



# MARKTOWN UPDATE

A publication of the Marktown Preservation Society

January 2004

## Breakfast With Santa A Great Success Once Again!

Christmas comes but once a year, but the preparations appear to be a year around event. Once again the Marktown Women's Club sponsored our annual Breakfast with Santa. Saturday, December 20th found well over 140 children and their parents gathered at the Old Marktown Community Center for this truly unique Marktown event.

The community center had been painstakingly decorated over the weeks prior to the event. Kim (Unger) Rodriguez led the decorating activities. She was assisted by Juanita McCormick, Ruth Plesha, Ms. Maria Perez (*no relation*) and a number of other volunteers who managed to walk in at the wrong time and were immediately drafted into the decorating party.

Even as late as the night before the event you could see the lights at the center on late as Kim and Judy Hicks put the finishing touches on the decorations and took one last inventory of the gifts to make sure that none of the children who had registered went without their gifts.

Saturday morning found the center open early once again as the donuts and juice were delivered by one of Santa's many elves (Kim Rodriguez). It didn't take long for the center to begin filling up with anxious children and parents attempting to keep their children off of the naughty list at least until Santa had arrived.

As the tables and chairs rapidly filled up with children enjoying their donuts and juice we learned that Santa had been stopped at the boarder between Whiting and East Chicago. It appears that a couple of eager Police officers wanted to see if they could obtain a copy of Santa's naughty list just for reference. At a little after 10 AM the sound of reindeer hoofs and sleigh bells could be barely heard over the joyous sound of the Marktown children singing Christmas songs in preparation of Santa's arrival. The kindly old elf himself arrived in his red velvet suit trimmed with white fur and his jolly white beard and button nose. Oh yes, and we can not forget the wonderful cap and

the handful of sleigh bells used to summon his sleigh when needed.

Santa made it a point of greeting each of the children before retiring to his traditional rocking chair where the children would have a chance to refresh Santa's memory as to just what they hoped for under the tree this upcoming Christmas morn.

Despite the size of the crowd in the tightly packed community center there was not one bit of bickering or squabbling among the children as they were all on their best behavior. Each child or family of children gathered around Santa to have their picture taken. Each was given a special gift, a pouch of candy, stickers and a coloring book, and each went away with a smile and fond memories of knowing that for what ever reason, Santa Clause had once again visited the Marktown Historic District.

While many people in our community helped to make this event possible, special thanks must go to the Marktown Women's Club and especially to Judy Hicks and Kim Rodriguez for all of the long hours and hard work that they put in to make Breakfast with Santa a success once again. Special thanks must also go to two of Santa's other elves, Lupe Guajardo and Javier Madri-

gal for coming to Santa's aid once again.

Special thanks must also be given to a number of people who helped to make this event possible through their most generous financial contributions. They are: The Office of the City Controller, Dr. Thomas Philpot, State Representative John Aguilera, Councilman Richard Medina, Michael Ebert of Safety Kleen, North Township Trustee Greg Cvitkovich, Lonnie Randolph, State Representative Earl Harris, the architectural firm of Detella, Planera & Paukner, 5th District Councilman Adrian Santos, The Foundations of East Chicago and Main Sporting Goods. Without their most generous support Santa could not have been so generous to the children of our community. We thank you one and all, and to all a good night!



## **CORRECTING BAD PRESS** by Paul A. Myers

They say that the best way to stay out of trouble is to do absolutely nothing, but if you know me, you know that just isn't possible. Doing nothing isn't in me. Over the past year the Marktown Preservation Society, under my direction, has issued a monthly newsletter. In December 2002 when we first went to press the first issue was only four pages long and dealt primarily with the designs for the New Marktown Community Center. We only had 200 copies printed and the primary distribution was to the 170 families that make Marktown their home.

Over the past twelve months our distribution has increased to 500 copies per month. Included on our distribution list are the city department heads, elected officials and a host of people who have specifically requested to be included in our mailings.

In the past year we have published over 100 pages of news articles. Our primary aim is to keep the residents of Marktown informed as to what is going on in our neighborhood. We also have included a series of articles in reference to the historic and architectural importance of our community. We have even done research in reference to problems people have in relation to getting new paint to stick to old stucco.

The object of the newsletter has been and always will be to keep the residents of this most important community informed and to provide them with positive information in relation to Marktown.

In September we ran an article titled **"Fixing Broken Windows... Pulling Weeds and Eliminating Graffiti!"** The next month we ran an article titled **"We've Fixed the Broken Windows. But we Need Everyone's Help to Truly Fix the Problem!"** What is amazing is that the articles did exactly what they were supposed to do... they resolved the problem. Not one more window has been broken in our community. Why? Because we took an open and positive approach to the problem and we made you, our intended readers aware of not only the problem but more importantly of the solution. That is what we have been talking about for the past year ... working together to make the Marktown Historic District a cleaner, better and safer place to live and to raise a family.

On Tuesday, November 25th I returned home at about 5:30 PM and found two messages from a local news paper reporter. While I did not have any idea as to what he wanted I always return telephone calls. When I spoke to him he told me that two people had called him outraged with an article printed in the December issue of Marktown Update. It should be

noted that neither of those who made the complaint live in Marktown. The article that they complained about was titled **"Car Stereos and Screeching Tires... The reason Behind the Noise!"** After discussing what he, or should I say they felt was the problem with the article I asked the reporter how much of the December issue he had seen. He told me that he had not seen anything except the page that they had complained about.

I immediately put together a partial set of past issues of Marktown Update and drove to Merrillville to meet with the reporter. I gave him the copies of the past issues and we discussed the problem at hand. The question from his perspective was *"Is this article insensitive to the Hispanic residents of Marktown, or as far as that goes, to all of the Hispanics in East Chicago?"*

What I find amazing is that while the distribution of Marktown Update is 500 copies per month, the article appeared on an insert of which only 200 copies were printed. You see, the article was intended for our neighborhood, not the entire city or all of the people who are on our mailing list.

I explained to the reporter that the articles on broken windows earlier this year had served their purpose in raising the level of awareness of our residents in reference to a growing and serious problem. I explained to him that the car stereo article was distributed primarily to the residents of Marktown, and more importantly, ever since the distribution of the article the problem has been greatly reduced if not totally eliminated.

He asked if I had received any negative telephone calls or feedback in reference to the article and I told him quite frankly that I have not received ANY negative comments about the newsletter at all in the past year or in the past week since the December issue was released.

For anyone in Marktown or the entire city of East Chicago who was in any way offended by my comments in that article, I extend my most sincere and heart felt apology. I did not intend to offend anyone and I do not consider myself insensitive to the Hispanic community or to any other group.

On Wednesday, November 26th I received scores of telephone calls from friends, associates and total strangers who supported my work in Marktown as the *"unofficial Mayor"* of this neighborhood and as the Director of Cultural Affairs and Historic Preservation for the city of East Chicago. Oh yes, and fifteen additional people have asked to be included on our mailing list.

***Need to e-mail us? You can contact Paul at [pmyers@eastchicago.com](mailto:pmyers@eastchicago.com)***

# Marktown Children Celebrate A Marktown Christmas

In preparation for this Holiday Season, the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department under the direction of Superintendent Joe Valdez announced their annual Christmas Tree Decorating Contest for all of the city community centers. The Team Leader from each center was asked to pull their theme from a hat. Judy Grindey, the Team Leader from the Old Marktown Community Center drew the song Feliz Navidad, which for those of you who may not know means Merry Christmas in Spanish.

Said Judy Hicks "We all put our thinking caps on and decided if our theme was Feliz Navidad then it should be Feliz Navidad from the Children of Marktown."

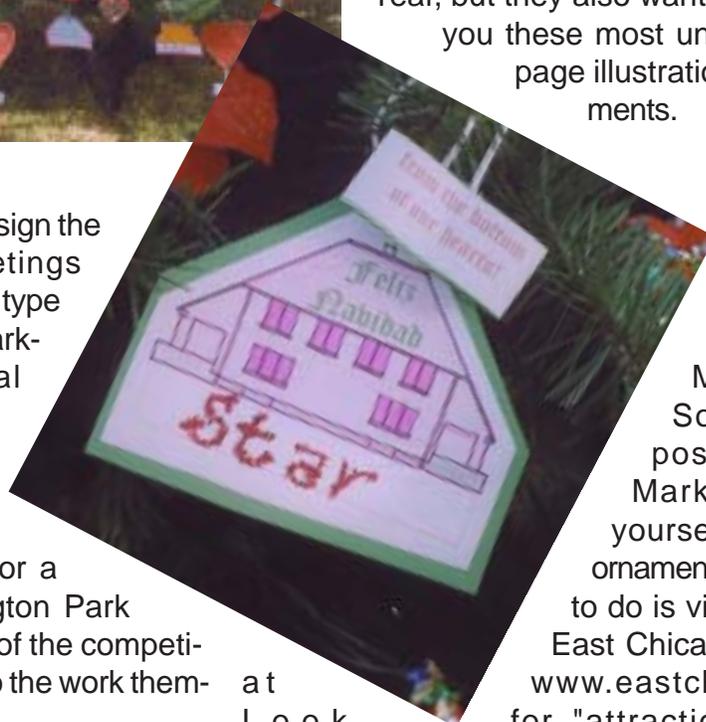
Jason O'Donnell, a commercial artist from Highland was contacted by the Marktown Preservation Society and asked to redesign the South Shore Season's Greetings poster into a pair of coloring book type illustrations for the children of Marktown. One with the original "Season's Greetings" and the other with "Feliz Navidad."

The next step was to come up with ornaments designed to express the theme for a Christmas tree at the Washington Park Conservatory. One of the rules of the competition is that the children have to do the work themselves.

The community center workers dipped into their archives and came up with a copy of an original 1917 illustration by Marktown architect Howard Van Doren Shaw. The drawing was of the archi-

tectural profile of the three different street elevations of the Marktown six-room duplex. The children scanned the image into the used and outdated computer at the community center and designed a series of ornaments that could be printed out on card stock. The ornaments were then printed out and decorated by the children of Marktown for inclusion on the tree.

Unlike many Christmas songs, Feliz Navidad only has one line: "Feliz Navidad from the bottom of my heart." The children hand made and decorated several paper chains with the theme. Along with this they also decorated hearts and cut out and decorated musical notes to follow the theme of the tree. The three workers at the Old Marktown Community Center, Judy Hicks, Judy Grindey and Maria Perez, along with all of the children of the Marktown Historic District want to take this opportunity to not only wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, but they also want to share with you these most unique coloring page illustrations and ornaments.



If you would like to have a copy of the coloring book edition of the Marktown South Shore poster or the Marktown do-it-yourself Christmas ornaments, all you have to do is visit the official East Chicago web page [www.eastchicago.com](http://www.eastchicago.com) for "attractions" on the header bar and then go down to the "happenings" line under the Marktown Historic District section of the web page. You will also find a page of photos from our Breakfast with Santa.

*The printing of this newsletter was made possible through the generosity of Mr. Dan McArdle.*

# ***The Future of Marktown Lies In Our Historic Past, and The Realization That Historic Preservation Is The Key To Our Future!***

## ***Marktown 1917 to the Present***

It is difficult if not impossible to sum up the eighty-five year history of any neighborhood, let alone a community with such an unusual architectural, industrial and social history. The Mark Town Site was developed under the English Garden City concepts of social reform. A part of the design called for modest, well built housing of four, five, six and seven room single, duplex and quad structures. There were originally more than thirty sections of the town designed. Of this only four were completed.

Under the Garden City Concept the homes were placed at the lot line adjacent to the street.

Each home had an open front porch facing the street so that neighbors could converse with one another as they passed by. The back windows of each home looked out onto the garden of the adjacent properties. The original plan called for the entire neighborhood to be painted in a unified color scheme, with buildings painted various pastel tints with coordinated

trim schemes. The plan also called for the sale of the homes to the workers as opposed to the retention of the properties as rental units by the company.

As a result of the Companies financial problems following WW I, the Mark Town Site along with the Indiana Harbor Works was sold to the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company of Ohio in 1942. YS&T retained the housing as rental units for some of their skilled workers until 1942 when a U.S. Supreme Court decision against Ford Motor Company sounded the death nil for all such ventures.

In 1942 YS&T sold the property to the

Riley Company. They in turn turned it over to the real estate firm of Dupes & Kinney of East Chicago who then sold the individual units to the residents of the community who were interested in the purchase.

In the early 1950's when YS&T began plans for the No. 2 Tin Mill, they petitioned the City of East Chicago to zone both Marktown and the adjacent property as industrial so that they could not only build the Tin Mill, but in the process begin purchasing back the houses so that the area could all be used for the production of steel. Residents of the neighborhood united and Marktown was saved from the wreckers ball. In the

process a buffer zone park was deeded to the city of East Chicago, and is one of three distinct parks in the neighborhood today.

In the early 1970's the U.S. Government announced plans to complete the long awaited Cline Avenue extension from Columbus Drive in East Chicago to the Indian Toll Road at approximately 129th Street. The ideal route for the road was down



*Marktown's Original Market Square included a recessed garden area and fountain. The garden and fountain area were removed in 1936 due to traffic problems on this corner. Plans for the New Marktown Community Center include a fountain and garden area. Circa 1920*

Dickey Road. Realizing that one-third of Marktown would be razed in the process, the newly elected Mayor Robert A. Pastrick along with Councilman James Ginther, Precinct Committeeman Wm. Hess and attorney Wm. Morrisroe placed Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places, and in doing so caused the U.S. Government to reroute the Cline Avenue extension away from the Marktown Historic District.

In 1980 the City of East Chicago announced the approval of a federal program under the Coastal Redevelopment Plan. The program restored and renovated the more than thirteen acres of Marktown Parks. Included in the

plan were elements of Mr. Shaw's original designs which included ample trees, berms along the back edge of the park and tennis and basketball courts for community recreation.

In 1990 the residents of the Marktown Historic District worked out a plan with fellow preservationist and architect Charles Gregerson of the Pullman Historic District for the total restoration and renovation of the streets and sidewalks of the community. Incorporated in the plan was original styled lighting and a unified fence and street side planting area. When the plan was begun it was found that one of the residents had worked privately to remove the fencing and the garden areas from the plan. While it has taken over a decade to complete this project, we are pleased to report that all but one street has been completed. That one remaining street (Spruce Avenue) is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2004.

In 1999 the East Chicago Sanitary District began the upgrading of the entire municipal sewer pumping stations. The Marktown Pump House, which was built in 1917 was expanded and totally rebuilt. The new system provided for two new pumps, new relay equipment and a computer monitoring system which is designed to keep the basements dry in all weather.

### **Marktown Today and Tomorrow**

Marktown has been referred to as "**The Brigadune of Industrial Housing - rising out of the mists of industry every few years.**" It has been called "**The Eighth Wonder of the World**" and as we know it was a feature in Ripley's Believe it or Not (1967) as "**A community in Indiana with narrow streets patterned after a town in Switzerland. Parks it cars on**

**the sidewalk - and the people walk in the roadway.**" Sound bites and cliché do not do this community justice, nor can they give the reader the reality of the neighborhood. The Marktown Historic District is one of the most unique Industrial Housing communities in the United States.

Is it fully restored? No, not nearly. Is it restorable? Absolutely! In 1970, according to the U.S. Census, the property value in Marktown was approximately \$10,500 per house. That's right, only \$10,500. The same census reports that the average value of a home in the Pullman Historic District in 1970 was also \$10,500.

The 2000 U.S. Census shows that the average price of a home in Marktown is

\$20,500, while at the same time the average price of a home in Pullman was \$110,000! That's right \$110,000.00!!!!

What happened to Marktown? Better yet, what happened in Pullman? The answer to both questions is the same -- HISTORIC PRESERVATION. In city after city and in town after town, with absolutely no excep-

tions, Historic Preservation of neighborhoods like ours has turned the tide in property values, crime and drugs. As the value of the homes increases, the criminal element disappears.

Seven years ago plans were set in motion to fund a new community center in Marktown. A year ago the neighborhood and city officials began working with the architectural firm of Detella, Planera & Paukner for the designs of that center. In the spring of 2004 construction will begin on a \$2,500,000 - 15,000 square foot center which will include an indoor basketball court, a computer lab, neighborhood library and much, much more. This is made possible through the



*Park Street at Pine Avenue. Note the original cast concrete light post at the corner. When Marktown was first built, the only fences were the two concrete fences on the 500 block of Lilac Street. Note the open porches which actually increased the level of security for each home. Circa 1920.*

tax revenues generated by the Harrah's Casino in East Chicago .

Today, the Marktown Preservation Society conducts guided tours of the neighborhood for hundreds of visitors each year. We have established a web page and now have e-mail service. We publish a 10-12 page monthly newsletter that is hand delivered to all of our residents and is mailed to more that 300 former residents, city officials and Friends of Marktown. It is also now available in color on the official City of East Chicago web page at [www.eastchicago.com](http://www.eastchicago.com). We have provided literally thousands of walking tour maps to individuals and groups who have requested them.

In 1990 we hosted a major museum display in entitled **"Marktown: The Architect the Builder and the People."** After the close of the exhibit at the East Chicago Main Library, the exhibit toured a number of museums and university libraries for the next three years before being retired. As a part of this first exhibition we printed a walking and driving tour map of our neighborhood. Since that first printing in 1990 we have moved forward with no less than three subsequent editions of the map. Today, with the aid of Bob Bender - a commercial artist from Michigan, the Walking Through Marktown map has been fully updated and redesigned and is distributed through the Marktown Preservation Society and the Lake County Convention and Visitor's Center in Hammond, Indiana.

Since our first exhibition we have been asked to include Marktown in two other exhibits. The first was the **"Frank Lloyd Wright and Colleagues: Indiana Works"** at the John G. Blank

Center for the Arts in Michigan City, Indiana (1999). The second was as a part of the **"Steel Shores"** exhibit at the Lake County Welcome Center at Kennedy Avenue and I80/94 earlier this year.

The Marktown Preservation Society has also issued a number of video tapes, not only of archived items that were taped by others, but more importantly, of major programs that have been developed for each of these exhibits. We are now looking into the aspect of reworking the information into the new DVD format.

Marktown as a neighborhood has three very distinctive community groups which all work together for the betterment of the Historic District. They are the Marktown Women's Club, the



*While only three Supervisor's Homes were completed, both sides of Broad Street were to have been lined with these classic Howard Shaw designs. Each home had it's own garage and all were separated from the worker homes by a brick garden wall. C.1920*

Committee for a Better, Cleaner and Safer Marktown Historic District, and the Marktown Preservation Society which is a community based nonprofit organization. These, combined with the continued support of Mayor Robert A. Pastrick, Councilman Adrian Santos of the 5th District, the Common Council of East Chicago, and the general

population of the Marktown Historic District makes this one of the most restorable historic neighbors in the Midwest.

Currently, a comprehensive history of the neighborhood along with a plan for the total restoration and preservation of the Marktown Historic District is being developed. The plan titled **"Plan of Marktown"** will be released later this year.

#### ***The Problems at Hand...***

As we have noted, over the past thirty years the City of East Chicago has made numerous reinvestments in the infrastructure of our

***This article is a part of an ongoing series written by Marktown Historian Paul A. Myers. For copies of prior articles please contact Paul at (219) 397-2239***

neighborhood. From the park redevelopment program of 1983 to the New Marktown Community Center, the city administration has set the stage for the total restoration of the Marktown Historic District. But just what needs to be done.

In conducting a detailed survey of the homes in Marktown we have found that of the approximately 210 residential properties in the neighborhood, over 20% are currently vacant. In reviewing the new property reassessments conducted by Cole Layer Trumble on behalf of the State of Indiana we find that, without exception, all of the properties in Marktown are depreciated by 50-65%.

To see Marktown preserved and hopefully restored we need several things. The first and foremost is a consolidated plan for the renovation and restoration of the neighborhood. The second is funding.

But just what needs to be done? Well, to begin, if you have more than one layer of shingles on your home, then it needs to be stripped and replaced. If your home doesn't have 100 amp electrical service, it needs to be upgraded. If you do not have an energy efficient gas furnace it should be upgraded. And what about central air conditioning? With the new energy efficient units it is a makes sense to change units now.

If your home has not had the internal water pipes replaced in the past 85 years, then chances are you have very, very low water pressure on the second floor, especially the hot water. And what about the cast iron sewer pipe that goes from the roof line to the exterior wall of the basement? Did you know that because Marktown was built during WWI that the pipe is referred to as Liberty Pipe? That's because they found out how to cast pipe thinner during the war years. What that

means to us is that many of the pipes are cracking and need to be replaced.

Have you looked at the chimney of your home lately? If you are missing mortar between the bricks you and your neighbor have a problem. What about windows and doors? Do you have bad wood in either? If you do, then chances are they should be replaced.

And what about those color schemes? Has anyone noticed how much better the buildings look if both sides of a duplex or all four units of a Marktown quad are painted in a consolidated paint scheme?

Yes, Marktown, all of Marktown needs work. While some owners have been able to reinvest in their property it is obvious that total

reinvestment is needed if Marktown is to survive. If reinvestment is provided it will need to be closely monitored and will need to be done under a consolidated plan. If the property values are to ever improve in Marktown then the reinvestment must be compatible with the Department of Interior Guidelines for Historic Preservation.



*Pine Ave. and the Old Marktown Park. The original park was designed by Jens Jensen, one of the nation's most renowned landscape architects. Note the open porches and historic lighting. At the end of the park was a wading pool and bath house.*

reinvestment is needed if Marktown is to survive. If reinvestment is provided it will need to be closely monitored and will need to be done under a consolidated plan. If the property values are to ever improve in Marktown then the reinvestment must be compatible with the Department of Interior Guidelines for Historic Preservation.

Is Marktown restorable? Yes! Do the homes and commercial properties in our neighborhood need a great degree of reinvestment? Yes! Would you like to see every home in this neighborhood not only restored but more importantly occupied? Yes! What will it take to get this done? Cooperation with one another! We, the residents of the Marktown Historic District need to work together if we are to see a positive future for OUR neighborhood. It is not up to you, it is up to All of us to make a difference. Let's give Marktown and historic preservation a chance! Let's work together for a brighter future for all of us.

***Life begins when you begin to serve. Serve your neighborhood. Serve Marktown. Volunteer to help make Marktown a Better, Cleaner and Safer Place to Live and Raise a Family.***

## **UTILITIES DIVISION COMES THROUGH ONCE AGAIN**

Far, far too often we take things for granted. Many are quick to criticize but few step forward and say THANK YOU when people do the right thing. This past month on December 2nd, 90% of Marktown was without electricity due to problems with the NIPSCO power grid. What many may not know is that the pump house on the corner of Broad Street and Spruce Avenue was also without power and the ground water and sewage began to back up.

Four years ago the Sanitary District updated the original 1917 Marktown Pump House and when they did they installed new pumps, motors and a computer actuated warning system that sends a radio signal to the Utilities Division Command Room.

Well, we are pleased to announce that the

system is functioning at 110% of capacity. Not only did the alarm go off when it was suppose to, but more importantly a crew was dispatched with a large diesel backup pump to resolve the problem. Unlike the electric pumps that go on and off automatically, the backup system had to be manned by the dedicated and vigilant employees of the Utilities Division.

Like we said, everyone complains when things don't work but people seldom if ever say thank you when they do work. So, on behalf of all of the residents of the Marktown Historic District who still have dry basements we say THANK YOU to the Utilities Division and to all of their hard working and dedicated employees. Once again the City of East Chicago has shown how well it really does work!

## **Parks and Recreation Department Provides Christmas Trees For Deserving Families**

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department for their most generous donation of Christmas trees for deserving families in Marktown. While I am sure that we would like to take credit for this program, we can not. The Parks Department donated trees to all of the community centers throughout East Chicago so

that they could be distributed to deserving families in virtually every neighborhood.

You know, when people make negative comments about East Chicago, they should take a look around and see just how well this city works. Yes, there are problems, but together we can resolve them. Special thanks goes to Joe Valdez of the Parks & Recreation Dept. and as usual to Mayor Pastrick!

## **So Just Who Writes for Marktown Update?**

**by Paul A. Myers**

You probably wouldn't think this possible, but guess what? Some people in East Chicago want to know who writes the articles in Marktown Update. Well, to be absolutely honest with you, while many of the articles are written by me, Paul Myers, a good number of them come from other residents of Marktown who just don't want to put their name to them. Why don't they want to take credit for what they write you ask? That's simple. Even as small as Marktown is we appear to have this problem between myself and one other person. And believe me, most people want to keep out of the middle of that problem.

While we noted that not all of the articles are authored by me personally, if you go back to some of the previous issues of Update you will not only find articles with other people listed as the author, but you will probably spot articles that were obviously not written by me.

No, Marktown Update is NOT printed in any part by the City of East Chicago, nor have I ever

spent one minute of city time working on any issue of this paper. It is paid for by former Marktown Dan McArdle, and we thank him for his generosity.

It is amazing to think that while so much stink was raised over the insert in the December issue, no one from Marktown or anywhere else ever picked up the phone or sent me a letter or any other negative communication in relation to that article or any other issue of Marktown Update.

When we first began printing Update we did so for one reason. To keep our residents informed and to provide you with positive information on OUR community.

Several times over the past year I have offered our Democratic Precinct Committee Person the opportunity to include any comments or articles in Update. To this date she has refused to participate. The offer is still open, both to her and to anyone else who wants to make a positive change in the Marktown Historic District. So why not pitch in and write a POSITIVE article for OUR Update?

# JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR MARKTOWN AND EAST CHICAGO CITY RESIDENTS

by Paul A. Myers

With the awarding of the contract for the New Marktown Community Center in December of 2003 Joe Valdez, Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Department and Board President Alex Sarkesian have pledged to do all within their power to see that the various municipal ordinances which require minority participation and the employment of East Chicago residents on the job site is enforced.

The two ordinances that they are talking about are E.C. Ordinance No. 3442 which requires that 50% of the skilled and non skilled jobs on new construction projects over \$100,000 be filled by actual residents of East Chicago. There is also an Affirmative Action Ordinance which requires that at least 50% of the work force for all contractors shall be minority employees.

Mr. Valdez announced that at some point in January he will host a meeting in Marktown and at least one other meeting elsewhere in East Chicago with the intention of providing a venue for those seeking temporary employment on the construction of the new center.

While the details of the plan have yet to be worked out, we do have some suggestions for those looking for employment.

1. If you have an opportunity to be gainfully employed now, TAKE IT. There are absolutely no guarantees that you will be hired for the construction of the new community center.

2. If you are in a training program that will provide you with a union card at some point in the future, you may want to apply for a job on the new community center. You may be able to continue your training and actually work on the new center at the same time.

3. If you are currently holding a union card in one of the construction or trade unions and are unemployed but are employable, you will definitely want to show up at one of the meetings.

Here is the problem. Many of the people that are looking for jobs have not finished high

school or don't have a GED. That obviously restricts your marketability in reference to employment. How do you increase your marketability in the work force? Finish high school or get your GED! NOW!!!

Not having a GED or diploma will not stop you from being employed, but it may move you down the hiring list. Even on this job they will need laborers. While they may not be the highest paying jobs, they will give you the opportunity to prove yourself in the job market. You may also qualify for additional training or an apprenticeship program. Where you take it from there is up to you.

So, what do you do next? TRY TO FIND A JOB! If you are still looking when Mr. Valdez announces the meetings, show up and be ready to at least fill out a job application.

Where else might you find employment? **WorkOne Express** in East Chicago may be where you want to go. To start that process just call 398-2601 for an appointment. You'll need a photo ID, social security number, proof of residency, citizenship/alien status, selective service acknowledgment (if applicable) and school status. They will also need a copy of your birth certificate and proof of income. Basically, they will want to know all they can about you and your prior employment history.

**WorkOne Express** is currently located at 720 West Chicago and they will not only help to evaluate your possible placement in the work force, but they also offer educational opportunities and job placement services. Along with this they also have a **Discovery Lab** where you can **Explore Your Potential**. This is yet another **FREE PROGRAM**, For information on the **Discovery Lab** or **WorkOne Express** just call 398-2601.

Don't forget to watch for the Parks & Recreation Department flyer in your mail box in January 2004. Until then, happy job hunting and please help look out for your neighbors!

## ***New Marktown Community Center Moves Forward***

When people have asked me before about the construction start date for the New Marktown Community Center I have always said that we would be doing good if we began construction in mid 2003. Don't look now but I was right, and more importantly I was right for all of the correct reasons. Why the delay? Well, believe it or not it takes time for such projects to get from the initial planning stages to the actual construction.

The plans for the new center began over eight years ago with the determination that all of the community centers throughout East Chicago need to be updated, expanded or replaced. But remember, Marktown is one of the smallest neighborhoods in the entire city. We had to wait our turn. 5th District Councilman Adrian Santos and Marktown Democratic Precinct Committeeman Richard Suchanuk saw to it that we were put into the planning process for the funds. That was eight year ago.

About two years ago, one year before the last Mayoral Primary, our Democratic Precinct Committee Person Barbara Perez was asked to appoint a committee to work on the design of the new building. That took about a year to finally get the plans drawn up and approved by the community.

Where are we in the process now? That's simple. On November 3rd and 17th, a legal bid announcement was placed in the local newspapers advising any and all contractors of the intention to build the center and soliciting their participation in the project.

On Tuesday, December 9th eight contractors and sub contractors were present at East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department for the official public bid openings for the New Marktown Community Center. A total of eight contractors submitted bids for the project. Before we go further we want to tell you that the bidding process took about thirty days. It was announced in the newspapers twice and the bids had to be properly labeled, sealed and received by the Parks Department no later than 8:30 on the morning of the bid opening.

Each of the various companies who submitted bids were required to complete a non-colusion affidavit. Along with this they had to pro-

vide a copy of their corporate financial statement and a bid bond to guarantee that if they are awarded the contract that they will move forward and sign that contract if approved by the board.

The bids themselves were broken down into four sections. The first and foremost was the Total Base Bid for the initial construction of the building. The bids for this portion of the project ran from \$2,675,400 at the low end to \$2,998,000 at the high end. It should be noted that the 15% variance between the high and low end is standard on a project this size.

The next three line items were for additional work that may or may not be included in the project. This included a line item for: (A) Lawn and Irrigation, (B) Fire Suppressions System, and (C) Electrical work to the shelter at the Pine Avenue end of the park. The total average price for all three line items is about \$50,000.00.

Following the opening of the bids and prior to closing the special meeting it was agreed that the Commissioners would await the recommendations of the architectural firm that designed the building and that of council. Both agreed that their recommendation would be provided prior to the next special meeting on December 16th at 8:30 AM at which time the Board of Park Commissioners would award the contract.

The meeting on the 16th of December went very well. While Brant Construction had the lowest bid, they failed to meet the requirements of the bidding process. At the recommendation of the architects the contract was awarded to Gariup Construction at a total contract price of \$2,749,000.

Even though the contract has been approved, don't look for the project to actually start in the next thirty to sixty days. The general contractor will now have to produce shop drawing, the steel for the structure will then have to be ordered and received, and oh yes, by the time they get the shop drawings completed the ground will be frozen and the cement plants will be closed for the season. Unless we have an extremely mild winter, plan on seeing the actual construction begin sometime in the spring of 2004 with a completion date of mid to late 2005 (*if we are very lucky*).

***Paul A. Myers, Marktown Historian***