

# The Profile

VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER 3

JUNE 2009

## Major Road Improvements

### Belmont Avenue – Post Drive to Jupiter

The Belmont Avenue road improvement project is *way* overdue. When I became Township Manager in 1996, Belmont had just seen its new and improved US Post Office open its doors across the street from its former location. At that time, the Township Hall was about 60% of its current size, and Belmont Road went straight through to West River Drive. There was no Jupiter Bridge, no Jupiter Avenue Connection between Plainfield Avenue and Coit, and no Jupiter Avenue linking West River Drive to Post. Have you ever thought about where this community would be without these road improvements and the bridge? There was only a bean field where the YMCA is now. There were no side-



walks on Belmont and no 4-way stop at Rogue River. This seems like a long time ago, but not nearly as long as the two-lane Belmont Avenue has needed work.

This road has taken a huge beating over the years, and now something is finally going to be done about upgrading this important arterial. One of the problems that prevented an upgrade has been the lack of positive drainage for the road. Storm water disappeared by evaporation and seepage into the sandy soil. With the development of the commercial center along Belmont Centre Drive came the construction of the Jupiter Drain in 2000. Both Plainfield Township and Rockford Construction, the developer of Belmont Center, were instrumental in getting the Ju-

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## Major Road Improvements

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piter Drain built — from the Belmont Grocery Store to the Grand River. The developer of the Belmont Village Green neighborhood just south of Rogue River Drive was responsible for creating an outlet drain from that portion of Belmont Avenue to the recently built Jupiter Drain.

The Kent County Road Commission is responsible for maintaining all public roads in Plainfield Township, including Belmont Avenue. It is pretty clear that maintaining this road has become just about impossible. The efforts of the KCRC to prioritize the Belmont road improvement and to secure federal system funding for it have been the critical factor in getting this project on schedule for 2010. Surveying and preliminary engineering has already begun. Plainfield Township is doing an unprecedented thing in supporting this project to the tune of \$200,000. The Township Board agreed that this is a very important and very necessary project. To get it moving, the Board committed this money from prior years savings in its General Fund.

Money is tight now, and it has been getting tighter for the past eight years due to cut-backs in revenue sharing from the State of Michigan. Under these conditions, this commitment of General Fund money is *huge*. Keep that in mind as you witness Belmont being torn up next summer and replaced as a three-lane road with curb and gutter. I am sure that we will all be glad when this new road opens next year.

## West River Drive – Jupiter to Verta

Here's another main road that needs work – yesterday! Potholes and bumps all over the place. I avoid it whenever I can. It's on the schedule for next year, too. The improvements will involve complete removal of existing pavement, widening, and the addition of a center turn lane. This project will be the fifth in a series of improvements to West River Drive that began about eight years ago. Stimulus money from the federal government has made this project possible, at a time when money for road improvements is really scarce. I am very glad that Plainfield Township is not responsible for roads, like cities and villages are, and I would not want Jon

Rice's job as Managing Director of the Road Commission. It takes money and good personnel to manage the Kent County road system. Michigan's roads are in trouble now, and it is going to take more money than is being generated now to get us out of the hole.

Please take seriously my opinion that the Road Commission and Plainfield Township are doing the very best we can to fulfill our local government responsibilities. What local governments do costs money. We do our best to manage your tax dollars wisely, and your understanding and support in these difficult circumstances helps a great deal. Everyone and every institution are being squeezed — from schools to the Sheriff's Department to township governments. We should appreciate our common

problems and depend on each other to make it through these tough times.



## Do you have a Septic System?



A typical septic system has four main components: a pipe from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil. The tank holds wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out. The remaining liquid exits the tank into the drainfield. Microbes in the soil will digest or remove most contaminants from the wastewater before it eventually reaches groundwater.

If properly maintained, your septic system can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't properly maintained, it will harm the environment, and you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars.

To prevent septic system failures, hire a professional to pump out your septic system **every three to five years**. Local professionals and licensed contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages under the heading "Septic Tank & Systems - Cleaning."



## I&I – What it is and how it affects us

**P**lainfield Charter Township and the other North Kent Sewer Authority (NKSA) communities are conducting an Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) Study to be carried out by Prein & Newhof, our consulting engineer. I&I is water entering the wastewater collection system through a combination of (1) direct inflow from illegally connected catch basins, yard drains or footing drains or (2) infiltration through leaking pipes, house connections, or cracks in manholes. As collection systems age, they inherently become more and more susceptible to I&I. The flow from I&I reduces the available capacity in the entire NKSA system that is intended to transport sewage to the new Clean Water Plant (CWP) for treatment.

I&I issues in the Plainfield Charter Township wastewater collection system are not new. We have been combating the problem for years through routine inspections and subsequent repairs and reconstructions. Maximum inflow

occurs during rainstorms, flooding and snow melt events. In the past, our excess flows from inflow and infiltration were passed through to the City of Grand Rapids' system and were a small part of what often overflowed into the Grand River from their system. With the new Clean Water Plant, the NKSA desires to maintain the reserve capacity built into the CWP for future development. The I&I study has been commissioned to find and eliminate as many sources of I&I as possible from a cost-benefit perspective.

The I&I study is currently under way and includes real time, continuous flow metering at key locations, thorough inspections of manholes located in known wet areas, and televising and smoke testing of sanitary sewers. Most of this will not be noticeable to the general public. However, some areas may be inspected more thoroughly, and nearby residents may receive notice of work going on in those areas.

## FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

If you live in one of our selected areas for this summer's neighborhood study, you may have already noticed our appraiser knocking on doors, talking with homeowners or leaving letters at individual homes. The State Tax Commission advises us to visit each property in the township on a five-year cycle. The purpose of this is to update our records for accuracy of record cards and correct them when necessary.

Letting our appraiser inspect your property thoroughly will insure that we have correct information on file and avoid mistakes.

In keeping with safety and security procedures, all personnel from the Assessor's Office will be carrying a picture ID and drive a marked Township vehicle in the residential areas. Thank you for your cooperation.

Here is a list of the selected neighborhoods to be visited in 2009:

Rogue River Frontage  
Peterson Valley  
River Road Farms  
Country Club Village  
Timber Ridge Estates

Rockford Site Condos  
Sierra Estates  
English Meadows  
West Hills  
Pineview/Rimrock/Omega

Northway Estates  
Skyway Plat  
Western Plains  
Lamoreaux Park

## Hyser Rivers Museum News

The Hyser Rivers Museum, located at 6440 West River Drive, is open to the public the first Sunday of the months of May through Decem-

ber, from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Special tour arrangements can be made for other times by calling Township Hall at 364-8466.

### The 2009 schedule of events includes:

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| September 19 & 20 | In conjunction with the Rogue River Camp Ground's Historical Reenactment, the museum will offer crafts, and, on Sunday the 20th, the Apple Valley Dulcimer players |
| October 4         | A Victorian Tea Party  |
| November 1        | Kids' crafts   |
| December 6        | Family Christmas Crafts: a make-and-take project for the whole family  |

The Plainfield Charter Township Historical Preservation Committee was proud to have two of its members, Wendell and Donna Briggs, recently honored with an award of community recognition presented by the Rockford Area Community Endowment. The Briggs' have

served on numerous committees and boards over the years, and they also donated the land on which the museum stands. Their knowledge of Township history has been an invaluable source of vital historical information to the Committee and to the community.

## Ah – Spring! Isn't It Nice?

**W**e are solidly into spring by more than two months. For a while, it seemed like we wouldn't be seeing spring and summer again.

I have two ways of knowing when spring hits Plainfield Charter Township. The first way is

quite obvious and that is when the birds are out flying around and singing in the nice sunny, warmer days.

The second is when I receive phone calls from irate business property owners who have an onslaught of skateboarders invading



their business premises after work hours doing damage to handrails, parking lots and landscaping. I wrote about this subject two or three years ago and maybe it is time for a refresher.

These business places are PRIVATE PROPERTY and the owners have generally spent considerable amounts of money for landscaping and upkeep, trying hard to make their

property presentable for clients and customers. Just because the employers and their employees have left for the workday, doesn't open their sidewalks and parking lots to people for a public playground. The "property" is still private property and should be treated as such.

I've seen some pretty messy areas left behind by the skateboarders and rollerbladers without even an attempt by the violators to clean up their debris. Broken bottles, plastic bottles, food and candy wrappers, trampled flowerbeds and disturbed handicapped signs are not out of the ordinary to find the next morning when workers start coming in to work. I have been told the owners have witnessed mothers or grandmothers driving three or four skateboarders to a location, dropping the young people off to play and then picking the kids up after being notified by cell phone that they are either done playing or the property owner showed up and kicked the kids off their property.

SO PLEASE, if you have skateboarders or rollerbladers in your family, teach them to have respect for private property and stay off the areas they have not been invited to play on.

HAVE A RESPECTFUL SUMMER!

*George K. Meek, Supervisor*

## Looking for a Few Good Service Organizations

**T**he 2009 Plainfield Township Farmers Market is offering an opportunity to "Not for Profit" service organizations that are community minded to lend a hand at the Farmers Market this summer. We are asking service clubs, churches and other non-profit groups to sponsor a "Day at the Market." Your group will be asked to help set up the market at 1:00 PM and close the market at

7:00 PM. The group will be provided a booth at the market for the day to promote your organization.

Please call Kathy Timmerman or Katie Karnes at 364-8466 to select the Thursday your group would like to help us at the Farmers Market. Call soon, as the dates are filling fast.

# 2009 VERSLUIS PARK NEWS

## FISHING INSTRUCTION

Plainfield Township has again partnered with the Dwight Lydell Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America for fishing instruction at Versluis Park. The fishing instruction will take place in June on 17th & 24th and on July 1st & 8th in the evenings and last for 1½ hours. Plainfield Township will provide the bait and some fishing poles will be available for those that do not have one. Last year the kids caught walleye, blue gill, and bass.

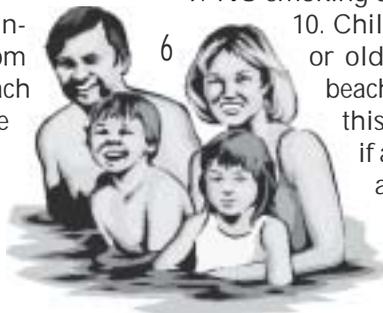


The mission of the Izaak Walton League of America is “to conserve, maintain, protect, and restore the soil, forest, water, and other natural resources of the United States and other lands; to promote means and opportunities for the education of the public with respect to such resources and their enjoyment and wholesome utilization.”

Plainfield Township is privileged to have such a highly regarded organization such as the Izaak Walton League of America to assist our youth in the understanding and experience of fishing.

## SUMMER SWIMMING

Versluis Park will be opening on Sunday, May 24, 2008. Versluis is open from 11:00 am – 8:00 pm (swimming beach ONLY). All other areas of the park are open from 11:00 am – 9:00 pm. A Season Pass Sticker may be purchased by Plainfield Charter Township residents for \$15.00. For those who don't live in the township, a Non-Resident



Season Pass Sticker is being offered for \$75.00. Without a sticker, the entrance fee, per vehicle, is \$8.00. You may purchase Season Pass Stickers at the park. The Plainfield Charter Township Parks & Recreation Department wishes you a wonderful Summer Season!

## LIFE JACKETS

Plainfield Charter Township is **recommending** that **ALL** children under the age of 8 years old use a “**Coast Guard Approved**” life jacket while in the water at Versluis Park. Please check the label on the inside of your life jacket to make sure it is “**Coast Guard Approved**”. We will **NOT** allow life jackets or flotation devices that are not “**Coast Guard Approved**.”

## BATHING BEACH RULES

1. NO swimming except when lifeguard is on duty.
2. Swimming permitted 11:00 am to 8:00 pm
3. Swimmers must stay within buoy lines.
4. NO inner tubes, flotation devices, swim fins, masks, large balls, arm floats, or battery powered toys or models are allowed into swimming area.
5. NO scuba diving or scuba diving equipment allowed.
6. NO boats of any kind allowed into swimming area, except for lifeboat.
7. NO ball playing or roughhousing is permitted.
8. NO food, glass containers, or picnicking on beach.
9. NO smoking on the beach.
10. Children must be 10 years of age or older to be in the water at the beach area. Children younger than this will be allowed in the water if accompanied by a responsible adult, who will stay with the child at all times.
11. Rubber pants must be worn over diapers.

12. Beach will close when thunder and lightning occur or when any other condition occurs that warrants closing of the swimming and beach area, such as a severe thunderstorm watch or tornado watch, severe thunderstorm warning or tornado warning.
13. All swimmers must clear the water immediately when the signal to do so is given, and no one may enter the water until an all clear signal is given.
14. Follow all directions by lifeguards. Lifeguards are authorized by Township Ordinance to exclude and expel from the beach or park area any persons who violate these regulations (See lifeguard if you have any questions).
15. Appropriate clothing is required on the beach and swimming area. (Clothing must

be modest, consistent with a family park environment).

16. ALL children under the age of 8 years old must use a Coast Guard Approved life jacket while in the water at Versluis.

Versluis Park was designed to accommodate ALL levels of ability. All activity areas are designed to enhance the park experience for the community of the disabled. As the disabled community uses the facilities at the park, please check with the staff to take advantage of any accommodations we can make to improve your experience. Those guests that choose to swim need to speak with the Lifeguards to ensure a safe experience.

Please remember that pets are NOT allowed and Versluis Park is drug and alcohol free. Violators will be removed and prosecuted.

## Township False Alarm Ordinance Proven Effective

In 2004, there were over 900 incidents of police response to private security alarms that were either malfunctioning or were not being properly used. In 2006, after the adoption of a "False Alarm Ordinance," the **number of false alarms was reduced by 25%**, and they continue to decrease. Last year, in 2008, the township received notice by the Kent County Sheriff's Department of 323 false alarms. Alarms improperly installed, having "hair trigger" sensitivity, and associated with inadequate or no user training create serious and potentially dangerous consequences to the policing agency (Kent County Sheriff) and the community as a whole. Standard response to any alarm is to send two units, usually leaving the rest of Plainfield Township without immediate or adequate response capability. Experience has demonstrated that **false alarms will not decrease or be eliminated without appropriate incentives to alter behavior**. As long as the alarm system owner is unaware of the seriousness of the problem and/or knows that the police agency will continue to respond to any and all [false] alarms and thinks no sanctions

will occur, change is unlikely.

To address the large and growing problem of unnecessarily diverting limited policing resources to "false alarms," Plainfield Township, in cooperation with the Kent County Sheriff's Department, created a "False Alarm Ordinance." The ordinance provides minimum standards to regulate the use of alarm systems and prescribes penalties for excessive numbers of false alarms. To be clear: alarm owners will not get fined for one false alarm or for very infrequent false alarms, but will be fined for excessive false alarms. "Excessive" is defined in Section 3.01 of the Ordinance as 1) More than 3 false alarms in any 90 day period; 2) More than 4 false alarms in any 180 day period; or 3) More than 5 false alarms in any 365 day period.

The intent of the ordinance is NOT to penalize and get revenue; the intent is for alarm system owners to monitor and safeguard their systems so that excessive false alarms do not occur.



**Attention Kids! Join the Summer Reading Club:**

**“Be Creative @ Your Library!”**

Reach your reading goal to earn rewards, and enter drawings for prizes, including a new bike. Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup> until Saturday, August 15<sup>th</sup>.

Bring the family to free programs all summer long!

**For Young Children and Families...**

**Baby Time.** One-on-one bonding time for babies and their caregivers, with songs, rhymes and play.

Plainfield – Tuesdays, 1 pm, Jun. 23-Aug. 11

**Toddler Time.** Stories, music and rhymes for babies, toddlers and their parents.

Comstock Park – Mondays, 10:30 am, June 15-July 27

Plainfield – Thursdays, 10 am, Jun. 25-Aug. 13

**Storytime.** Stories and crafts for ages 3-6 years, with a different theme each week.

Comstock Park – Mondays, 10:30 am, Jun. 15-Jul. 27

Plainfield – Thursdays at 10 am, Jun. 25-Aug. 3

**Family Storytime.** Stories, songs, crafts and other book-related fun for families with kids ages 6 and under.

Plainfield – Mondays, 10 am, Jun. 22-Aug. 10

**Early Literacy Make & Take.** Crafts that support pre-reading skills for care-givers and kids, ages 6 and under.

Comstock Park – Monday, Aug. 3, 10:30 am.

Plainfield – Wednesday, Aug. 6, 6:45 pm

**Pajama Storytime.** Bedtime stories and night time fun. For ages 6 and under.

Plainfield – Wednesdays, 7 pm, Jul. 1-Aug. 5

**For Ages 6 and Up....**

**Ruff Readers.** A unique read-aloud program that pairs kids with trained therapy dogs who love to hear a good story. Call to register for a 15-minute session. Presented in partnership

with West Michigan Therapy Dog Association. Plainfield – Mondays, 6:30-7:30 pm, Jun. 15 - Aug. 27.

Comstock Park – Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 pm, Jul. 9-Jul. 30.

**For All Ages...**

**Summer Carnival.** Celebrate the Summer Reading Club with games, crafts, prizes and tons of carnival-style fun!

Plainfield – Thursday, Jun. 18, 5:30 -7:30 pm

Comstock Park – Tuesday, Jul. 7, 1:30-3:30 pm

**John Ball’s Traveling Zoo.** Can’t get to the zoo this summer? Z’s Kid’s Club will bring the zoo to you with live animals in the library!

Comstock Park – Tuesday, Jun. 23, 1:30 pm

Plainfield – Thursday, Jul. 30, 6:45 pm.

**Strike up the Band!** Children will make musical instruments using a variety of common household objects – then strike up the band!

Plainfield – Thursday, Jun. 25, 6:45 pm

Comstock Park – Monday, Jul. 27, 10:30.

**Animal Encounters.** See live animals and discover how they inspire art.

Plainfield – Thursday, Jul. 2, 6:45 pm.

**Ain’t it Great to Be Crazy?** Interactive family poetry, puppetry, music and more with Kevin Kammaraad, author of *The Tomato Collection*.

Plainfield – Thursday, Jul. 9, 6:45 pm

**It’s Magic!** – See magician Tom Plunkard pluck coins from thin air, turn a candle into a dove, and suspend an audience member in mid-air!

Comstock Park – Tuesday, Jun. 16, 1:30 pm

Plainfield – Thursday, Jul. 16, 6:45 pm

**Basket Weaving with Kelly Church.** Native American basket weaving; hands-on participation.

Plainfield – Thursday, Jul. 23, 6:45 pm

**Art Attack.** Create clay sculptures, paintings, prints, collages and wearable art to take home.

Plainfield – Wednesday, Aug. 5, 5:30-7 pm

**Joel's Circus Creatus Comedy Show.** Dazzling juggling and a creative whirlwind of new tricks and audience favorites with Joel Tacey.  
Comstock Park – Tuesday, Jul. 21, 1:30 pm  
Plainfield – Thursday, Aug. 13, 6:45 pm

**Kid and Teen Craft Sale.** Find amazing pieces of art, wonderful crafts and the most creative kids in town! Stop in to the Plainfield Branch to pick up an application for a booth at the craft sale.  
Plainfield – Wed., Aug. 12, 5:30- 7:30 pm

### And just for teens...

All summer long, join us for the **Teen Summer Reading Raffle: "Express Yourself @ the Library."** The more you read, the more chances you have to win! The grand prize is your choice of an iPod or a mall gift certificate. For teens entering grade 6-12.

**Teen Crafts with Liz Langenberg.** Let's get crafty! Join us for paper-making. Registration is required and participation is limited.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Jun. 16, 6:45 pm

**Creative Cooking.** Learn to make snacks and desserts with a local chef.  
Comstock Park – Thursday, Jun. 25, 6:00 pm

**Guitar Hero.** Rock out with your bad self at this Guitar Hero event!  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Jun. 30, 6:30 pm

**Teen Empty Bowls Project.** Help feed the hungry by creating and donating a ceramic bowl to raise money for a local food pantry.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Jul. 7, 6:30 pm

**Rock Band for Teens.** Become a rock star at the library! Tap into your Rock & Roll fantasy as you form a band and tour for fame and fortune in Rock Band.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Jul. 14, 6:30 pm

**Teen Advisory Board Meeting.** Are you creative, talented and eager to make a difference at your library? Then come share your ideas at our TAB meetings.

Plainfield – Tuesday, Jul. 21, 6:30 pm

**Ice Cream Social.** Mix it up with some tasty frappes or sundaes. Bring a friend and design your own creamy creations.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Jul. 28, 6:30 pm

**Trash to Treasure.** Turn ordinary junk into some great new crafts. Bring a dark colored, plain T-shirt for the Shirt Bleaching Craft.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Aug. 4, 6:30 pm

**Duct Tape with William Beacom.** Make creative and useful items with the handyman's best friend, duct tape! Duct tape expert, William Beacom, shows you how.  
Plainfield – Tuesday, Aug. 11, 6:30 pm

**Our informal Adult Book Discussions** are a great way to meet new people and share your love of books and reading. Ask at your branch library to get a copy of the next books, and join us any time!

Comstock Park – 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs. every month, 7 pm  
Plainfield – Thurs., June 18, 1 pm: *The Secret Supper* by Javier Sierra (Pick up a copy on reserve for the book discussion group.)

**Each One Teach One: Knitting!** Join us for an evening of knitting, whether you'd like to learn, or whether you'd be able to teach someone. All supplies included for first-time knitters.

**Enseñe y Aprenda: ¡Tejer!** Júntese con nosotros por una tarde de tejer. Puede aprender tejer, o puede enseñar a alguien que quiera aprender. Todos los materiales estarán incluidos. Cada dos semanas en los martes. Para todas edades.  
Comstock Park – Every other Tuesday night, 6:30 pm: Jun. 2, 16, 30, Jul. 14, 28, Aug. 11, 25

### PLAINFIELD BRANCH HOURS

2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930  
Mon. through Thurs. 9:30 am to 8:00 pm  
Friday, Saturday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm  
Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm  
(during the school year only)

### COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH HOURS

3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860  
Monday 9:30 am to 8:00 pm  
Wednesday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm  
Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm  
Friday, Saturday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

### **Recap of 2008 collections...**

The Township collected over 96% of taxes prior to March 2, 2009. Thank you for remitting payments in a timely fashion. The Treasurer's office processed over 25,000 tax bills between the summer and winter cycles and collected approximately \$39 million, of which the majority went to schools. Personal Property (a business type tax and personal property at mobile home pads) had a delinquency rate of 4%. If you experienced any problems during the tax year, please contact me, and we can discuss them.

### **Exempt from paying taxes...**

In recent years, taxpayers have asked if there was a means to have their taxes waived due to financial difficulty. The only means available is to be eligible for a Hardship Exemption. The Assessor processes this Exemption. If you are interested, please call the Township Assessor at 726-8880.

### **2009 tax bill...**

The 2009 summer tax bill should be in the mail near the end of June, with the due date of September 14. None of the local schools had a voted millage increase; Kent Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids Community College and the County Operating are reported to be about the same.

### **Pay your taxes easier...**

The use of automatic debit payment has been available for several years and is working very nicely. If you haven't used this and would be interested, please call the Treasurer's Office at 726-8891 for further information. You will be able pay your taxes automatically from your

financial institution. The benefits of doing this: No stamps! No late penalty fees! No lost mail!

### **Summer tax deferments...**

If your household income for 2008 was less than \$40,000.00, you may be able to defer payment of your summer taxes until February 16, 2010 without any penalties being charged if you are either of the following: over 61 years of age, paraplegic, quadriplegic, eligible serviceman, blind or disabled. The deferment must be renewed annually.



### **Drop boxes...**

The Township has two drop boxes that can be used during or after office hours for your payment. If you don't want a receipt, I encourage you to use the curbside drop box (seen at left) or the building drop box. When we empty the boxes each morning, any payment in either drop box will be treated as paid on the prior business day. This applies to either tax or utility payments.

### **Partial payments...**

I am encouraging taxpayers to make *partial payments* if the full amount cannot be paid. The software used for processing tax payments allows partial payments. Whatever you can pay by the due date reduces the amount of late fees charged.

Visit us on the Township website, [www.plainfieldchartertpw.org](http://www.plainfieldchartertpw.org), email me at [stoverj@plainfieldchartertpw.org](mailto:stoverj@plainfieldchartertpw.org) or call me at 726-8892.

Have a great summer!

*Jim Stover, Treasurer, CPFA*



## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrated by the Northview Senior Citizens Center

*Looking back . . .* In 1978 plans and goals were made for a senior citizens program. The group met in a church, library, and a small classroom at D.W. Richardson School. In 1981, the group moved into two classrooms, opened by an archway made possible by the Grand Rapids Rotary Club. Senior men added an efficiency kitchen from funds earned on special projects. In May 1983, financed in part through a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, a remodeling program to both the interior and exterior of the building took place, making it barrier free. Northview transferred the real property on which the center is located to Plainfield Charter Township in 1982. Since then, Northview Public Schools and Plainfield Charter Township have cooperatively operated the Northview (Plainfield) Senior Citizens Center. In 1984 a Northview Senior Citizen Board was organized and in January, 1984 marked the opening of the center. An Open House was held on May 3, 1984.

The center has been a strong program due to the leadership of long-time coordinator, Joan Doyle and the many committed senior volunteers. Her 30 years of dedicated service to area seniors and the relationships and programs she developed have laid the groundwork for the next 25 years.

The key to success has been strong leadership, a strong advisory board made up of senior members and a strong volunteer system. This has ensured an effective program over the years.

*Looking ahead . . .* The focus now is exploring and adding new programs, reaching more seniors of all ages and networking within the community. We are keeping our strong foundation of current programs and building new programs..

Stay physically active ~ two weekly exercise classes, line dancing, shuffleboard in the summer, social dancing

Enjoy your hobbies ~ sewing, crafts, crocheting, quilting opportunities, senior choir, bridge and card playing, bingo, Bunco, All Games Day

For your mental health ~ educational (e.g. Civilian Conservation Corp, Monarch Butterflies, Civil War, Grand Rapids Business Climate) and health lectures, Brain Aerobics, Matter of Balance, Cooking for One, AARP Driver Safety Program

On the go ~ outings (e.g., PARCC Side Water Treatment Plant tour, The Heritage Restaurant and The Civic Theatre etc.) and trips (partial day, one day to several day bus trips to theaters, casino's, Fall color tours etc.)

Fellowship with food ~ monthly luncheons, lunch outings, ice cream socials, potlucks

If interested in receiving our newsletter, have any questions or are interested in facilitating a class or program, please contact Christine Friedt, Program Director, at (616) 365-6150 or email to [cfriedt@nvps.net](mailto:cfriedt@nvps.net).

# Your Clerk's @ Work

It seems like yesterday when I came to work as your Clerk in November. So much has happened since I began working for you, the citizens of Plainfield Charter Township. The Office of the Clerk has met the statutory requirements of the Michigan Constitution. We have made sure all meetings are "Open Meetings," we performed the recent election according to all federal and state laws, payments for all purchases are reviewed prior to submission to the Board for approval, Freedom of Information requests are handled in compliance with the statute, and Township records are secured and maintained in compliance to the retention requirements set forth by the United States and the State of Michigan. We now have the entire Township Board meeting packet online. This is the truest form of transparent government. You can see where your tax dollars are being spent, and you have the opportunity to question the board members at our meetings. We are using State of Michigan pricing through the MI Deal program when there is a possibility to save on purchases, and we are making sure that we have competitive bidding.

The above-mentioned functions take precedent over the additional roles performed by the Clerk's office. These additional tasks contribute to the goal of making Plainfield Charter Township a superior place to live, work, and raise our families. My staff and I are committed to making your encounter with local government a WOW experience. We are also committed to driving costs out of day-to-day operations, spending your hard-earned tax dollars the most efficient way possible.

The Farmers Market is going to begin on June 11 at a new location. Making changes usually comes with controversy. It was recommended that a new location be considered for the market for safety reasons. It took a few attempts to get Board approval for this year's market, and in the end it was the great volunteer work of Ruth Ann Karnes who prepared a marketing plan that helped sell the 2009 Plainfield Farm-

ers Market. We will be holding the market in the parking lot of Frontline Church at 5 Mile and Plainfield, just behind Fire Station #3. The hours of operation will be from 2 pm until 7 pm on Thursdays through October 15<sup>th</sup>. Please visit the market and support our farmers by purchasing their wholesome fresh fruits and vegetables.

The passport office is another area where Plainfield Township excels in providing government services. We are a one-stop shop where you can have all of your passport needs met in around 10 minutes. An example of what I call "business unusual" for local government occurred here on the Saturday before the May election. Townships are required by law to be open on that Saturday to take applications for absentee ballots. We decided to open the passport office on that Saturday because it was anticipated that there would not be a significant number of absentee ballot requests. It turns out that we had one citizen come in for an absentee ballot and we serviced eighteen passport customers. The passport revenue more than paid for the salary of the deputy clerk who had to be here anyway and we provided a service to those who have a difficult time getting to a passport office during the work week.

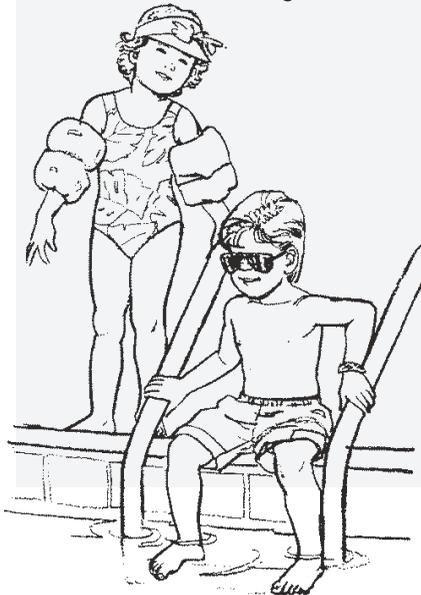
There will continue to be opportunities to make changes in how to better serve our citizens. Some of these changes will be difficult as we continue to see less money available from revenue sharing and a reduction in taxes collected. This is where it is important that all of you become more involved in your Township government. I know you have ideas in ways we can reduce spending. Please let me know your ideas. Feel free to send me an e-mail at [harveys@plainfieldchartertwp.org](mailto:harveys@plainfieldchartertwp.org), call me at 364-8466, or stop at Township Hall and share your thoughts on how we can weather this economic storm together.

*Scott Harvey, Clerk*

Summer is almost here! Many people love to get relief by swimming, sitting, or wading in swimming pools. Thankfully, there are a number of portable swimming pools that are relatively inexpensive, fairly deep, and have their own filter systems. However, with pool ownership comes a responsibility to ensure the safety of our children. Accidental drownings happen not only in lakes and ponds, but also in private swimming pools. We must do everything possible to prevent this from happening, and one way is to make sure that the swimming pools are not easily accessible to little children.

The Michigan Residential Building Code states that a **building permit is required**

# Swimming Pool Safety



for any structure holding over 24 inches of water and intended for swimming and bathing. The code also requires that an electrical permit must be obtained if the pool has a pump and filter system. Also, very importantly, *the swimming pool is required to have a 4-foot high barrier around it* that is not climbable and has a self-closing and latching gate that swings away from the pool. With the popularity of the blow-up pools, or portable pools, there is a definite increase in the possibility of children drowning. Let's take the necessary steps to protect our children by abiding by these rules. If you have any questions about this, call Building Services – Community Development Department at 364-1190.

*David Kloote,  
Building Official*

## Friends of the Plainfield Library

If you are interested in donating your time or talents locally, consider the Friends of the Plainfield Library, a tax exempt, non-profit group with a membership of over one hundred individuals and families; your membership may also be tax deductible. The membership helps to support the library through various community and fundraising activities such as used book sales. The Plainfield Township Branch Library greatly appreciates the support of the Friends and its core group of active volunteers who work so hard to raise funds for library programs, furnishings and equipment. Funds from the Friends this year have been used to relocate the information desk and the area for new books.

The next Friends' Spectacular Used Book Sale is scheduled for Friday, September 11 through Monday, September 14. And, if you like to keep your money local, consider attending the next Craft and Home-Based Business Sales event on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. Shop for birthday gifts, anniversaries, Christmas and other celebrations; the show will be featuring a jewelry artist. Hope to see you there!

**Mark on your calendar:** Friends of the Plainfield Library is sponsoring a Blood Drive during the day of Tuesday, August 11 in cooperation with the American Red Cross for the benefit of the community. You will be able to register online through the American Red Cross.

# PLAINFIELD FD FIRE DEPARTMENT

The sentiment of the general public today is that the government carelessly wastes taxpayers' money, that every level of government employs far too many people, and that spending is out of control. In some situations, as we have seen at the federal and state level, I tend to agree; but ALL government programs are not wasteful and ALL government employees do not spend their time wasting money. As Chief of Plainfield Township's Fire Department, I am using this space in the PROFILE to weigh in on this subject and to educate our citizens about what your fire department is doing to counter this negative perception. Being responsible for the largest allocation money in Plainfield Charter Township's General Fund budget, my staff and I are very aware of intense scrutiny and accountability for every dollar spent.

Having been around for a while, I have observed that townships typically operate more efficiently and with less bureaucracy than other forms of local government. I believe our fire department reflects this very well. The average cost per resident for fire suppression and emergency services nationally is \$164. The Plainfield Fire Department is operating at \$86 per resident for 2009.

Over the last few years, the Plainfield Fire Department has been implementing more cost-saving ideas in order to make the department operate as "lean" as possible, without sacrificing the high level of service offered to residents and businesses. Some of the ways the department is conserving resources and saving money are:

- **Turning lights off** in unused rooms and turning down the heat in all fire department build-

ings saved \$16,029.32 in one year (including gas, electric, water, and sewer)

- **Utilizing Paid-On-Call personnel** to fill in for full time Equipment Operators whenever possible saved approximately \$20,000 in one year. Having paid-on-call personnel instead of hiring additional full time firefighters enables us to avoid spending many more thousands of dollars.

- **Delaying the replacement** of one full time Equipment Operator saved \$10,000 this year

- **Eliminating pay differential** for POC/part time firefighters working as instructors during their trainings

- **Utilizing the Internet** to communicate schedules, department procedures and operations with employees rather than using paper memos and calendars saves money on paper and copy costs

- **Recycling** all paper waste

- **Downsizing Tech Rescue Team** through attrition

- **Cutting the Firefighter Appreciation Banquet** saved \$3,000 (this occasion was intended to distribute service awards and recognize the spouses of our POC firefighters who frequently "lose" their spouses and families during holidays and special occasions because of their dedication to the department).

- **Freeze hiring** of new POC and part time firefighters delayed cost of equipment purchases and training

- **Cutting cost by washing apparatus only once a day** rather than after every call

- **Filling Lieutenant absences with Chief Officers** who are salaried employees saves on overtime expenses

- **The department uses a non-traditional method of staffing.** In addition to our use of Paid on Call staffing, the department has negotiated the use of Part Time firefighters to fill two positions per shift (one at each station). The projected savings over ten years by the use of this method is \$2,500,000. **In the next issue I will explain the pros and cons of our staffing system.**

**Not only are we saving money,** but we are also generating revenue from outside sources to relieve the burden from the Township's tight budget. Here are the ways we are doing that:

- Applying for all available grants (federal, public and private) garnered \$235,300 since 2007 and \$401,762 since 2003. As we struggle to do our part to assist the Township Manager and Township Board deal with continuing cut-backs in state shared revenue over the past several years, using this source of "outside" money for essential purchases has helped to balance the General Fund budget.

- **Starting to charge businesses and groups** for Fire Extinguisher, CPR and First Aid trainings, rather than to continue to offer it free of charge, collected approximately \$5,000 per year

- **Generating revenue** through Cost Recovery Ordinance totaled \$17,500

**T**he implementation of these ideas illustrates the cost-conscious mindset of your local government – not just the fire department. In addition to this list of savings to the *Township's* budget, the fire department also affects each *homeowner's and business owner's budgets* by providing a level of fire protection that meets national standards, resulting in lower insurance premiums than would be the case without this effort. This saves homeowners *hundreds of thousands* of dollars that they would otherwise pay in insurance premiums.

In last year's PROFILE I wrote about how the fire department is saving the property owner money on insurance premiums. Currently, the **average annual insurance premium** for residents with a **home valued at \$100,000** in Plainfield Township is **\$642**, based on the ISO

rating of the Township at **ISO Level 5**. Using one company's estimates for comparison, the premiums paid Township-wide for home-owners insurance would total \$6,095,020. If the department were rated

at **ISO 7**, premium would be **\$686**, totaling \$6,512,747 for the Township (a savings of \$417,727).

at **ISO 8**, premium would be **\$724**, totaling \$6,873,511 for the Township (a savings of \$778,491).

at **ISO 9**, premium would be **\$885**, totaling \$8,402,013 for the Township (a savings of \$2,307,997).

Investing your tax dollars in our fire department and your water usage fees in our water department has made these savings possible.

Below is a comparison between Plainfield Fire Department and other surrounding fire departments in terms of ISO ratings. The significance of the Plainfield rating is that we are a 5 in hydrant and non-hydrant areas. This allows all of our residents to benefit from the quality of the water distribution system and fire department.

DEPARTMENT	ISO RATING
Plainfield Fire Department	5
Wyoming Fire Department	3 and 10*
Grand Rapids Fire Department	3
Gr. Rapids Township Fire Dept.	5 and 9*
Algoma Fire Department	6
Rockford Fire Department	5
Kentwood Fire Department	5
Walker Fire Department	5 and 9*
Ada Township Fire Dept.	5 and 8B*
Alpine Township Fire Dept.	5 and 9*

*\*for areas without hydrants*

The Plainfield Fire Department intends to consistently offer the high level of service to which residents have grown accustomed – even during these tough economic times. To do this, we are making every effort to stretch your tax dollars and increase our creativity in providing the necessary fire and life safety services.

# The Profile

Plainfield Charter Township  
6161 Belmont NE  
Belmont, MI 49306

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
GRAND RAPIDS, MI  
PERMIT NO. 657

## Plainfield Charter Township

### TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday – Friday  
Phone: 364-8466

### MANAGER

Robert Homan

### TOWNSHIP BOARD

George Meek, Supervisor  
Scott Harvey, Clerk  
James Stover, Treasurer  
Rebecca Borek, Trustee  
Jack Hagedorn, Trustee  
Robert Heindrichs, Trustee  
William Parris, Trustee



### TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 pm  
First and Third Mondays

[www.plainfieldchartertwp.org](http://www.plainfieldchartertwp.org)



## Commodity Distribution

Commodities will be distributed from River Grove Retirement Community, located at 5761 Jupiter Avenue, just north of West River Drive (enter from Jupiter Avenue) from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. To qualify, you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road.

Remaining 2009 distribution dates are **June 4**, **September 3** and **December 3**.

New families wishing to qualify may call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to the distribution site on the above date. Bring Social Security cards for each member of your family along with income statements.

*Jim Granzotto, manager*



See page 5 for an opportunity for "Not for Profit" service organizations that are community minded to lend a hand at the Farmers Market this summer.