



North End Connection

The Newsletter of the Creston Neighborhood Association

Spring 2013

Remembering Creston High School



By: Pete Tabberer

Creston High School has been a Plainfield Avenue landmark since it was first opened as a junior high school in 1926. After its initial construction it was converted to a high school and expanded several times. The building grew to its present form with the addition of the athletic facilities in 1980.

Earlier this year it was announced that Creston High School will close and City High School and Middle School will move into the building for the 2013-14 school year. Thus, while one storied chapter of our neighborhood's history comes to a close, another begins.

I did not have the honor of attending Creston High, and thus feel unqualified to chronicle the memories and experiences of the students who learned and grew there. Instead I will let some of my favorite images from Creston's yearbook, the Saga, speak for me. In this way we would like to welcome the new students who will soon walk Creston's halls, and remember all those students who are proud to call themselves Polar Bears.

See more pictures on page 5.

Top: Creston High School with construction nearly complete, circa 1923 (GRPL, Collection 54).

Bottom: Creston's a cappella choir performs for President Nixon and Vice President Ford in the White House Rose Garden as part of their Spring Tour to Washington and New York in 1971

All yearbook photos courtesy: Grand Rapids Public Library.

Local food options in Creston

By: Lance Kraai

According to most estimates the average fruit or vegetable purchased in the US travels 1,500 miles before arriving on your plate. To put that in perspective, 1,500 miles from your quaint Creston neighborhood home will put you on the Texas/Mexico border, Salt Lake City, Utah, or perhaps—most appealing of all this time of year—Miami, Florida.

So why does this matter? Well for a lot of reasons. First, when food travels it uses carbon-emitting fuel. Second, when food travels it goes bad. For all the food grown for US consumption, 40% goes to waste. This is compounded by the fact that only 3% of our food is composted, which means a lot of food ends up in our landfills where it breaks down without oxygen-releasing methane.

Local food is also healthier. Food picked to travel well, is picked early. So those tomatoes from Miami, Florida are picked firm and green, before they are at their nutritional best. Further, after being picked the tomatoes immediately start shedding nutritional value. In other words, there is a reason why a cherry tomato plucked right from the vine tastes incredible. Our taste buds are aware that something beautiful is happening in that perfectly ripe, super fresh explosion of juice.

Thankfully Creston has some fantastic local food options:

1. To buy CSA shares or fresh produce from a farm stand, check out New City Urban Farm, which grows all of its food on a two-acre field right in the neighborhood. For more information contact Lance Kraai. See below for contact information.

2. To grow your own food at a community garden, check out the Creston Community Gardens on Facebook or email Andrea Hensen at crestoncommunitygardens@gmail.com.

3. To shop for Michigan grown produce, check out Kingma's Market, which often has a good local food selection. Some neighborhood restaurants like Graydon's Crossing and Red Jet Cafe offer local food options on their menus as well.



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New City Urban Farm is a CSA farm and a youth employment program that is part of New City Neighbors.

Located at 1226 Union Ave.

For more information visit: newcityneighbors.com
www.facebook.com/NewCityUrbanFarm
or contact Lance Kraai at lancek@newcityneighbors.org

7th Annual
**ART
BATTLE
for
COMMUNITY**

Wednesday, May 15
6 pm doors, 8 pm auction

The Rezervoir formerly the
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Local artists
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a neighborhood
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Local artist profile: Erick Picardo

By: Jonathan Seely

The following story is based on a transcript of Deborah Eid's interview with Erick Picardo. Visit the Rapidian.org to see a video of the full interview.

For Grand Rapids-based artist Erick Picardo, a visit to the United States has turned into over a 20 year stay.

Picardo attended a university in the Dominican Republic, where he earned a visual arts degree. He is also a musician, who says he got his beginnings playing on buckets that he and his friends would collect, but says that art came first for him. He believes that in art, when you get into the vocational process, is when you "get into really good stuff."

The Dominican Republic native first came to the United States in 1994. Picardo came with plans to visit family members in New York City. On his visit to New York, he made plans to visit a friend in Grand Rapids. Two weeks later, he found himself with a job at a factory making and finishing wood doors.

Picardo says the experience was good for him as an artist. He would paint doors "in a flash" with a large machine, a huge contrast to his work with brushes and paint on canvas.

Six years later, in 2000, the time came for a vacation back to the Dominican Republic to visit family and friends, and for Picardo to announce his decision to move to the United States. The decision was emotionally challenging for everyone, as he says his family and friends share a very tight bond.



Photo by: Pete Tabberer

Eric Picardo works on a piece for the 2012 Art Battle for Community, at Sazerac Lounge.

Spring Offerings

TUESDAY NIGHTS 6:30pm 4-Person Teams • \$11/person 9 Weeks • Starts April 30th \$1000 for First Place	WEDNESDAY NIGHTS 6:00pm Adult/Child 2-Person Teams \$13/team 9 Weeks • Starts May 1st Pizza Party the Last Night of Bowling!
THURSDAY NIGHTS 6:30pm 4-Person Teams • \$8/person 9 Weeks • Starts May 2nd Enjoy a Fun Night Out!	FRIDAY HIGH SCHOOL BOWLING PREP LEAGUE 4:15pm 2-Person Teams • \$6/person 9 Weeks • Starts May 3rd For Bowlers Interested in Bowling in High School.

NORTHFIELD LANES
2222 Plainfield Ave., NE
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See: Picardo, Page 6

Remembering Creston High School



Left: Varsity Football, 1951

Below Right: Creston Aeroplane Club, 1936

Below Left: Drum Majors, 1939



Above Right:
State Champion
Volleyball team,
1980

Right, Homecom-
ing court, 1971



Picardo, cont. from page 4

Part of Picardo's inspiration comes from challenging the pre-conceived notions of life in the Dominican Republic. He says that his people are often seen as "third world," a stereotype he fights with beautiful, bold colors inspired by life on the island.

According to Picardo, he uses his art "to show exactly who we [citizens of the Dominican Republic] are."

Since coming to Grand Rapids, Picardo says his art has changed a lot. He recalls one particular experience at his first Grand Rapids showing, "Red Triangle" back in 1994, that opened his eyes to a new direction in his work. A woman, whom he recalls as being "very professional," came into the exhibit and remarked how "pornographic" artists from the Dominican Republic are.

At the time, Picardo says his paintings were much more sensual. Since then, he's moved on in a different direction, which has opened up his work to a new, broader audience.

Part of that audience comes from his involvement for the past three years in Art Battle for Community, an annual event put on by the Creston Neighborhood Association. The event invites artists to come and participate by creating art live, in front of an audience, with their art auctioned off after the competition.

In the 2012 event, Picardo not only placed first in the competition, but his painting went to high bidders City Manager Greg Sundstrom and his wife. Picardo says the event is important to him, because it allows him to help the community to be better, and use his art to address situations in society. It's also a great

opportunity to collaborate with other artists and support the community.

Right now, Picardo is working on becoming a US citizen, but there are obstacles in his way. After completing all the necessary paperwork, he says the last hurdle is the financial aspect of the process, which is quite expensive. He views it as an important step in his life in the US, as it affords him a chance to have his voice heard through voting. He hopes the step will help him advance his international career, and allow his Caribbean voice to be heard in the US.

Picardo's art can be viewed on Facebook at his P I C A R D O Art page. Follow him on Twitter at @PicardoArt.



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Plant trees for Arbor Day

By: *Caroline*

It was a native of Detroit who first established Arbor Day about 140 years ago. After moving to Nebraska and missing Michigan's tree-filled landscape, Julius Morton set about planting and caring for trees and encouraging others to do the same. Arbor Day is now widely observed around the world as a day set aside for planting, nurturing and celebrating the importance of trees.

Arbor Day is an excellent time to take note of the trees around your home and in your neighborhood. It is a worthwhile exercise to be proactive, noting what needs to be pruned and watching for evidence of disease, so you can keep your trees healthy, even planting additional trees to maintain a continuous tree canopy for generations to come.

In Michigan, Arbor Day is observed on the last Friday in April, and the Friends of Grand Rapids Parks is organizing a community event to celebrate the day by planting 150 trees in our own Riverside Park. This planting will help to replace some of the 400 ash trees in the park

devastated by the emerald ash borer.

You don't need to have tree-planting experience to join in, though you will know how to plant your own trees once you are done! Join the fun of getting to know a new neighbor and doing something lasting for our community. Come, rain or shine, with a pair of gloves and a willingness to get dirt on your jeans on Saturday April 27 8:30-1, meet at the Riverbend Shelter at Riverside Park.

For easy sign up visit: wmac.eventbrite.com. To get GRCity points visit: points.mygrcity.us/volunteering or simply ring 581.7164.

Living Green in Creston (CNA's environmental committee) will be there! Hope we see you there too!



Perennial Exchange
May 30, 2013
6:00pm

**Living Green in Creston's
Annual Perennial Exchange.**

- 1) Dig up and label your extra perennials to trade and share with neighbors. (No invasive species, please!)
- 2) Don't worry if you don't have any to share – experienced gardeners love to help those who are just starting out.
- 3) Come, share and socialize.

Information available on native plants. Master gardeners will be on hand to answer your questions.

Same location as last year!!
Aberdeen Park, 798 Evelyn NE
\$1 entry, CNA members free
Questions: Linda (616) 364-9724



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A minimalist approach to Crime Prevention

By Mac Brown

Prevention always should be our first choice for reducing crime. As we thaw out for another great Michigan spring lets dust off the skills we have picked up by meeting with our local neighborhood watch, perusing the internet on how to engage in your neighborhood, and by reading these wonderful public safety articles.

Yelled, politely, across the street, a “hey neighbor, the tulips are looking great this spring” is a great way to break the ice and get to know your neighbor. Chances are your neighbor will look for the next opportunity to say “hi” back to you, and if he happens to prevent someone from walking off with your golf clubs because you forgot to put your garage door down that day, well, crime prevented.

A desire for you to return the favor someday hopefully will compel you to look out for other neighbors as well. Congratulations, you have taken ownership of your block and the activities that affect the quality of life of you and your neighbors. You probably also made a friend or two.

Reporting suspicious activity is imperative to crime prevention. When encouraging reporting I get questions like this one: “but Mac, how do I know if what I’m looking at is suspicious activity?” Well, I say, “by connecting with your neighbors and being involved in your community, it will help you to determine the dynamic and culture of your block.” That knowledge, coupled with that innate gut feeling that

something is wrong and out of place when you see it, should be enough to get you to call the GRPD to report suspicious behavior.

CNA also has additional information to help you determine suspicious activity as well as other crime prevention materials you can access when life permits you time to work beyond the minimalist approach when engaging with your block.

In review, follow these two simple steps to keep your neighborhood safe this spring and summer: know your neighbors and call police when your judgment tells you something is wrong. You are not bothering them because you called on a hunch. The GRPD thrives on hunches which lead to the information that helps them resolve the issues you are experiencing.

Numbers to call:

Police Non-Emergency: 616-456-3400 (for suspicious behavior and quality of life issues)

For emergencies/crimes in progress: 911 (and if you can’t decide which number to call, call 911)



Ruth and Laurie Williams,
Creston Business Association

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Paid for by The Committee to Elect Ruth Kelly
940 Monroe NW Apt. 219 Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Meet our new intern: Mark!

This spring the Creston Neighborhood Association has a new college intern. Mark Vander Heide is a senior at Calvin College and is studying Sociology.

He currently lives in one of Calvin's community houses in the neighborhood (named *Nizhoni*); that's where he first heard about CNA.

This spring, in his internship, Mark is specifically focusing on the aging population of Creston. He is trying to find out what needs they have here in Creston

and how best to meet those needs.

CNA desires to provide resources enabling people to continue to live here as they age, and to people with those resources.




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Wednesday, April 10 at 7:30 am
Common Ground on Fulton

Tuesday, May 7 at noon
Rico's Deli, 940 Monroe

Visit blissforgi.org for
periodic newsletters and
to join us on Facebook!

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Rosalynn Bliss,
p.o. box 3663 Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Welcome New & Renewing Members!

As of: 4/2/2013

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 Carey, Corinne
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 DeBoer, Nancy
 DeLuca, Jolene
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 Deschaine, Tom & Jodi
 Dieleman, Jim and Arliss
 Disosway, Glenn and Sue
 Domanski, Anne
 Edwards, James and Kendra
 Eid, Deborah
 Essenberg, Penny
 Firlik, Michael & Terri
 Fisher, Randy and Diana
 Francisco, Dave & Jan
 Gort, Vernon and Elaine
 Gottschalk, Thomas & Laura

Haan, Paul and Nietling, Julie
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North End Connection
2013 Issue 1 (Spring)

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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Volunteer Opportunities at CNA

Volunteers are important to the Creston Neighborhood Association! If you would like to get involved, here are some areas where you can help.

YES! Count me in:

- Communication Committee:** Promote the work of CNA through writing, photography, and graphic design.
- Volunteer and Membership Committee:** Encourages participation in CNA.
- Fundraising Committee:** Plans & implements events to sustain CNA services and programs
- Living Green in Creston:** Promotes the environmental health of the Creston neighborhood

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

Yes, I want to support CNA

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- I wish to receive my newsletter and alerts electronically
- I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities

Please check any options that apply:

- I wish to pay annual resident membership dues of \$25 per household
- 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



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Community Calendar

Arbor Day Tree Planting
Saturday, April 27
8:30am @ Riverside Park

Palmer Health Fair
Saturday, April 27
10am @ Palmer Elementary (309 Palmer)

7th Annual Art Battle for Community
Wednesday, May 15
6pm @ Rezeroir Lounge

Annual Perennial Exchange,
hosted by Living Green in Creston
Thursday, May 30
6pm @ Aberdeen Park

CNA Board meetings
4th Thursday of most months
6pm @ CNA Offices (205 Carrier)



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