

PARK POINT BREEZE

OCTOBER 1997

Club Spends Money on Tables; Tables Spending Money on Taxes

At the September meeting of the Park Point Community Club, members voted to spend \$400 on new tables for Lafayette (2nd vote); approved a plan for the purchase of 12 oars for the Duluth Rowing Club for \$2760 in exchange for 50 youth vouchers (first vote); returned the Community Club meeting night to the 3rd Thursday of the month; and tabled a proposal first put forth in August to allocate \$5000 of Club funds for use in research or legal fees on the issue of ballooning property taxes and land values.

Virtual Meetings: Are You Online?

by Kinnan Stauber

The theme for October is spooky stuff, ethereal beings, netherworldliness, witches and spells, goblins, a test of reality. This is a test of your reality, virtually.

I would like to compile a list of "connected" Park Pointers... i.e., those who use e-mail (electronic mail) regularly. Once the list is started, I would like to post messages and begin the base for a news-list for news and messages relevant to life on Park Point. It would also be a good place to go for information. Questions could be posted, and those in the know would share their information.

I would like to share the address for a Park Point homepage
<<http://members.aol.com/kkstauber/parkpoint1.html>>

This is VERY basic, but your input is welcome.

There are links to other sites that relate to Park Point and the Lake Superior Region The Internet's popularity is unquestionable.

It is also a very efficient way to communicate. Email is easier, faster and often more detailed and convenient than telephone, FAX or mail. 24-hour access accommodates night-owls and early risers.

Please e-mail me so you can be on the list. If you are not yet connected, but would like to know what its all about, call me. I'll try to convince you that its the way of the future.

Kinnan Stauber <k.kstauber@aol.com> or phone me at 722-6255. FAX is available at

722-4308.

The Scare at the Square:

Halloween Party at Lafayette

Polish up your neck-bolts and comb last year's caramels out of your gorilla mask hair, it's time for the big Halloween Party at Lafayette Square. This year's party couldn't be better. Halloween falls on a Friday, and Lafayette will be decked out for the occasion.

Volunteers organizing the carnival could use your help. Come to Lafayette in the afternoon to decorate and set up, or that evening, to help with games. If you bake, please consider baking cakes, cookies, cupcakes or bars. We'll pick them up, if you'll call us. Donations of prizes for door prizes and costume contest winners would be most welcome. And if you're a zombie, we promise to prop you up so you can still watch what's going on.

To get involved, call Andrea at 727-2756 or Markita at 727-2087.

Oct 31 7:30 - 9:30

Lafayette Square

Old Time Movies 6:30-9:30

New Games Great Prizes

Costume Contest for

Adults and Children!

The Park Point Breeze is published 10 times annually by the Park Point Community Club, 3026 Minnesota Avenue, Duluth, MN 55802. Editorial staff and distributors are all volunteers. We welcome submissions, artwork and letters, but reserve the right to edit for length. Contributions must arrive by the 7th of the month. All material © 1997 by the Park Point Community Club.

Are you looking for a challenge? Are you looking for a Pulitzer prize? We're looking for volunteer writers, proof-readers and reporters here on the Point, especially a high-school reporter. Interested? Call Dave at 722-9764 (No guarantee on the Pulitzer.)

Buoys & Gulls

The November meeting of the Buoys & Gulls Seniors' Club will be held in Lafayette Square on Wednesday, November 5, 1997. The meeting begins at 1:00 p.m. Blood-pressure screening will be available prior to the meeting.

This month's guest speaker will be Kathy Esson from RSVP Please plan to attend!

Open House Birthday Celebration for Evelyn Maynard This Saturday

Big "Happy Birthday" greetings from the Park Point community to Evelyn Maynard on her 90th birthday! Celebrate with this special woman on Saturday, October 18, 1997 from 1:00 to 4 00 p.m. in the Lakeview Social Hall of First United Methodist Church, (the "copper-top" church; 230 E. Skyline Parkway).

All family, friends and especially former "Playroom Nursery School" students and parents are invited share in this special occasion.

If you're unable to attend, please send a note expressing a special memory you have of Evelyn for her "Memory Book" to: Dan Maynard, 2709 Minnesota Avenue. (No invitations will be sent, and no gifts, please.)

Park Point Community Club Acts to Support Rowing Club

A proposal from the Duluth Rowing Club received warm support from the Park Point Community Club at the club's September meeting. That proposal, detailed by DRC Secretary Alan Denman in the September Breeze, requests the purchase of 12 sweep oars by the PPCC for \$2760. In exchange, the community club would receive 50 youth membership vouchers for the rowing club.

The transaction would be a profitable one for the community club. Currently, annual youth memberships cost \$60, so the club will be receiving four free memberships for the money. All will be distributed as the club sees fit. Club bylaws require two meeting votes for major expenses. The first vote passed in September; the second vote is on the agenda for Thursday night's club meeting.

Editorial Comment from Club El Presidente Loco: The histories of the Duluth Rowing Club and Park Point are interwoven, dating back nearly 100 years to the first Oatka Boat Club. We can't wistfully talk about "the good old days" and not work to make these days better. This proposal benefits ambitious Park Point kids and our DRC chums at the same time. I'm proud to cheerfully support it.

Dave Johnson

The next meeting of the Park Point

Community Club will be held on

Thursday, October 16, 1997 at 7:00

p.m. in Lafayette Square.

Environmental Committee Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Environmental Committee this Tuesday, October 14, at 6:30 p.m. in Lafayette Square. Topics under discussion include the progress made on the Pine Forest protection; the different facets of the LCMR

grant, and an upcoming, "hands-on" project that will involve transplanting trees away from the end of the Sky Harbor runway. The Airport Authority will also be installing a marker light on a pole between the runway's end and the Pine Knot cabin. For more information, call Kinnan Stauber at 722-6255.

A Perspective on Resources

by Kinnan Stauber; Environmental Committee Chair

We live on an exceptional resource. Everyone in Duluth knows it, and takes advantage of that knowledge. They as well as we, utilize this narrow sandbar island as a refuge from ordinary life. This means we are living an extraordinary life here.

Take a look around your neighborhood. Look at the natural beauty of the trees, the beach grass, the dunes, the sand itself, and especially the water. We are surrounded by water. We are affected by the water. We are drawn to the water. The water has become a part of us.

The green spaces we have are manifested in our empty lots, our park areas and the Pine Forest. The empty lots are very fragile and perhaps transient, depending on the ability of the owners to pay the ever-increasing taxes. This means a loss of green space to development and in some areas, overdevelopment. The quality of life is diminished by crowding. The loss of privacy when trees are removed for development is saddening and distressing. There is a loss of habitat for birds and animals as well.

Our parks are a little more secure from exploitation. They are well-used as well as abused. We need to take some care by working for defined trails and paths through dunes. We need to re-plant wind-eroded sites and secure them with barriers. Better education of users by way of signage must continue.

The Pine Forest is the most exceptional land area along our skinny island. It has trees nearly 200 years old. It hosts rare ferns and lichens. It is a cathedral of pines. It too is well-used. Again trail marking, dune planting and interpretive signs will improve its quality and ambiance.

Thanks Again, Harold!

The season for weddings and summer parties at Lafayette Square has drawn to a close, and so, with a lull in the action, Harold Ramey has finished up his term as rental coordinator. Throughout the summer, often alone, frequently with his wife Sally and the hard-working Tom Richards, Harold kept Lafayette in A-1 condition. Now it's time for someone else to take their turn at it. (That's fair, right?) Volunteer at the Community Club meeting.

Cub Pack 45's Popcorn Sale

In the September issue of the Park Point Breeze, we reported that the Community Club would again be sponsoring Cub Pack 45, and that the Pack would be going door-to-door selling popcorn. Since then, reports Pack leader Jim Schlies, Pack 45 has had a change of plans. Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Cub Scout Councils nationwide are discouraging door-to-door fundraising sales following a disturbing incident in which a youngster selling door-to-door was killed. The Pack will instead set up a sale at a central location here on the Point. (Watch the S-curve sign for announcements.) If you'd like more information, call Jim at 726-1934.

Park Point Landowners: Protect Your Open Space with a Conservation Easement

By Dr. Gary Glass; Long-Range Planning Committee Member

If you have no plans to develop your property, and in fact would like it preserved as open space for future generations, you may be a candidate for a Conservation Easement. This may be especially true if you have underwater lots and want to protect the view of Superior Bay, or if you are near street ends, on the lake side, and want to protect the native vegetation, pines, dunes, and the view of Lake Superior.

A Conservation Easement is a legal agreement which puts "certain permanent development restrictions on your land. Possible tax benefits to the landowner

include a charitable deduction for the value of the development rights given up, reduced property taxes (based on the lower, non development value of the land), and estate tax savings to the family.

The easement is donated to a conservation organization such as the Minnesota Land Trust (MLT), which acts as a watchdog to be sure the agreed upon restrictions are enforced. MLT is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of open space for public benefits such as protecting public water supply, scenic vistas visible from roads, and habitat for rare species across Minnesota. Public access is not a requirement.

MLT began operations in 1991 and currently holds 73 conservation easements on 5105 acres in 28 counties across the state. Generally, the minimum acreage requirement is 10 acres, but exceptions are made for smaller parcels in areas of high ecological sensitivity. Park Point is such an area as it protects the fishery nursery area of Western Lake Superior. the St. Louis River Estuary, as well as its waters and forested areas providing respite for migratory birds.

Open space is protected using Conservation Easements. These are legally recorded agreements by which landowners may voluntarily restrict the use of their land. Donors of easements meeting certain conditions may be eligible for significant income, estate and property tax benefits where the duration of the conservation easement is perpetual, providing permanent protection by subjecting all future landowners to the same restrictions.

The landowner who conveys a Conservation Easement retains all rights to use the land for any purposes that do not interfere with the preservation of the property as stated in the terms of the easement. The landowner retains title to the property, the right to sell it, the right to restrict public access, and the right to give it to whomever he or she chooses. However, most or all the rights to develop are restricted or eliminated. This is the only way that permanent protection can be assured for current and future generations.

Tax benefits result from reductions in federal and state income taxes, local property taxes, and estate and inheritance taxes in the amount of difference in value before and after the easement restrictions are applied as determined by a qualified appraiser who meets IRS requirements. The donation of a qualified conservation easement may be treated as a charitable contribution, and up to 30% of the donor's adjusted gross income can be deducted in the year of the gift, and over the next 5 years, if needed. Other tax benefits may also follow from the donation of the easement. The appraisal costs are the responsibility of the landowner considering donating a Conservation Easement.

After the Conservation Easement is in place, the MLT does not have the right to use your property, nor does the easement allow public access to the property since it remains privately owned. The MLT has certain criteria for accepting donations and are obligated to inspect the property once per year to ensure the terms of the agreement are being upheld. The MLT does not charge a fee for assisting landowners in preserving their properties. However, the organization is entirely dependent on private donations, and contributions to its Annual and Stewardship Funds are requested.

For more information contact Renay Leone, Director, at: Minnesota Land Trust, 70 N. 22nd Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55402; or call 612-522-3743.

The above information was taken, in part, from materials provided by the Minnesota Land Trust Conservation Easement Fact Sheet, and from presentations by Dr. Gary Glass (525-2384) at the last two Community Club Meetings on how extremely high taxation policies on vacant land can damage Park Point's environmental quality and destroy its community diversity.