



# North End Connection

The Newsletter of the Creston Neighborhood Association

Fall 2011

## What is the northQuarter?

*By: Kaylee Milanowski & Deborah Eid*

### What is the northQuarter?

The northQuarter is an area located in northeast Grand Rapids comprised of the Creston Business District, Cheshire Business District and the North Monroe Boundary.

The mission of the northQuarter is to create and sustain a vibrant culture of activity and investment in the Cheshire, Creston and North Monroe neighborhoods.

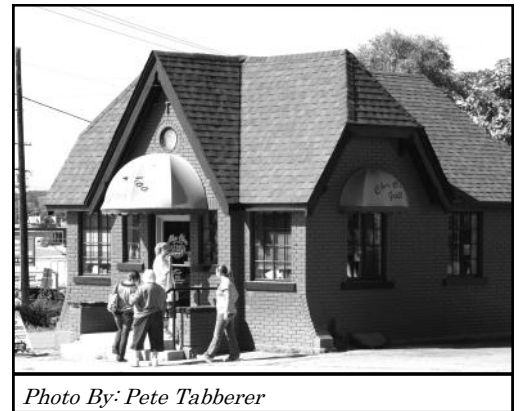
The northQuarter team is led by CNA and area business representatives along with the help of Neighborhood Ventures, an

economic development non-profit organization.

The northQuarter is recognized for its iconic restaurants like the Choo Choo Grill (right) and Fat Boy. The northQuarter aims to continue the mission of the Creston Corridor Initiative (CCI) which commissioned the Creston work plan. To date, we have secured grants for capacity building, marketing and completed public art projects.

### What is a Corridor Improvement District?

A Corridor Improvement District (CID) is an area designated



*Photo By: Pete Tabberer*

by the City of Grand Rapids to revitalize commercial and mixed-use business corridors that are located outside traditional downtowns. A CID helps fund qualifying public infrastructure

**See North, pg 6**

## A summer full of community events

*By: Mac Brown & Deborah Eid*

I want to thank all our neighbors that attended our CNA sponsored summer events this year. National Night Out was a great success with over 70 people in attendance. A special thanks to the Public Safety Committee for organizing this event! Also a special thanks to our City Leaders for attending as well. National Night Out is a very important event for our community in the fact that it brings our neighbors together



*Photo By: Kim Lang*

Wake up Call performs at Aberdeen Celebration in the Park on August 12th

around the subject of crime prevention. It was so great hearing neighbors share their stories of triumph and reduced crime and

improved quality of life in their neighborhood. CNA continues to facilitate the partnership between our neighbors and local law enforcement through various crime prevention programs, and it is great when our neighbors can hear firsthand how much of a help their trained eyes can be to the GRPD.

A long running event, the Aberdeen Celebration in the Park brought together our North Enders for an evening of good

**See Events, pg 2**

# Preparing your Yard for Fall

By: Amanda St. Amour

The city of Grand Rapids prohibits the sweeping of leaves and other materials in the street or gutter. These items clog catch basins and cause street flooding. All street gutters lead to our streams: as organic materials decompose in the water, too many nutrients are released and oxygen is used up. This can create very toxic conditions for aquatic plants and animals.

Options for yard waste disposal include: Building a compost pile, using city yard waste bags (5 for \$7.50) and bulk yard

waste tags (\$1.50) available at local stores, city yard waste carts (\$27.50 for reusable 96 gallon cart, \$5.25 for waste pick up tag), yard waste drop off site (free to residents showing ID. 9am to 4:45 pm, Monday through Saturday until the second Saturday in December).

Fall is also a time when people drain their swimming pools. Residential swimming pools can be drained into the storm sewer system (curb and gutter) only if the water has been dechlorinated. It is also advised to allow the water to drain across the yard, if soil erosion can be prevented.

Excess fertilizers can also end up in the storm drain. If you plan to prepare your lawn for winter by applying fertilizers or pesticides, remember to follow the application rate guidelines and to sweep up any excess from paved surfaces. This will help improve water quality and prevent waste.



## Events, cont. from pg 1

music, great activities for the kids, and vital information about what our various community organizations are doing in Grand Rapids! 250-300 people stopped by for what can only be described as a perfect day in the park. A

special "thanks" goes out to all of CNA community partners in their contributions to the success of this event. Also thank you to the bands and performers Wake Up Call, Chris Crown, Wildwood Gary, Kevin Kammeraad, and The Interruptions.

Aaron Lee, a tall lanky bicycling ukulele player, rolled into Sweet St. playground on a sunny Sunday evening in July and played through his all ukulele repertoire for neighbors and friends. The gathering of over 30 families was one of many stops on his South Carolina to Wisconsin tour.



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Photo By: Deborah Eid  
Aaron Lee sings and plays his ukulele at Sweet Street Park on July 24th.

# Welcome to Creston's Urban Orchard

By: Amanda St. Amour

Fourteen apple and pear trees were planted at Aberdeen Park by about 40 volunteers. This latest park feature organized by the Living Green in Creston committee was established on July 11, 2011.

The Planting Day was complimented by a Fruit Pie Throw-down. We were able to serve about a dozen pies donated by residents and such local bakers as August's Kitchen, Graydon's Crossing and Red Jet Café. The All American Apple Pie, contributed by Red Jet Cafe, emerged as the winner of the People's Choice vote.

We look forward to the future when anyone who is enjoying the park can also pick some fruit to enjoy.




Photo by: Deborah Eid

Volunteers pose with their tools at Aberdeen parks after planting a grove of fruit tree at Aberdeen Park

Special thanks are due to all the volunteers and tree sponsors who made the event possible. We are also grateful to the City of Grand Rapids Parks Department for allowing us to plant in

their space, and to Athens Arborist for hosting the planting workshop.

Keep your eyes open for more fruit and nut tree planting opportunities!



**Commissioner  
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Photo by: Deborah Eid

Amanda St. Amour helps her nephew plant a tree at Aberdeen park.

# New Business Profile: Bros BBQ & Ice Cream

By: Kaylee Milanowski

An old building got a new face recently, and Creston got somewhere new to indulge our cravings. The former Frosty Boy building at 1757 Plainfield has transformed into Bros BBQ and Ice Cream.

Owners Andrew Finn and Jose Carranco opened for business on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Finn, a Creston neighbor, dreamed of opening a business, and leasing the vacant building at the corner of Plainfield and Ann from building owner Ray Hoebeke seemed like a perfect fit.

Finn and Carranco try to utilize as many local products as possible with all pork coming from Devries Farm in Coopersville and the ice cream served from Bareman's Dairy in Holland.

Bros BBQ and Ice Cream is open Monday to Saturday from 11:00am-10:00pm and Sundays from 12:00pm to 8:00pm. They are also anticipating an option for deliveries come October. Be sure to stop by Bros BBQ & Ice



Photo By: Pete Tabberer

Bros BBQ and Ice Cream moved into the former frosty Boy location at Ann and Plainfield. They opened for business on August 20th.

Cream and try a savory or sweet treat!

## Community Healing Gathering

This is an excerpt from a speech given by Deborah Eid at the Community Healing gathering on July 13th honoring the lives lost in Creston on July 7th.

The Creston Neighborhood Association has a vision of a beautiful and diverse community where neighbors feel safe, where businesses, housing, schools and parks thrive. On behalf of our CNA board of directors and members we want to express our immense gratitude for the many ways in which our committed GRPD have shown heroism in this tragic event.

In my own life and the lives of many I know, our darkest moments of grief and deepest despair have helped us to uncover individual and collective strength we did not know we had. May we begin to find that strength together this evening. And may we each consider, in our own way, how we might honor the passing of these Creston area neighbors by breathing new life into an old word – neighborly. Perhaps we can learn to balance our traditional American high regard for independence and privacy with a renewed in-

terest in the well being of the neighbor next door.

At CNA we have named some of our cooperative groups "family"; the Creston Family of Schools, the Creston Family of Churches. Members of our neighborhood block clubs describe the friendly feeling that comes from stepping out their door and being able to call one another by name. And tonight we are a family of grieving neighbors, seeking ways to connect in community as we go forward together.

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# Local History: Riverside Gardens

By: Julie Tabberer

*"OUT OF THE SMOKE ZONE  
INTO THE OZONE"*

The Riverside Gardens subdivision covers most of the land between Plainfield and Monroe, north of Knapp Street and south of Three Mile. This large housing subdivision was developed in 22 separate sections, spanning the years 1923 to 1956.

In the 1920s, the Riverside Gardens area was still fairly well north of the city. Advertisements for lots boasted of the natural surroundings and enticed people to move "Out of the Smoke Zone into the Ozone."

Two well-known local families were responsible for the development of Riverside Gardens: the Comstock and Sligh families. Charles Comstock and Charles Sligh were major players in the furniture industry. You'll also recognize their names on local street signs.

## Comstock Family

In 1900, Charles Comstock passed away. Part of his estate was left to two of his daughters: Clara Comstock Russell and Etta Boltwood. Their inheritance

included a great deal of property, much of which became Riverside Gardens. We also have Clara and Etta to thank for the establishment of Riverside Park, prompted by their initial donation of property.

Among other things, the Com-

## Sligh Family

Charles Sligh, through his Sligh Realty Company, was responsible for development of the eastern portion of Riverside Gardens.

In 1924, Charles donated land to the city for a municipal golf



Marywood Avenue, looking east towards Plainfield, May 1939. Photograph courtesy of the Grand Rapids Public Library (GRHSC, Coll 8)

stock sisters were both active in politics, in particular the suffrage movement. Clara was an active member of the Republican party and was honored as a Presidential Elector in 1928, just eight years after women won the right to vote. Etta made her mark in the Democratic party. In 1919 she was one of the first women in Michigan to appear on a ballot, as a candidate for university regent.

course (through a \$1 a year lease). The golf course was operated by the city of Grand Rapids, with the clubhouse located at the northeast corner of Coit and Sligh. The Sligh Golf Course operated for a short time but was ultimately not successful, and the property was plotted out for houses.

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Walk Ins or by Appointment

**RIVERSIDE GARDENS**

A FEW REASONS WHY THIS NEW SUBURBAN ADDITION IS MOST POPULAR.

BEAUTIFUL SURROUNDINGS

Natural rolling landscape all high ground overlooking Grand River Valley and the new Comstock Riverside Park which is now being developed by the City. This park extends one and one-half miles along the river and is adjacent to RIVERSIDE GARDENS.

1920s sales flier, showing lots along Oakwood Ave. Courtesy Grand Rapids Public Library (GRHSC, Coll 8).

# Town Hall hears strong voices on need for quality housing!

By: Deborah Eid

On Tuesday July 26 the City Commission of Grand Rapids heard from 25 community members representing over 50 organizations. They spoke to the importance of adding single family rental housing to the city's certification program and creating an accurate registry of vacant housing.

CNA brought 8 people out to represent the North End's interest in seeing this addition to the city's housing code.

As September arrives CNA is meeting with the city staff and hoping for a public hearing on the 27<sup>th</sup> to offer once again our unequivocal support for this important protection for Creston's families.



Photo Courtesy: CNA

Community members representing over 50 organizations met at city hall on July

## North, cont. from pg. 1

improvements, marketing initiatives and economic growth projects through the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

CIDs improve public spaces including streets, sidewalks, lighting, parking and green space. CIDs can receive grants, acquire property, apply for loans, fill vacant properties and market the northQuarter.

## What is a Business Improvement District?

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a public/private partnership in which property and business owners elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development



and promotion of the commercial district resulting in a clean, safe and beautiful space.

## Upcoming northQuarter Events!

### Visioning Meetings

Everyone Welcome  
Tues, Oct. 4th 7 pm  
Thur Oct. 6th 8 am  
Berean Baptist Church

### Consensus Meeting

Everyone Welcome  
October 18th  
8 am  
Berean Baptist Church

# Creston Community Gardens: Cultivating Community!

By: Mandi Creveling

The harvest season begins! Creston Community Gardens is now bursting at it's seams with tomatoes, cucumbers and squash. All excess vegetables are donated to St. Alphonsus food bank and used for community meals.

Having only broken ground in April the gardens have come a long way. Not only have the gardens been providing food for the neighborhood, it has also become a unique place to cultivate community. Area residents enjoy having the garden in their backyard because it provides an interesting, leisurely space to walk about and forget the cares of the world.

Sheila, a gardener and resident of the Carrier Crest Apartments located in front of the Carrier Garden, says, "I love the garden! I go out every morning to water. It is so peaceful, and it's interesting to see how things grow even over a few days. I'm glad I got involved in the project!"

Last month the gardens, in



Photos by: Julie Tabberer

A scarecrow watches over the harvest at the Community Garden behind Carrier Crest Apartments.



collaboration with Very Special Arts, hosted an event called "Art in the Garden." About 25 students from Wedgewood Christian Services with various disabilities paired up with 25 students from Grand Valley to add some color to the garden by decorating garden stakes. The participants also received an interactive garden tour in which they were able to see, taste, touch, and smell various plants. Many of the participants had never experienced a garden before, so this was a valuable opportunity to visualize and see the production of food.

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Creston Community Gardens has also

provided various gardening workshops throughout the summer to area gardeners. Previous workshops included sessions on soil, weeds, organic pest control and when to harvest.

Upcoming workshops include a tour of Blandford Nature Centers' CSA called 'Growing on a big scale' on September 17<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> and Helping Your Garden Hibernate which will provide tips on preparing your garden for the next season. Both workshops meet at 10am at the Carman Garden.

Have questions or want more info?

[crestoncommunitygardens@gmail.com](mailto:crestoncommunitygardens@gmail.com)  
[www.crestoncommunitygardens.org](http://www.crestoncommunitygardens.org)

# Public Safety

By: Mac Brown

The beginning of the new school year is here! It is an exciting time for our neighborhood as we have so many various schools here in Creston! Today CNA's Executive Director, Deborah, and myself sat down with Principal Ron Gorman from Creston High School. The meeting's focus was the coming school year and making sure that it is a safe and enjoyable experience for both our neighbors and students.

Most schools in the Creston Neighborhood are attended by our youngest residents, which means that most of them can get to school by walking or biking. While thinking about that aspect I remember the old saying, and everyone knows it, "It takes a village to raise a child."

Ron mentioned in our meeting that he believes that his re-

sponsibility for the safety and welfare of his students starts in the morning when they walk out the door of their home, to the time that they return right after school. This is surprising to me because I would assume that it starts and ends once they walk into school or onto the school premises, it was a refreshing point of view.

This point of view also got me to thinking about what responsibilities our neighbors have toward the kids of Creston. It reminded me of an organizing effort started by CNA to address an issue a block of neighbors were having with some rowdy kids on their route to school.

The neighbors decided that they needed to somehow externally influence these kids, so that they would stop disrupting the block. They all decided that every morning they would walk out on their front porch or steps

and drink their morning cup of coffee and as a block, watch the kids as they passed through. Well, nobody likes an audience when they are up to no good, and that same rule applied here as well.

This is but one example of how our neighbors can insure that our community's children are safe from bullying and predators, and also be respectful to their surroundings by just having a presence outside your home when students are walking to and from school.

If your block is a block that has a lot of student traffic, look into when the local school in your area starts and ends and do your part in being a positive presence. Let your neighbors know what you are doing, so they can too! Don't hesitate to contact CNA if you would like more tips or ideas of what you can do to insure the safety of our children.

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# Editor's Corner: My catalpa and why I love it

By: Pete Tabberer

CNA recently planted a small grove of fruit trees at Aberdeen Park. I missed the event for some reason or other. My failure to participate in CNA sponsored events this summer is not the point of this article. This article is about fruit tress, or rather one specific fruit tree that grows in my yard.

My tree is a catalpa, which I'm sure all the arborists out there will argue is, technically, not a fruit tree. I'm aware of this. Just hear me out, okay?

I love my catalpa for many reasons. In the spring it fills with beautiful, tiny white flowers. When their season is past the flowers turn brown, shrivel up, and disappear. So, we don't have to clean them out of the lawn. Awesome.

In the summer our tree has leaves the size of a basketball, and it offers the best shade ever in the history of shade. Seriously, sitting under our catalpa is like sitting inside a cave. Squirrels apparently like the shade too because legions of them hang out there. I'm a big fan of squirrels, so this pleases me.

Once fall arrives the enormous leaves offer another advantage in that they are super easy to rake. Raking

leaves is a bummer, and the fact that our tree is thoughtful enough to help us expedite that process is the mark of a great tree.

I only have one complaint about my catalpa and it also arrives in the fall.

Our catalpa grows fruit. Not the delicious slice-it-up-and-bake-it-in-pie kind of fruit. It grows giant seed pods that look like irradiated green beans from a 1950s horror film.

The only way to be rid of them is to rake them up with the leaves and haul them away. Last fall I filled three yard waste bags just with bean pods.

I have a cousin-in-law who also has a catalpa and hates it solely on account of the bean pods. But here's the way I think of it. Maple trees have helicopters. Oak trees have acorns. Pear trees have pears that attract bees. Those things can all be pretty annoying too.

Every tree has something about it that is sometimes unpleasant and my tree just happens to have giant mutant bean pods.

Do the bean pods irritate me sometimes? Sure. Do I frequently complain about them? Absolutely. But really, they are just one more thing that makes my tree special. And if you really pressed me on it, I probably wouldn't give them up.

The North End Connection  
2011 Issue 3 (Fall)

**Creston Neighborhood Association**  
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Board meets the 4th Thursday of most months.  
6pm @ CNA offices.

**The North End Connection** is a community newsletter published 4 times a year with a circulation of 1000 and is distributed in various local businesses. Advertising space is available. Contact our office for rate information.

**The North End Connection** is produced by volunteers and published by the Creston Neighborhood Association. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the staff, Board of Directors or membership of the association.

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Printing of this publication is done by KISD.

## Welcome New & Renewing Members!

Aten, David & Sandi

Aungst, Veronica

Barnum, Jerry & Mary

Bohr, Jerry

Casey, Jim and Betts

Cowden, Anna

Divita, Robert

Dunn, Charleen

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VanderWerf, Dan & Gavin,  
Candace

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Volunteer Opportunities at CNA

YES! Count me in:

Communication Committee: Promotes the work of CNA

- Writing for print newsletter
- Selling business ads for print newsletter
- Mail preparation for print newsletter
- Delivery to local establishments

Electronic Communications: Social Media to promote the Creston neighborhood

- Website expansion
- E-newsletter
- Facebook
- Media Releases

Hello Neighbor Committee: Plans & implements events to increase CNA membership base

- Pancake Breakfast
- Aberdeen Celebration In the Park
- Walking & delivering flyers/announcements
- Delivering yard signs
- Volunteer recruitment & appreciation

Fundraising Committee: Plans & implements events to sustain CNA services and programs

- Planning
- Art Battle
- Texas Hold'Em

Living Green in Creston: Promotes the environment health of the Creston neighborhood

- Planning
- Perennial Exchange
- Parks & Playgrounds
- Rain Barrel Workshops

You may contact me at:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

*Mail to: CNA, 205 Carrier NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505 or contact CNA at 454-7900*

# Become a Member!

“Share this membership form with a neighbor. If your neighbor commits to a new membership your name will go in a drawing for a \$25 gift certificate to a local restaurant of your choice to be awarded at the CNA Annual Membership Meeting in October.” Please enter \_\_\_\_\_'s name in the drawing”

**Sandy Stuckhardt,**  
**CNA resident and member**

## Yes, I want to support CNA

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- I wish to pay annual business membership dues of \$50 per non-profit organization or \$75 per for profit organization
- I wish to make a contribution of \_\_\_\_\_

Total Memberships and contributions enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to Creston Neighborhood Association and mail it with this application to: Creston Neighborhood Association  
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- Check here if you prefer not to be listed in our newsletter



Creston Neighborhood Association  
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Community Calendar

Black Squirrel Social Hour  
3rd Monday of most months  
5:30 pm @ Sazerac's Lounge

CNA Annual Neighborhood  
and Membership Meeting  
Thursday Oct. 27 6:30 pm  
Palmer Elementary School

Election Day  
Tuesday, Nov. 8

CNA Monthly Board Meeting  
Thursday Nov. 17  
6:30 pm at CNA Offices (205 Carrier)

Find us on **Facebook** or visit  
**crestongr.com** for more frequent updates  
on CNA's Activities and events.



Fall 2011

North End Connection