



North End Connection

The Newsletter of the Creston Neighborhood Association

Winter 2012

What's going on in the North Quarter

By: Laurie Williams

Neighborhood Business Association Awards

Visit our North Quarter businesses to see why they were nominated at the 23rd Annual Neighborhood Business Awards held November 1 at the Wealthy Street Theatre. The ceremony was hosted by the Neighborhood Business Alliance to recognize local businesses for their part in making Grand Rapids an amazing place to live and visit. Mayor George Heartwell presented the prizes with much pride and amusement.

CONGRATULATIONS go out to our North Quarter nominees and winners:

- Plainfield Ave. Water Retention Islands, nominated for the "Green Award"
- Clear Water Place, nominated "Best Exterior Maintenance"
- Culver CPA Group & Burger King, nominated "Best Exterior Renovation"
- Fat Boy Burgers, nominated "Best Longstanding Business"
- The Cheney Place, The Cheshire Grill & La Huasteca, nominated "Best New Business"

See: North Quarter pg. 6



Photo By: Pete Tabberer

Fat Boy Burgers was one of several Creston Businesses nominated for an award at the Neighborhood Business Association Awards.



Representatives of Sun Title cut the ribbon at the company's newly renovated Plainfield Ave. offices on November 29th.

In recognition of their efforts to revitalize the Plainfield business district, Sun Title was awarded "Best Re-use of a Building" at the Annual Neighborhood Business Awards.

They are currently working on a similar renovation of another storefront in downtown Ionia.

Photo Courtesy: Tom Cronkright

Living Green: Please don't feed the ducks and geese

By: Amanda St. Amour

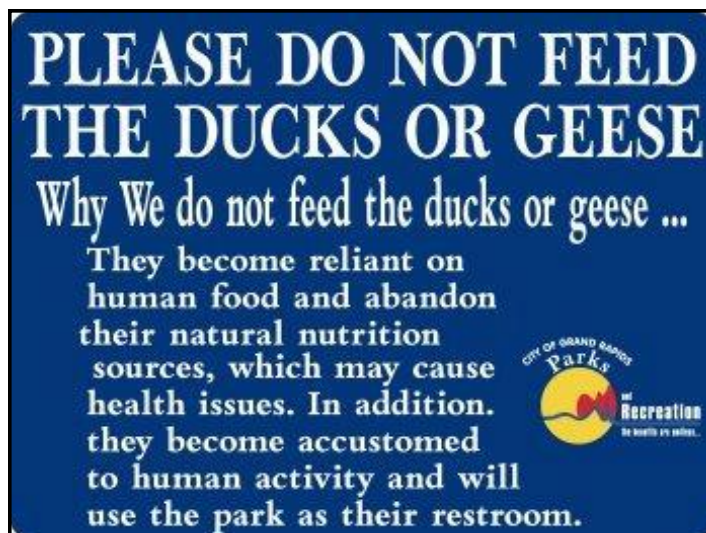
One of the reasons Riverside Park is such an asset to Creston is that it provides many opportunities to view wildlife. However, we must remember to limit the human to wildlife interactions to viewing or taking pictures, not feeding. The City of Grand Rapids has posted signs at Riverside Park to remind visitors that feeding ducks and geese can cause many problems:

- People food does not provide the proper nutrition for wild animals. Ducks and geese can develop health problems and physical deformities if they do not eat their natural diet. In fact feeding, especially during the migratory season, may interrupt the migration cycle.
- Feeding can make geese acclimated to people, leading to confrontations with future visitors, especially children.
- Feeding attracts additional waterfowl to the area, increasing the numbers to a point that may not be supported in a natural environment.
- Goose droppings get onto the shoes of park visitors and are

tracked into cars, homes and businesses. The droppings also run off into the ponds and river. An artificially increased number of birds means an increase of fecal coliform bacteria in those water bodies.

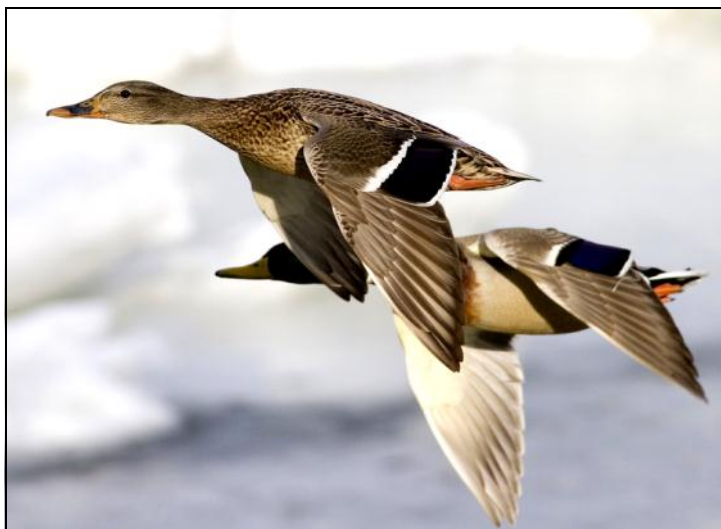
- The extra nutrients contributed by droppings from an above normal goose population can cause algae blooms and disrupt aquatic ecosystems.

Canada geese in particular have made a very successful comeback since being almost extinct in the 1970s. We should work to maintain this success by keeping the geese healthy by NOT feeding them. More information about Canada Geese can be found on the Michigan DNR website by searching for "problem wildlife."



Signs like these have been posted around Riverside Park warning of the potential problems caused by feeding the waterfowl.

A Riverside Park area resident expressed concern about this issue at the last Annual Meeting. The Living Green committee will be investigating solutions that will work for both the wildlife and park visitors. If you are interested in participating, call or email CNA (454-7900, info@crestongr.com) and leave your contact information for the Living Green Committee.



Although feeding ducks and geese can be an enjoyable experience, it can be harmful to the animals you are feeding.

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Public safety: My CERT experience

By: Mac Brown

Recently I was invited to attend a four week class with the local Community Emergency Response Team, more commonly known as CERT. This group of dedicated volunteers trains for disaster situations, which they hope to never be called upon to respond to.

The program originally started in California after observers from the state visited Japan after a major earthquake. They witnessed the coming together of entire neighborhoods trained in responding to disaster situations in which the first responders were not able to promptly address all individual emergencies of the day.

CERT, along with other programs that enhance community and safety preparedness at a grassroots level, took on a national presence after September 11. CERT was one program under the umbrella known as Citizen Corps. Citizen Corps is a program run by FEMA and implemented locally in partnership with public safety leadership; it not only includes CERT but also provides training for Neighborhood Watch.

CNA engages the community in collaborative community planning and capacity building through a broad spectrum of neighborhood issues and endeavors like neighborhood watch. We are a safe and tighter community trained to deal locally with issues that arise.

CERT provides the resources locally to take that capacity building to the next step and build a general knowledge in disaster preparedness, fire safety, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, and finishing up with a disaster simulation to apply your new training.

Did I mention that this training is free? Aside from working with CNA, I cannot think of a better opportunity to gain some knowledge and experience to help better your community. Contact Mac Brown, your Community Safety Organizer, to get signed up for the next round of free classes (mbrown@crestongr.com or call 454-7900).



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Local History

By: Michael J. Page

What street do you live on? Does your street hold the secret of a former name?

A Very Brief History.

The *Village* of Grand Rapids was incorporated in 1837. In the following decade, there was substantial growth. The village then became the *City* of Grand Rapids in 1850. At that time, the lands we call Creston were north of the established boundaries of the city and were mostly woods, orchards, and farmlands.

Where Are We?

Fast forward to the spring of 1884. You and I are in northeast Grand Rapids at the corner of Madison St. and Reed St., a stones throw east of Perry St.

We're waiting for friends to arrive. One lives on Henrietta near King Court. Another is coming from the area of Crabapple Alley and Christ St.

When they arrive, it's a short walk to the Plainfield Avenue School grounds (just north of Quimby St.) where I hope to try-out for the Kent Base Ball Club. I want to be a Hurler, but I can also play the Behind position.

Afterward, we are meeting a group of neighbors at the corner of Carrier and Coit to discuss rumors about a new Catholic church being proposed for that area. They say it will be named St. Alphonsus Church. Time will tell.

Growth and Changes.

In the coming years, our city will continue to grow rapidly due to the furniture industry and many other businesses. The north city limits will push to Sweet St., then Knapp St. and beyond. Some streets will be named and then re-named ... making for a confusing mess at first, but for the good of future generations (see table on next page).

About the Author:

Michael J. Page is one of eight children born to Lucille M. and Charles P. Page. The Pages helped establish the Creston Neighborhood Association in the early 1980s. Michael is a local historian and works part-time at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. He is the author of "*The Loren M. Page Family and the American Civil War*",



Photo by: Pete Tabberer

Burr Oak was called Seventh St. until it was re-named in 1892. It is only one of many area streets that has had its name changed.

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Please send comments, corrections, suggestions, etc. to:
michaeljpage@att.net

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Creston Area Street Names

Here is a list of CNA area street names that exist today, the former name of the street, and the year of the change. Is your street listed here?

Then	Now	Year Changed
Plainfield Rd.	Plainfield Ave.	1873
Chubb St.	Curtis St.	1877
Crabapple Alley	Brenner Ct.	1888
Colfax Alley	Matthews Ct.	1891
Ninth St.	Knapp St. (Monroe to Coit)	1892
King Ct.	Shanahan Ct.	1892
Second St.	Dale St.	1892
Third St.	Travis St.	1892
Fifth St.	Ann St. (Monroe to Coit)	1892
Seventh St.	Burr Oak St.	1892
Madison St.	Spencer St.	1899
Forrest St.	Maude Ave.	1899
Hazel St.	Dean St.	1899
King Ct.	Queen St.	1899
Canal St.	Monroe Ave.	1912
Crescent Ct.	Page St. (R.R. to Plainfield)	1912
Briggs Place	Berlin Place	1912
Henrietta St.	Carman Ave.	1920
Perry Ave.	Buffalo Ave.	1920
Stuard Ave.	Cole Ave.	1928
Ryn Ct.	Emerald Ave.	1928
Christ St.	Paris Ave.	1938
Armstrong Ave.	Houseman Ave. (Leonard to Sweet)	1938



Courtesy: Grand Rapids Public Library

A portion of an 1884 map of Grand Rapids showing several area streets with their old names, including Crabapple Alley and Christ Street.

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North Quarter: from pg. 1

- Stonestrow, nominated "Best Window Display"; and, last but not least,
- Sun Title, WON "Best Reuse of a Building"

We're so proud of our neighborhood businesses and the North Quarter.

Creston Car Show

The 8th Annual Creston Car Show took place this year on Saturday, September 15. The show was hosted by the Creston Business Association and had three primary goals:

- Connect the community with the Creston Business District;
- Raise funds for local non-profit and volunteer organizations; and
- Create a source of pride and fun for our businesses and residents.

We believe that a healthy business district is a key to a healthy community and strive to revitalize the area by reconnecting the business district with the community that surrounds it.

The volunteer groups, which included the Car Show Committee and the Creston High School ROTC and Robotics Club, showed up at 7 a.m. just moments before the first of 105 participants rolled onto the newly paved Plainfield Ave with his cherished vehicle.

We had many neighborhood vendors and organizations lining the streets, adding a sense of celebration to the show. Many families and spectators came to enjoy the sights, listen to live music, watch Red Jet Café's pie eating contest, and have fun. It was a great event for the businesses and families in the community.

The money raised by this event helps meet so many needs in our community: health, nutrition, spiritual, environmental. It also allows



Photo by: Pete Tabberer

The annual Creston Car show is consistently one of the neighborhood's most popular events.

organizations to continue their work in the areas of safety, growth and sustainability. On October 16th The Rezervoir hosted our annual fund awards luncheon where funds were distributed to several Creston non-profit organizations. Those receiving funds included Catherine's Health Center, New City Neighbors, North End Community Ministry, Creston Community Gardens, Crash's Landing and Creston Neighborhood Association.

We hope to involve more businesses, neighbors and visitors in the show to make this one of Grand Rapids' best events.

North Quarter CID, CIA, TIF? YOLO!

In 2005, the Michigan legislature passed the Corridor Improvement Authority Act, allowing cities, villages, and townships to create an authority to:

- Correct and prevent deterioration in business districts
- Encourage historic preservation
- Promote economic growth

After a public hearing on May 15, the Grand Rapids City Com-

mission adopted a resolution that legally formed the North Quarter Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA) for the business districts of Cheshire Village, Creston, and a portion of Monroe North. Then, on July 10, the City Commission appointed members to the North Quarter CIA. The specific goals of the CIA are to:

- Encourage the recruitment and retention of businesses and employment
- Provide direction for desired land use and development within the district
- Improve the overall business climate of the district and deter economic decline
- Expand the tax base for the district and for the city
- Enhance the visual aspects of the district while preserving its unique qualities

A role of the North Quarter CIA is to establish a development plan for the North Quarter Corridor Improvement District (CID). This plan outlines improvements to public or private properties that will prevent further weakening of the district and encourages new investment. This plan may be funded by tax increment financing (TIF), private or corporate donations, and other grants.

The public hearing to consider creation of the North Quarter TIF & Development Plan was held on November 27. The Commission voted to adopt the TIF & Development Plan on December 4. Once adopted, a portion of the increase in the tax base which results from the economic growth within the North Quarter can be reinvested and used for infrastructure and facilities improvements. With this reinvestment a cycle of sustainable prosperity begins.

YOLO? You Only Live Once!

North East residents attend the Citizen Police Academy

By: Elizabeth Westra

Recently, three Creston residents completed the Citizen Police Academy program. The three residents who attended are John Van Tholen, Elaine Edmonds and Marilyn Goodell. The CPA is a ten week program whose purpose is to give residents of Grand Rapids the chance to learn more about their police department.

Requirements to apply are that you must be at least 21, have no felony convictions and no misdemeanor convictions within the last three years. There is no cost to attend the CPA.

Marilyn Goodell always had an interest in the duties of a police officer. She learned about the operations of many departments including: narcotics, bomb squad, canine, swat team, patrol, internal affairs, and the detective unit. Everyone involved in the program, from Chief Belk to Pat Merrill from the bomb squad, brought their



Photo by: Mac Brown

Three Creston residents were among the most recent graduates of the Citizen's Police Academy.

"toys" to show the participants the equipment they used.

At the graduation party each graduate acquired a certificate, a pin and a CD with pictures of the party. Marilyn said, "I loved the experience. All staff went above and beyond all of my expectations."

Elaine Edmonds said that she was honored to be one of only 30 to be accepted to the program. The high point for Elaine was riding with a police officer. She said,

"Watching and reporting is one of the easiest and most important things we can do to help the police."

Elaine also learned about forensics and how long it takes DNA to be processed. She recommends that anyone who values a safe neighborhood should apply for the next class. She said, "The police department may lose as many as 29 officers soon, so we should do our part to help out the police."

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- ④ There will be ten home visits over a 24 month time frame. Each participant will receive a total of \$150 in gift cards as a thank-you for their participation.
- ④ Home visits will be provided by Calvin College nursing students and a community health worker.

Women may be **eligible** to participate if they are childbearing age (age 18-44).

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Editor's Corner: Christmas lights

By: Pete Tabberer

There is a stately old house a few blocks from ours that my wife and I occasionally walk by.

The owners decorate the house with lights at Christmas time. The decorations are not ostentatious, but they outshine anything else that is nearby. It is around this time of year that I most enjoy walking past it.

I've never lived in a neighborhood where people go all out with Christmas lighting, and, apart from the house mentioned above and a few others, Creston is no exception. At least the part of Creston we live in.

Every winter I make grand plans of being the most well lit house on our street. I imagine sparkling lights lining the porch railing and eaves, and encircling the tree in our front yard. It is a sight to behold. If you could step into my imagi-

nation you would be awestruck.

So far these plans have never progressed beyond my imagination and there are several reasons for this. Our roof is very steep, and the idea of climbing up there to hang lights makes me nervous. We don't have a ladder tall enough to do the job from the ground. The same is true of our tree which is something like 30 feet tall. Our house does not have any outlets outside, and I don't want to run a cord out a window.

These reasons, combined with a severe lack of motivation that seems to strike this time of year, always conspire to leave our house unlit. And it will probably remain unlit until I get a taller ladder, or someone lights a big fire under me. Until then, the big house nearby will have to suffice.

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Board meets the 4th Thursday of most months.
6pm @ CNA offices.

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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.

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Welcome New & Renewing Members!

As of: 11/16/2012

Aldrich, William & Martha
Babcock, Clifford J.
Banghart-Therrien, Mary & London, Rebecca
Barnum, Jerry
Byle, Jennifer
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- ☐ 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
- ☐ Media Releases

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

- ☐ Pancake Breakfast
- ☐ Walking & delivering flyers/announcements
- ☐ Delivering yard signs
- ☐ Volunteer recruitment & appreciation

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

- ☐ Planning
- ☐ Art Battle
- ☐ Riverside Date Night
- ☐ Texas Hold'Em

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

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

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Winter 2012



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