

THE PROFILE

*PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

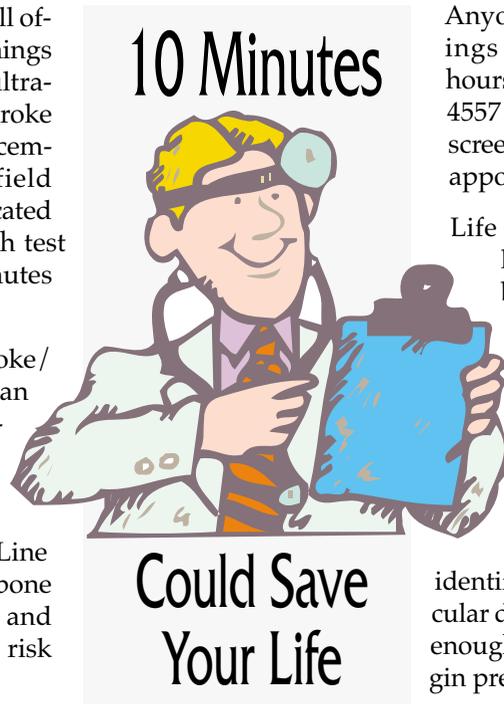
VOLUME XXIX NUMBER 1

PHONE 364-8466

NOVEMBER 2003

Life Line Screening will offer four health screenings using non-invasive ultrasound to assess the risk of stroke and vascular disease on December 19, 2003 at the Plainfield Charter Township Office, located at 6161 Belmont Ave. Each test takes approximately 10 minutes and could save your life.

The tests will include a Stroke/Carotid Artery screening, an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening and an Ankle Brachial Index, which screens for Peripheral Arterial Disease. Life Line Screening also will offer a bone density screening for men and women, which assesses the risk of osteoporosis.



Anyone interested in the screenings must register at least 24 hours in advance. Call 1-800-407-4557 to learn more about these screenings and to schedule your appointment.

Life Line Screening was established in 1993 and has since become the nation's leading provider of vascular screenings. Over 45 ultrasound teams are on staff to travel to your local community, bringing the screenings to you. These non-invasive, inexpensive and painless ultrasound tests help people identify their risk for stroke, vascular diseases or osteoporosis early enough for their physicians to begin preventive procedures.

Retirement Community Launches Meal Program!!

It's lunchtime and you are faced with the decision of what to cook. Why not try something new and meet new people in the process?

You are cordially invited to join the residents of River Grove Retirement Community for lunch every Monday through Thursday from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. The purpose of this program is to provide seniors of River Grove and the community with fellowship and a nutritious meal.

The meals are prepared by the Senior Meals Program of Grand Rapids. A donation of \$1.75 is requested and goes toward future meals provided through the program.

All area seniors are welcome to drop in and see what the program is all about. So come one, come all, and come hungry!

For further information contact: Lindsay Stefanko, Dining Hostess, River Grove Retirement Community, 5761 Jupiter, Belmont, MI 49306, (616) 364-0120.

New Clean Water Plant

I wish I had more to report about this project that is vital to the future of our community and the improvement of our environment.

We have a great opportunity to accomplish something from which generations following will benefit. Plenty has already been said about this, and plenty more will be said as we gear up for the culmination of much effort. We are, as they say, “in the red zone.” The game plan has been followed; it is working; and we are determined to get into the end zone. Finishing touches are being made to the crucial documentation that comprises the application for the necessary permits to make this all happen: (1) National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit; (2) Floodplain (construction) permit; and (3) Wetlands permit. Much has been done, and much will be done to design and build a clean water facility (We take sewage and transform it into “clean water.”) that far exceeds the capabilities of the facilities that handle our sewage now. After thirty-five years of having a public wastewater collection system in North Kent County, we are about to ascend to a higher level of meeting our community responsibility for serving the public and protecting the environment. Millions have been spent to upgrade and replace antiquated sewer systems, and the results are evident. I sleep much easier knowing that we have achieved our goal of rescuing a decaying system from potential disasters.

Separating the North Kent Sewer Authority communities from the Grand Rapids system is the next giant step we are about to take. One short year ago, the citizens of Plainfield Township voted to confirm the decision of the Town-

ship Board and the elected boards of four other communities to embark on this bold and historic path. We are doing our duty and are meeting our responsibilities to the people we serve. With the cooperation and diligence of the reviewing authorities and the continued determination of our leaders and those whom they have appointed to carry out their policies, the vision of our goal will most certainly become a reality in the not-too-distant future.



Bits and Pieces from the Township Manager

There Oughtta Be a Law...

Traveling up north in the Cadillac area a couple of weeks ago, I was reminded of how great it is to live in Michigan and to enjoy our state’s spectacular fall scenery. Regrettably, we live in an imperfect world, a world that is made more imperfect by an imperfect society. Coming over the crest of a hill with the yellows, the oranges, the bright reds, and the deep greens of the fall countryside, I saw JUNK CARS!

The automobile, perhaps the single greatest determiner of what America has become in the past century, has a very, very dark side. When car owners are finished with this marvelous affordable tool of freedom and utility, altogether too many of us (them) discard them to rust and rot on our own property. It’s like throwing your garbage on your front doorstep! I looked at this wretched spectacle out in the country, and I felt my stomach turn. It is a mystery to me why people let their own property and their own neighborhood turn into—literally—a junkyard. It looks bad. It decreases property values. It makes people angry and upset. And it reduces the community’s quality of life.

Bottom line: At the heart of this is the need for everyone to accept their personal responsibility to clean up their own act. There ought to be a law... Well, there is. Just about every municipality around here has some form of a junk car/ unlicensed vehicle ordinance. We have these laws because some people simply don't acknowledge their personal responsibility to themselves and the rest of us to take care of these things. How seriously we take the reasonable enforcement of these local ordinances is a measure of how much we care about property values, aesthetic standards, community quality of life, and community image. Think about it.

Budget Crisis in Lansing Hits Local Government

Times are tough in Lansing. They've used up all the accounting gimmicks in the dying months of the Engler administration. The vital manufacturing sector of Michigan's economy has been going south—and east (far) and west, so the jobs, the income taxes, the sales taxes, and all the revenue producers (maybe even gambling) have withered quite a bit. Maybe they have hit bottom. Maybe not. In any case, "they" is US. Over 40% of Plainfield Township's General Fund (Fire, Po-

lice, Planning, Elections, Parks, Senior Citizens programs, etc.) is supported very heavily by Revenue Sharing from the State of Michigan. They've cut it once; they've cut it twice; and now they're talking about cutting it again.

The legislature and the governor, rather than acknowledging the obligation and commitment it was designed to be when it started in 1963, consider Revenue Sharing a discretionary expense to the state. With their low property taxes, township governments throughout Michigan are much more heavily dependent upon this source of revenue than are cities and villages. We find that state is balancing its budget on the backs of local governments. What can we do? Grin and bear it! I don't think so. You shouldn't think so. We at the local level have been doing pretty well in managing our limited resources as we provide basic services to our citizens. Now the state is looking to penalize school districts, cities, villages, townships, and counties because it is apparently too painful to address their problems by making hard decisions in its own bailiwick. I do, however, appreciate their dilemma and encourage them to be wise and do the right things.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager

Veterans Memorial Park Development Continues

The tasteful new park at the corner of Belmont and Jupiter Avenues, which recognizes the veterans of Plainfield Charter Township, continues to receive generous donations for its growth, development, and maintenance. Local Boy Scouts planted more than 200 bulbs, which will add spring beauty to the park, and cedar seedlings. American Lumberman donated and planted trees under the supervision of Chet's Nursery.

For individuals who may wish to make a tax deductible contribution to the growth, development, and maintenance of the Veterans Memorial Park please contact Charles (Chuck) Weldon at 363-1160 to discuss opportunities.

Funds may be contributed to a special township account to assist with maintenance of the park including the payment of the electric bill for the lighting that keeps the flags and monument lit. Perhaps the designation of the Veterans Memorial Park Fund could be considered as a memorial contribution honoring a veteran if his family so chooses.

The Veterans Memorial Park grew out of the corner of Belmont and Jupiter Avenues, which was struck by a small tornado and then cleared of fallen trees in 2001. It is now a beautiful park with a purpose, honoring Plainfield Township's veterans.

2003 winter tax bills ...

Our plan is to have the tax bill in the mail before the end of November. Once again the tax bills will be printed and mailed by a printing service in Bay City. Hopefully, they have corrected the problems that were experienced with the summer bill and these won't reoccur. However as we all know, the best made plans can run into a glitch.

Freely access your assessing and tax information ...

You can access your tax and assessing information either via the Internet or telephone. The web site address is www.plainfieldchartertp.org or www.ugotpal.com. There isn't any requirement of a logon or password. After selecting Plainfield Charter Township, you will be arriving at the search criteria page. You can enter a name, parcel number, street address, and all sorts of stuff to retrieve your data. The data available for view is the assessment information, legal description, owner information from the Assessor and current year and prior year tax information. The pages are printable for later references. The telephone number is 1-800-846-8725 and our identification number is 4110. You will be given several menus whereby the same information, described above, is also available. The data is updated daily!!!!!!!

Pay your taxes easier...

The use of automatic debit payment has been available for several years and is working very nicely. You will be able pay your taxes automatically from your financial institution to the Township. No stamps! No late penalty fees! No lost mail! If you haven't used this and would be interested, please call 364-1188 x. 114 for further information. The plan will require you to sign an approval form.

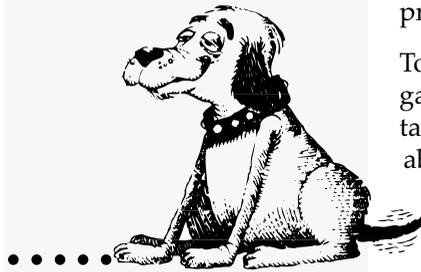
Please **remember when you change your financial institution or accounts, you MUST let us know so we will withdraw your payment from the proper account.**

Your taxes paid from a mortgage escrow account...

For various reasons, a number of taxpayers are refinancing or restructuring their mortgage. If this event occurs after November 1, the tax bill may indicate the prior mortgage company. If that is the case, you must send a copy of the tax bill to the correct mortgage company because we sent the tax bill to the mortgage company on record at the time of preparation of the tax bill.

To inquire whether the mortgage company has paid your taxes, refer to the second topic above.

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK



Dog tags ...

The Township will start selling the 2003-2004 dog tags on December 1. All dogs over the age of 4 months need a license. IF the licenses are being renewed, please bring the renewal card that you received from the Animal Shelter. If this is the first license for the dog or if the rabies vaccination has expired, we need the Proof of rabies vaccination from the veterinarian. A discount is available if the dog is neutered. If the neutering occurred since the last licensing or you are purchasing the first license, you need to present the Proof of neutering from the veterinarian.

The last day to purchase dog license at the Township is March 1, 2004. Beginning March 2 you have to buy the license at the Animal Shelter at 711 Ball, Grand Rapids, and the fee is doubled.

Jim Stover, Treasurer

Pedestrian Safety, Sidewalks, and Courtesy

Yes, Virginia, there are sidewalks in Plainfield Township. In fact there are many miles of sidewalks on main roads and in neighborhoods. Sidewalks are provided for the convenience and safety of the walking public. So why do we see people walking in the street when they can use the sidewalk? Have you every driven down a dimly lit road and been startled by a shadowy figure strolling along the traveled portion of a paved road? I have, and my reaction is something like “@#&*\$. Why doesn’t this person walk on the sidewalk, so I can’t run him over so easily?” Or, “This person must have a death wish, walking on the road when a sidewalk is 10 feet away – and he/she doesn’t even have the good sense to wear reflective clothing in the dark!” Like my mother would often say, “These people don’t have the brains they were born with!” Right, Mom.

Non-sidewalk users who like to flirt with death should take heed. This is a free country, so you can do what you please; but consider your friends, your family, and the poor stranger who will be devastated when the ambulance comes to cart you off to the hospital or the morgue. Be smart, use the sidewalks — or at least wear

some kind of light or reflective gear that will give you or the potential instrument of your death half a chance to avoid an unnecessary tragedy.

Sidewalks are nice, but they are nicer when they are not obstructed by gravel from unpaved driveways, skateboard ramps, low hanging branches, or piled up snow. Please be courteous and helpful to your neighbors or the stranger who must try to make their way past your property with these kinds of obstacles in their way. There is no law that requires a property owner to clear his sidewalks of snow and ice, but – it’s a nice thing to do. Taking a slightly different twist: “First, do no harm.” This maxim can also be applied to people who carelessly make a natural snowfall situation worse for the pedestrian by shoveling, snow blowing, or plowing accumulated snow onto and across sidewalks. This is totally unnecessary and very discourteous to others. Give your snow clearing efforts a little thought and deposit the unwanted white stuff in places that don’t obstruct pedestrian pathways. Some commercial property owners/renters or their snow removal contractors are the worst offenders. Come on! Give us a break! Thank you. —*Myron Clexx*

You Live in the Rogue River Watershed!

The Annis Water Resources Institute of Grand Valley State University would like to extend this invitation to have you join them for a homeowner workshop. Topics

of interest include:

- lawn care
- septic system management, and
- household hazardous waste disposal.

A continental breakfast will be provided free of charge.

Saturday, November 22, 2003 • 9:30 am – 10:30 am
Sparta Township Library • 80 N. Union St., Sparta, MI 49345

To RSVP, contact Donna Stevens at (616) 331-3789 or stevendo@gvsu.edu.

Please pass this invitation on to friends, relatives, or neighbors that might be interested in the Rogue River Watershed!

This workshop is being offered in partnership with the Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited and the West Michigan Environmental Action Council.

Update on the New Fire Station on Plainfield Avenue

The staff of Plainfield Township's Fire Department wanted to get the most benefit possible for the dollars spent on what is now getting to look like a neat looking addition to "The Avenue." We wanted to provide a building of which the Township's residents can be proud, to anticipate current and future needs, and to have a building that will be serviceable 50 years from today.

Recently, one of our crews was fueling an engine at the gas station and became involved in a discussion with a resident of the Township. The resident commented on how nice the station was starting to look, but he thought that we were being somewhat extravagant. It seems that someone had told them that the new station had to have three kitchens in it because "the different shifts could not get along"! So, if that story has been told once, I'm sure it has been told several times. The truth is that there is "only" one kitchen in the new station – and... the different crews *do* get along. How do these rumors get started?

The building that will replace the current Fire Station #3 (at the corner of Plainfield and Five Mile) has been erected and is being closed in. A completion date of between Christmas and New Year's Day has been established, but I'd be amazed if we are operating out of the station by then. The previous true story leads me to conclude that it is necessary to let the residents know a little bit about the new building's design.

First, let me discuss the architecture. While the design is decidedly modern, its roots come from the traditional firehouse, with arches over the doors and a masonry look. The look is achieved through pre-cast concrete panels and EFIS. EFIS is a 2" foam layer that has stucco applied to it, making it look like stone or ce-



Plainfield Fire Department

FROM THE CHIEF'S DESK

ment. This is a very economical way to sheath a building, and, when combined with the pre-cast cement panels in the areas subject to wear and tear, it provides a very durable exterior. The next issue is the height of the building. It seems massive because it appears quite tall.

The height of the building is determined by three factors: (1) It is an engineered building, (2) it has a pitched roof, and (3) in an effort to maximize our use of the space, we placed the offices on the second floor of the west end. These factors were chosen for the following reasons: (1) An engineered building was the cheapest to construct, (2) we have had too many problems with flat roofs leaking, and (3) the second floor space was very inexpensive compared with adding more ground floor space.

The first floor has several distinct areas including: kitchen living area—540 sq. ft., office areas—392 sq. ft., sleeping areas (6)—432 sq. ft., shower rooms (4)—412 sq. ft., locker room—345 sq. ft., exercise room—427 sq. ft. The rest of the area is bathrooms (3), storage rooms, a laundry room, bio-decontamination area, and corridors/stairs/lobby. This floor has a minimal amount of carpet—the sleeping area and 10'x12' in living area. The rest of the floors are stained concrete.

The second floor is the new location of the fire department headquarters. It has four separate offices, totaling approximately 750 sq. ft., a 400 square foot conference room, open office area—456 sq. ft., two bathrooms, file storage areas, and mechanical areas. Both carpet and stained concrete are used.

The size of the area where the trucks are parked was determined using the National Fire Protection Association standards for fire station design. The station will house the aerial platform, two engines and a fast attack vehicle. This area of the building has a heavy equipment repair room, a room where the SCBA (self contained breathing apparatus) is repaired and filled, a

room where food and water is prepared and stored, and a mezzanine area that will be used for storage. The second, smaller building on the site is to be our new training center. It is part of what was left of the old Wards building. Over the last training season, we delivered over 25 weekend classes, as well as over 100 night training sessions. We anticipate that the next season will be even busier. The scheduling and delivery of classes will be considerably easier once we have a facility for which the Fire Department can control the schedule. The training center will accommodate 60 students in a classroom, plus provide space to do practical exercises.

The department staff has made considerable efforts to keep the cost down for both of these

buildings. We intend this station to be a source of pride for the community — from a functional, aesthetic, and cost standpoint.

Your Township Board, Township staff and consultants have worked diligently behind the scenes to help make this impressive facility possible. The Fire Department is quite eager to see this project completed and to use it to offer our citizens and visitors to Plainfield Township the best fire prevention, protection, and life-saving services that the available resources can provide. We are already proud to serve you, and this new facility will make us even more so. See you at the grand opening!

David H. Peterson, Fire Chief

Here are some neat and helpful bits of advice for protecting yourself from the perils of nasty things that tend to happen when the weather gets cold:

Space Heaters

Space heaters need space, too. As the weather gets cooler, space heaters come out of their summer hiding places. Remember to leave at least 3 feet of space around your heater—things often get scorched or catch on fire because the “three-foot rule” is not followed. (Note: Per the State Fire Marshal’s office, space heaters are not allowed on campus. If you have special needs, contact the Fire Prevention Division of the Office of Environment, Health & Safety for help.) If you use them, you probably know that using them makes your (or your employer’s) electric meter spin. So unplug them when you’re not using them. There are other, less costly ways, to keep comfortable. Consider sweaters, warm socks, layered clothes, and the like.

Clean Your Chimney

Make a clean sweep for autumn. Give your fireplace a fall cleaning. Call your local chimney sweep. Have your spark arrester checked and your chimney inspected for

soot build-up. Simple attention to this could save you a lot of grief. In my career, I have witnessed far too many sad results of neglecting chimney maintenance. “Remember, only you can prevent chimney fires...”

Fuel-burning Furnace

Your furnace flue must be inspected regularly. Your furnace gives off heat and something else, too — carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide gas has often been described as the “silent killer.” Clear, colorless and tasteless, it is difficult to detect. If your furnace flue is clogged or loose, carbon monoxide could be going into your lungs instead of up the chimney. Have your flue inspected on a regular basis by a qualified worker before it is too late for an inspection to make a difference.

Check Your Detectors

Spring forward, fall back, and check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. When you changed your clocks, you should have changed the batteries in your detectors. Developing this habit is a good way to remember a simple task that can save your life. It beats the alternative.

TOWNSHIP/ OFFICERS

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 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

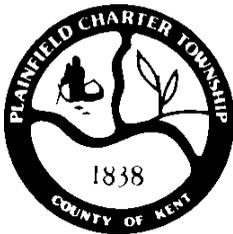
Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 P.M.

First and Third Mondays

www.plainfieldchartertp.org



Arts Commission Wants You!

Are you missing the fun and satisfaction of expressing yourself creatively through your favorite art form, or would you just like to try something different? If so, the Rockford Area Arts Commission wants YOU!

Come join the activities sponsored by the Rockford Area Arts Commission in a great community where the arts are supported, encouraged, and thrive! RAAC offers several visual and performing art programs, all waiting just for you!

Three times each year RAAC presents a variety of classes for all ages from pre-school through adult. Tap, ballet, jazz, guitar, piano, violin, oil, and watercolor painting are only a few of your choices. In addition, you can be a part of the Rogue River Theatre, Rockford Community Orchestra, Rockford Community Band, and Rouge River Chorale. Rockford Area Arts Commission also sponsors events such as *Art in the Park*, *Celtic Festival*, and *Music in the Park* – events that the community looks forward to every year.

So come explore your creative side – take a class, paint a picture, and exhibit your work at the art gallery. Sing in the Chorale, play in the orchestra, act on stage, or volunteer to support any of these programs with your participation. For more information, please contact the Rockford Area Arts Commission, a non-profit organization, at 866-7764, or visit www.rockford.mi.us.

THE PROFILE

Plainfield Charter Township

6161 Belmont NE

Belmont, MI 49306

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