



npna

normal park neighborhood association

normalpark.org

Newsletter, Vol. XVI, No. 3, Summer 2004

NPNA Ice Cream Social

Where: Senior/Community Center Rec Park
Date: Wednesday, August 4, 2004
Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Program: Ice Cream, Meeting Neighbors, and Fun

NPNA ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

On Wednesday, August 4, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. the NPNA is holding its 8th annual Ice Cream Social.

Christine Obeid has offered once again act as the event chairperson, which means the ice cream and games and activities for children of all ages will be plentiful. For those who attended last year, you will remember the tetherball, soccer, sidewalk chalk, balloons and even stick-on tattoos.

It's a festive gathering, a great way to connect with all the wonderful people in our neighborhood, and a chance to see neighbors both old and new. Please try to attend.

If you have a little free time to assist with set-up, scooping ice cream or clean up please call Christine at 484-0751. She would love to hear from you.

NORMAL PARK'S "WALKABILITY" MAY IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

The evidence is growing that older, traditionally designed neighborhoods such as Normal Park are more "walkable," and therefore healthier for residents when compared to typical sprawl neighborhoods. A walkable neighborhood provides a safe, enjoyable walking environment and can improve health for residents. In the short term, walking increases energy levels, improves sleep, and increases bone and muscle strength. Walking over a longer term can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, obesity, and improve mental health.

Neighborhoods in sprawl areas typically are self-contained loops off busy main roads; there may be no sidewalks, no trees to provide shade, and nowhere to actually go. In contrast, features of a more walkable neighborhood such as Normal Park include:

- A neighborhood laid out in a grid design with short blocks, giving plenty of options for walking from one part of neighborhood to another.
- Sidewalks with curb cuts throughout the neighborhood.
- Grass buffers between sidewalk and street.
- Mature trees, which add beauty and cast shadows on roads, visually narrowing streets and slow traffic.
- Traffic moving at slow speeds throughout neighborhood.
- Well-kept, especially architecturally interesting homes.
- Well-tended yards, with low shrubs at intersections for pedestrian visibility, and visually interesting yards.
- Destinations such as schools, parks, shopping, library, etc.

Access to multiuse trails for recreation and transportation is an important feature of a walkable neighborhood. Normal Park is fortunate to have two trails that are linked to the neighborhood: the loop around Recreation Park, which is about a half mile; and the trail behind Ypsilanti High School, which is 3.1 miles if you follow the entire cross country path.

Two recent studies have found weight differences between residents of traditional grid-style, dense neighborhoods and those living in "sprawl" neighborhoods. One found that people in traditional neighborhoods weighed an average of 10 pounds less than their sprawl counterparts; the other found a six-pound difference. Another recent study found that people who lived in neighborhoods with homes built before 1946 were significantly more likely to walk a mile at least 20 times per month.

Normal Park residents don't have to stay in the neighborhood – we can be physically active and support downtown institutions by walking downtown and visiting the library, post office, restaurants, and businesses on Michigan Avenue. And why not take a walk or bike ride to Depot Town to visit the Food Co-op or stroll along the river?

There is still a great deal of room for improvement to make Normal Park and the City of Ypsilanti more walkable, and therefore a healthier community. Residents can advocate for more pedestrian-friendly connectivity within Ypsilanti, such as bike paths on main roads and more multiuse trails throughout the city. We can also support downtown businesses and restaurants by making them walking and biking destinations. Because Ypsilanti is a small town, it has great potential as a truly walkable community, where people can walk to work, to the grocery store, and to school. The Normal Park neighborhood and residents are a vital part of that picture.

For more information about walkability, visit www.walkable.com, www.activeliving.org or www.americaswalking.org.

ANNUAL NPNA YARD SALE

June 5th was a glorious spring day, perfect for our annual yard sale. Over 80 households signed up to participate this year, with many more jumping in at the last minute. There was everything from children's toys to clothing to tools to hotdogs and soda pop. **Sarah Weiss** made some beautiful new signs to advertise the event in the four corners of the neighborhood. **Rebecca Dunkle** then made great maps that were available to locate the yard sales.

All told, it was a huge success and an event that only seems to get bigger and better with each passing year.

NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN TAKES ROOT AT RECREATION PARK

This spring, a small dandelion covered plot of land behind the Ypsilanti Senior Center was transformed into an organic community garden. Over four weeks, 25 volunteers spent 125 hours pulling up sod, rototilling, spreading compost, dividing the area into plots, making woodchip paths, and installing a fence.

Sarah Weiss also contributed many hours of landscape design expertise, including drawing up detailed site plans, building four raised beds and supervising the fence installation. Numerous individuals and families in the Normal Park and Woods Road neighborhoods now are tending plots in the garden.

“This garden is a tremendous asset to our neighborhood and the community as a whole,” says **Jenna Bacolor**, volunteer garden coordinator. “It provides a place for people to grow their own produce, be physically active, and connect with neighbors. Also, the harvest from three of the twenty plots is being donated to the **Plant a Row for the Hungry** program which will benefit people in the Ypsilanti area and beyond.”

The Ypsilanti Garden Club, led by **Paul Meyes** and **Vicki Patterson**, has taken responsibility for planting and tending the Plant a Row for the Hungry plots. “The garden contributes to the greening of Ypsilanti,” noted Vicki. Garden Club members recently toured the Recreation Park Garden and were impressed by what they saw. “The club members thought that the idea for community gardens can spread,” said Paul, “And maybe Ypsilanti will become known as the garden city.”

The garden would not have happened without technical assistance and support from Growing Hope, an Ypsilanti-based non-profit dedicated to improving people’s lives through gardening. Amanda Edmonds, Executive Director, met with a group of interested neighborhood residents in April to talk about installing the garden. With her assistance, the group quickly made plans to start a garden at Recreation Park. Funds for the garden have come from plot fees, generous donations and a substantial contribution from the NPNA. The City of Ypsilanti has agreed to allow the garden to grow on city property and is charging a small fee for water use.

The garden is open to the public, and residents of both Normal Park and the Woods Road/Pleasant Drive neighborhood are especially encouraged to visit. The only rules for visitors are to stay on the woodchip paths, leave pets outside the fence, and accompany young children. Visitors are welcome to tend the plots reserved for the Plant a Row for the Hungry program (plots 3, 5 and 18).

The Recreation Park Community Garden will host an open house during the Ice Cream Social on August 4 when community members can learn more about organic community gardening and more details about what’s planted and will be featured as part of the Ypsilanti Garden Tour on August.

In September, gardeners will host a Harvest Party to celebrate the first season of the Recreation Park Community Garden (date to be determined – look on the sign at the garden for more details or the calendar at www.normalpark.org).

For more information about the Recreation Park Community Garden, please contact Jenna Bacolor at 483-1647 or communitygarden@npna.org. More information about Growing Hope is available at www.growinghope.net.

MORE ROAD REPAIR?

A number of people have voiced concern over the state of disrepair of Mansfield Street. Folks would love to see that road fixed up to match the new roads that now weave through all of Normal Park. In order to get a firm answer to the questions of “Why wasn’t Mansfield paved with the rest of the streets?” and “Can we expect it to be repaired in the near future?” **Lisa Wozniak** asked the director of the Department of Public Works, Harry Hutchison.

Harry pointed out that the city and the county share Mansfield, a street that has always been eligible for truck traffic. The reason that many trucks are not found on Mansfield, however, is that it is what is known as a class B road. That means the axle restrictions are 11,700 lbs steering and 8,400 lbs per rear axle. This eliminates a number of the larger, more common trucks.

In order to address Mansfield’s terrible disrepair, the city recently applied for what are known as “F-Series funds” through the Michigan Department of Transportation. If the city receives the funds, they will reconstruct Mansfield either as early as this construction season or in 2005. Once funding is approved, the city can begin work with the county to design the reconstruction. The county will share the costs of the project. If the city is not successful in procuring the funds in this funding cycle, Harry has assured us that they will reapply, while also seeking funding from the federal government since a class B road is eligible for Federal Highway funds.

Let’s keep our fingers crossed.

RECREATION PARK IMPROVEMENTS

As you may have noticed, there has been some progress cleaning up the area of the park that was used as a staging ground for last year’s street improvements. All of the debris is gone and the grassy areas have been smoothed over with fresh dirt.

The contractors have agreed to restore the park to its original state, with some improvements. The tennis courts will be replaced by a new hard surface court with rolled edges, which will allow multiple uses, including the possibility of flooding the courts for an ice rink in the winter. Two basketball nets will be installed for summer activity. The NPNA has requested the City to look into adding shorter nets as well, for younger children to use.

The project was supposed to have been completed by the end of June. We are hoping that the area will be completely restored by the time this newsletter goes to print.



RUTHERFORD MUNICIPAL POOL IS OPEN

After a very cool and rainy spring to start the season, our neighborhood pool is happily open! The average number of patrons floats between 75 and 100 kids per afternoon not even counting the family pass swimmers. It was so rainy that the Family Swim Picnic used the rain date, June 12, and was still soggy. Two days later on Flag Day, proper springtime temperatures were reached and there were over forty swimmers in the pool at 2:30 in the afternoon. The August numbers should be great.

Eric Rudolph returns as pool manager. He hired two stellar head guards, Betsy and Megan, both graduates from U of M. Many neighbors will recognize Cathy Thorburn as the fantastic gatekeeper from last year. She is in charge of admissions and concessions. Bonnie Cervantes is back on staff and a welcome face among the guards. There are approximately 14 guards on staff ranging from 16 to 42 and we thank them for keeping our swimmers safe.

A season family pass is just \$100 and you can have up to 8 members on a pass. Individual passes are \$50. The passes are good all summer.

Along with open swimming Red Cross Swim lessons have started and Senior Aqua Aerobics will be Wednesday mornings starting in July. Aqua Aerobics will begin splashing, as soon there is an instructor.

The '04 season seems safe financially but the FOR Pool group is aware that record keeping will be vital to securing grants for next year. They are researching new grants and actively collecting funds for next year. It is up to FOR Pool and residents to secure next summer's operating costs.

FOR Pool is also selling advertising space on the lower half of the fence. For the bargain price of \$150 you get a 3x5 foot vinyl banner, which are quite spiffy.

If you have any questions about times, rates or programs call the pool at 482 4401 or visit the pool page at www.normalpark.org.

YPSILANTI PRIDE DAY – ROSE GARDEN

In spite of the torrential rain the night before, Ypsilanti Pride Day was a tremendous success in the Normal Park Neighborhood. The NPNA sponsored our annual project to clean up weed, prune, plant flowers, and the rose garden next to the Senior Center. This year the job was accomplished in record time, thanks to the extra volunteers organized by the Ypsilanti Area Jaycees. About 25 people came out to the rose garden to lend a hand, the best turnout we've ever had.

The ground was soggy due to all the rain, but that didn't dampen the spirits of the hard workers. In fact, it made the weeding easier. The City of Ypsilanti contributed \$200 for flowers, and the DPW delivered wood chips, which volunteers spread around the freshly weeded and pruned flower beds.

Many thanks to the following neighborhood volunteers whose time in the rose garden on May 22 really made a difference:

Carol Leyshock – Rose garden project organizer, **Rick Leyshock**, **Diane Willis**, **Lisa Wozniak**, **Sue Collins**, **Kristyn Spangler**, **Sandy Schultz**, **Harriet Lindsay**, **April Pickrel**, **Jane Carr**, **Janet Resch**, **Rebecca Dunkle**, **Janet and Bob Resch** and **Paul Schreiber** (from the Woods Road Neighborhood)

Thanks also to Laura Stimpson, Allen Morgen, and all the other volunteers from the Jaycees, and to our special volunteer, Alma Wheeler Smith, who was in the neighborhood for a fundraiser and came over to pitch in and pull weeds.

Thanks to all of you who have worked in other parts of the neighborhood not just on Ypsi Pride Day, but also throughout the year.

RECREATION COMMISSION UPDATE – JULY 2004

The Recreation Commission is working on the recreation strategic plan. In April about 30 members of the community met to discuss future needs/ideas for recreation in the city. We are taking the information from that meeting, the results of the recent recreation survey, and the city's Recreation Master Plan and writing the strategic plan. We plan to present a draft to the mayor and city council in the next 60 days.

The pool is open! Kudos to the Friends of the Pool who have done an amazing job raising money. Thank you to the Ann Arbor Area Foundation that matched what the FOR Pool raised and the contribution from Ypsilanti Township. The Ypsilanti Housing Commission obtained a grant for recipients to receive scholarships. It couldn't have been without the community's support. Make sure you stop by for a dip in the pool and while you're there, pick up your summer pass.

The city will soon be putting out a request for proposal for a group/organization to run the Freighthouse. If anyone is interesting in serving on the selection committee please contact Ed Koryzno at 483-1810 or email at ekoryzno@cityofypsilanti.com.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation awarded a grant to Ypsilanti Youth Empowered to Act (YYEA) through the Ann Arbor Area Foundation. This has enabled the formation of a youth board that will assist in programming and planning at Parkridge giving them ownership in the future of the center. YYEA is a board of local teenagers who are spearheading youth-directed service-learning projects aimed at promoting youth civic action. If anyone is interested in making a donation or volunteering at Parkridge, contact Mary Lema at city hall, mlema@cityofypsilanti.com, or a member of the recreation commission.

The Recreation Commission meets the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall. Public comment is welcome at the beginning of each meeting. If there is additional information or comments you would like to provide, please contact the Recreation Commissioners in ward 2: **John Weiss** at 480-1823 or weissjk@umich.edu and **Lisa Zuber** at 484-0372 or lzuber@ameritech.net.

YOGA AT THE SENIOR CENTER?

You may have heard a rumor that there is work being done to establish a yoga class (or maybe even two) at the Senior Center. Well, the rumor is true. **Patrick McLean** and **Lisa Wozniak** have been working with the city to put in place a contract for use of the building, as well as searching for an accomplished yoga teacher who has the time to devote to a new class. They hope to announce a fall class and fee schedule in August. Ideally, there will be an introductory class and an intermediate class offered. If you are interested in participating please call or email Patrick at 485-5852 or pmclean818@earthlink.net and Lisa at 483-5013 or lisa_wozniak@lcvef.org.

HOMES FOR SALE/HOMES RECENTLY SOLD

As of this printing, the following homes are for sale in our neighborhood:

1215 S. Congress	\$119,900
306 Hiawatha	\$189,900
909 Sheridan	\$190,000
1204 N. Congress	\$194,900
475 Owendale	\$198,500
1129 S. Congress	\$199,900
955 Sheridan	\$199,900
1304 Pearl	\$199,900
1 Oakwood	\$205,900
1116 Grant	\$209,900
917 Grant	\$211,900
211 Elm	\$214,900
161 N. Mansfield	\$217,500
1103 Grant	\$224,900
948 Sheridan	\$259,900
122 Linden Court	\$250,000
472 N Mansfield	\$257,500

The following homes have sold recently:

912 Congress	\$115,100
1104 Pearl St	\$154,000
1228 Elbridge	\$168,900
1213 Congress	\$177,500
1210 Grant	\$180,400
1118 Grant	\$197,500
1007 W. Cross	\$206,000
308 N. Wallace	\$230,000
1113 Westmoreland	\$260,000
107 Elm	\$234,900

Sue Collins, an NPNA resident and agent at Real Estate One provided the above information. Contact her at 483-6609 or 662-8600.



2004 BOARD

MEMBERS/CHAIRPERSONS

President:	Lisa Wozniak	483-5013
Vice-President/ New Neighbor	Heather Benoit	481-0726
Treasurer:	Rebecca Dunkle	482-9330
Secretary/ Newsletter/Website	Joe Capuano	483-6091
Recreation Park:	Carol Leyshock	481-0836
Greenscape Chair:	Sarah Weiss	480-1823
At-large members:	Jenna Bacolor	483-1647
	Sue Collins	483-6609
	Patrick McLean	485-5852
	Kirsten Mowrey	483-6811
	Bea Otis	482-8567

If you have any questions about our neighborhood, items you would like discussed at the next board meeting or information on opportunities to volunteer please contact a board member.

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks go to Kristi Martin for the printing of this newsletter. Thank you!

NPNA AND YPSILANTI HAPPENINGS

For more and up to date information see www.normalpark.org

- **NPNA Ice Cream Social** Aug 4
Rose Garden, Rec Park, 6:00 – 7:30 pm
- **Yspi Heritage Festival** Aug 20 - 22
Riverside Park and Frog Island Park
- **NPNA Board Meeting** Aug 25
- **Fire Truck Show** Sep 11
Riverside Park
- **Festival Latino** Sep 19
Riverside Park
- **Antique Truck Show** Oct 2
Riverside Park
- **NPNA General Meeting** Oct 20
Senior Center, Rec Park, 7:30 - 9:00 pm
- **Downtown Halloween Fall Festival** Oct 29
Downtown Ypsilanti

NPNA DUES

In addition to the annual yard sale, dues are one of the NPNA's main sources of funding. They are not required but they do help our neighborhood pay for projects like Recreation Park improvements. Dues are \$10.00 per household and anyone who contributes \$40.00 or more will receive a NPNA coffee mug. Payment of cash or check made to NPNA can be given to any of the board members.

NEIGHBORHOOD EMAIL GROUP

Have you signed up for our neighborhood email group? Keep up to date on neighborhood news and announcements. It's a nice supplement to the quarterly newsletter. To sign up send your email address to listserv@normalpark.org or visit normalpark.org.

If you have news items of your own that you would like to send to the neighborhood, email npga@umich.edu.

NORMAL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD WEB SITE

Keep up to date on the latest information and events happening in our neighborhood and city. There is also an extensive list of links to city, community and business websites.

It can be found at www.normalpark.org.

ADVERTISE IN THE NEWSLETTER

The NPNA newsletter reaches over 700 households in Ypsilanti. A business card sized ad is only \$30.00 per issue. If you are interested in advertising in the newsletter please contact a board member or visit www.normalpark.org.



Lisa Zuber

Your Local Source for Hexabits

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