working with state legislators and the Friends of The White Pine Trail to influence the DNR to adopt a realistic route for the trail that can be completed in 2002.

The DNR has requested the Friends of The White Pine Trail and local communities to assist in raising matching funds for the paving grant from Russell Road to Sand Lake. After being suspended for most of the fall because of national events, fund raising will commence as soon as some final details are worked out with the DNR. For information about **contributions to this match**, how to assist in advocating for trail development, or the activities of The Friends of The White Pine Trail please contact the Friends at 866-8464.

Meeting schedule for Friends of The White Pine Trail (the 2nd Wednesday of each month and open to the public).

December 12, 7 pm
Plainfield Township Hall

January 9, 7 pm
Krause Library Downtown Rockford

February 13, 7 pm
Algoma Township Hall

March 13, 7 pm
place to be determined

In addition, The Friends of The White Pine Trail are planning a special program for late winter or early spring. Past programs have been of great interest and concern either local history or nature topics associated with the trail. Further details will be available shortly in The Friends newsletter, posted at the Township Building, or by calling 866-8464.

7

PLAINFIELD LIBRARY HOURS

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
9:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Friday, Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Phone 361-0611

COMSTOCK PARK LIBRARY HOURS

Monday 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Friday, Saturday 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Phone 784-8944

Community Policing

It is a violation to stop, park, or leave a vehicle upon a paved or main traveled part of a highway in Plainfield Township. A vehicle shall not be stopped, parked or left standing, attended or unattended, upon the paved or main traveled part of a highway. When it is possible to stop, park or leave the vehicle off the paved main portion of the highway. The only exception is an emergency or mechanical difficulty. A person who violates this section may be charged with a civil infraction.

Winter season is upon us, so remember to maintain equipment on your vehicle. Check your windshield wipers and tires. Also, remember that when snow starts to fly, slow down and drive with caution as the roads become icy and snow covered. Every year some people forget that winter driving is different. Cars behave differently on snow and ice, and drivers' reactions must change accordingly. Don't become a victim of an early winter accident. Slow down, look ahead, plan your moves deliberately, and watch out for the other guy.



Have a safe holiday season!

Community Policing
Kent County Sheriff Department
(616) 336-3118
compolice@kentcounty.org

NPBA IS NOW NEBA

The North Plainfield Business Association is now the North East Business Association. Its membership is open to any business on Plainfield Ave., Northland Dr., West River Dr. and the surrounding areas, including home businesses. Anyone doing business in the northeast area is welcome to be a member.

The association meets on the third Wednesday of each month at Boulder Creek Clubhouse at 11:45pm for lunch and program. The cost of the lunch is \$12.00, which is paid at each meeting. Membership dues are based on your activity level in the NEBA! Active participants pay less and benefit more.

The programs focus on business issues and township relations. Some of the programs planned for the 2002 season are: **Making My Office Space Work for Me** led by an interior designer, **Shaping Up Our Front** – exterior business improvements, **Meet the Candidates for State Offices, Township Update with Supervisor Groenleer**, and **Corporate Gift Giving**, an annual favorite. The NEBA sponsors a golf tournament, scheduled for June 13, 2002, to raise funds for a scholarship. We have distributed more than \$7,000 to students in the area.

Questions may be directed to Gayle Compton, Compton Tax and Financial Services, 363-2364.

2002 GYPSY MOTH PROGRAMS

Gypsy Moth monitoring and treatment programs are available through the Kent County Conservation District for your area. Over the past few years, we have had great success in controlling gypsy moth infestation in Plainfield Township. If you are concerned about preserving the health and beauty of your trees, shrubs, and ornamentals from this destructive pest, please contact our office at (616) 336-8868 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. for more information. A minimum area (20 contiguous acres) will be necessary to participate. This may be accomplished through cooperation from adjacent land owners organizing as a group for services.

Plainfield Charter Township 2002 Gypsy Moth Survey Request Form

Instructions:

1. The Gypsy Moth Program is administered by the Kent County Conservation District.
2. If you think your property needs to be checked for Gypsy Moth infestation (worms in the summer and brownish-orange egg masses in the fall) please complete the information below and return this form by **December 15th, 2001**.
3. Minimum acreage to be included in spraying will be twenty (20); no less. This can be accomplished by combining acreage of adjacent landowners and will maximize spray results.
4. Inform your neighbors that you are requesting a survey and encourage them to request one as well, in order to meet the acreage requirements.
5. The product Btk will be used in the aerial application and will be applied at the rate of 24 BIUs, which is + gallon per acre.
6. **IMPORTANT:** Please do not remove egg masses until March 2002 so surveying work can be completed accurately.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Parcel Tax Code #: 41-10- ____ - ____ - ____ Municipality: Plainfield Charter Township

Please return this form to: Kent County Conservation District
1328 Bradford NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Phone: (616) 336-8868

Fax: (616) 336-8861

E-mail to: conservationkent@aol.com

Plainfield Fire Department



FROM THE FIRE CHIEF'S DESK

As you may suspect, the Plainfield Fire Department has been very busy over the past several months. Events that occurred on September 11 have affected every member of the department in some way. We have gone to memorials and raised money to benefit the survivors of the terrorist attack.

The fall is traditionally our busiest time of the year. The Fire Department recruits paid-on-call members year-round; however, we start to train these recruits starting in late September or early October. The training lasts until April or May, depending on how many classes a week are scheduled.

Once again Plainfield Fire asked to be the host for a firefighter academy. Nine students from Plainfield F.D. are participating in the class, as well as several from neighboring departments. In addition to the training, we had fire prevention week activities and a Halloween party for the community's children. We are evaluating the former Montgomery Ward auto center site for the relocation of our #3 station, and we are preparing specifications for a new rescue vehicle. Preparing the budget for 2002 and closing out projects from the current budget year are keeping us very busy.

The Fire Department has always tried to operate as economically as possible. We continue to use paid-on-call staff to augment our full-time staff as a means to keep costs down. Only one person staffed the fire stations 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The Township Board

agreed with my recommendation that this system was not providing the quality of service that our community deserved. We also felt that this system was not safe for our firefighters, as it allowed them to be in potentially hazardous situations alone. We instituted a staffing system that added a second firefighter to each crew by using trained firefighters from other departments. Most of these firefighters are from the Plainfield area; however, we have one firefighter traveling from Muskegon and another from Ludington to work 12-hour shifts. Our full-time staff has worked hard to incorporate these new people into our fire department family. This system requires more administration than hiring additional full-time staff, but it saves a considerable amount of money over the year. We are happy with the progress of this new program after its first nine months.



The Western Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs (WMAFC) partici-

parted in a program called *Pennies From Heaven*. I am president of the organization this year. The program involved collaboration between Citadel Broadcasting, the Fraternal Order of Police, and WMAFC. It was devoted to collecting donations for the surviving families of emergency workers killed in the attack on the World Trade Center. The members of the Plainfield Fire Department donated many hours of their personal time to work at collection sites in and outside of the Township. The *Pennies From Heaven* campaign was very successful, raising over \$200,000, all of which will be given to victims of the September 11th. By

the time you read this the money will have been delivered to New York. I wanted the residents of Plainfield Township to know how proud I am of our people for taking the lead in this campaign. Without their selfless dedication, I can assure you that nowhere near this amount of money would have been raised. **THANK YOU P.F.D.**

We are in the process of overhauling our award winning website. The site was selected by *Fire*

House Magazine as one of the "Hot Spots" on the web. Check out the animated Apparatus Page. Pass your mouse over the pictures and open doors on the apparatus. If you click on the open door, it gives you an enlarged picture, as well as a list of what is inside. The website is still incomplete and under construction. Our goal is to have all of the functions fully implemented by 1/1/2002. The address for the site is <http://www.iserv.net/~pfdchief/>. Take a look.

—David Peterson, Fire Chief

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

Taxes and Tags

Recap of 2001 summer tax collections.... This year we collected nearly 94.7% of the summer taxes. Thank you for remitting payments in a timely fashion. We anticipate that this trend will continue with the winter taxes. The Treasurer's office processed over 11,000 tax bills. Outstanding!!!

Pay your taxes easier..... Since the summer of 2000 the Township has offered the ability to have your taxes paid automatically with a debit payment plan called 'E-Z Pay'. You are able to pay your taxes from your bank or credit union directly to the Township. No stamps! No late penalty fees! Nothing lost in the mail! There will be an 'E-Z Pay' enrollment form in the envelope with your tax bill.

Dial in and get your information.... You are now able to call the Township's *Infoline* and get tax information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This may be useful to you when you are filling out your Income Tax forms at year's end. You will be able to get information on taxes and assessment values. We have two numbers because of the heavy usage; 364-1196 and 364-1198. If you see room for improvement when using the *Infoline*, please let me know by calling 364-1188 x114.



Dog Licenses will be available..... at the Township beginning December 1, 2001 through March 1, 2002. Bring your proof of rabies update and spay/neutered certificate if applicable. If your puppy is at least 4 months old, it is required by law to be licensed. Don't waste a trip; bring your renewal card with you!

Mortgage company escrow tax payments..... If a mortgage company is paying your taxes from your escrow, the name of the mortgage company the bill was sent to is printed above your name. This appears on the page of the tax bill where the taxes are itemized. If the name of your mortgage company doesn't appear above your name, you should send a copy of your tax bill to your mortgage company.

Jim Stover, Treasurer

TOWNSHIP/ OFFICERS

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

David Groenleer, Supervisor

Susan Morrow, Clerk

James Stover, Treasurer

Wendell Briggs, Trustee

Robert Heindrichs, Trustee

William Parris, Trustee

Charles Weldon, Trustee

MANAGER

Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 P.M.

First and Third Mondays

www.plainfieldchartertp.org



FREE TREE INFORMATION

Mark your calendars.

Details to follow in next *Profile*.

Call-in date:

April 16, 2002, 9:00 am

Pick-up date: April 26, 2002,
2:00-5:00 pm

THE PROFILE

Plainfield Charter Township
6161 Belmont NE
Belmont, MI 49306

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
GRAND RAPIDS, MI
PERMIT NO. 1