



MARKTOWN UPDATE

A publication of the Marktown Preservation Society

June 2004

THE THIRD SAVE IS THE CHARM:

So Let's ALL WORK TOGETHER To See Marktown Fully Restored!

by Paul A. Myers

The first time that Marktown was saved from the wrecker's ball was back in the 1950's when Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company wanted to build their No. 2 Tin Mill and zone all of that property and Marktown as industrial so they could later buy out the owners and raze the property. My grandfather, Chester R. Williams who was a supervisor at YS&T, not only lead the fight to save Marktown but also persuaded YS&T to donate the land on which the park on Pine Avenue and Broad Street was to be constructed.

The second time that Marktown was saved was in the early 1970's when Cline Avenue was going to go down Dickey Road to 129th Street and then connect into the Indiana Toll Road. This time Mayor Robert A. Pastrick, Marktowners James Ginther and Bill Hess and city attorney William Morrisroe along with a good number of Marktown residents (including myself) worked together and placed Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places and in doing so forced the U.S. Government to move Cline Avenue from Dickey Road to it's current location.

Had Cline Avenue gone down Dickey Road, the federal government would have purchased the property in Marktown under the eminent domain laws and then put the Riley Road exit and entrance ramps in the area that we know as the Marktown Historic District.

Because of our listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Marktown Park was redeveloped in the early 1980's and the Marktown street and sidewalk project was designed in accordance with the original concepts of Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw.

The third time Marktown was saved from

the wrecker's ball was this past winter when 80% of the Marktown property owners gave the Marktown Preservation Society and I permission to represent them in the informal appeals process of the Indiana Supreme Court mandated assessment program. Had we not appealed the obviously over assessed values of our homes we would have now been paying literally thousands of dollars in property tax each year for each prop-

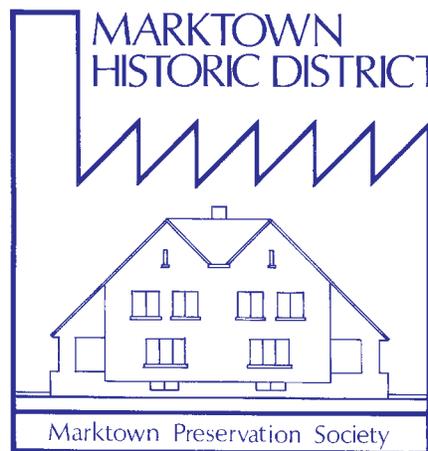
erty. That would have been senior citizens and everyone else. Oh yes and if you rent, your rent would have had to have gone up about \$150-\$350 per month just to cover the increase in the property taxes.

Why was it that the Marktown Preservation Society was so successful in our appeal? That's simple: we had 80% of the property owners stand behind us in our efforts.

You see, the Marktown Preservation Society wants to work with everyone; Latino, African American and virtually everyone else in not only preserving this most unique neighborhood, but more importantly in seeing to it that each and every property is not only brought up to code, but just as importantly, to see that the properties comply with the Department of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation.

Let's all work together to make the Marktown Historic District a better, cleaner and safer place to live, and to raise our families. And in doing so, let's adopt the precepts of historic preservation as the cornerstone of this most unique neighborhood.

If you would like to see a copy of the written appeal for the reassessment or have any questions about code compliance or historic preservation, just call Paul Myers at 397-2239.



Lake County Welcome Center Hosts "Cultural Connections" --- *an exhibit that includes the Marktown Historic District and much, much more!*

Upon the backdrop of Marktown's unique English country architecture a most unique tapestry of social life has been woven for more than eighty-five years. Early resident of Marktown made their way here as immigrants from eastern and western Europe, all with the hope and aspiration of a better life in America. While as early as the 1920's immigrants from Mexico found their way to this visionary utopia, they did not become an active part of the neighborhood until the late 1960's and early 1970's when they actually began purchasing property in Marktown.

This very theme has repeated itself in neighborhoods in virtually all of the cities and towns in Lake County and the greater Calumet Region for more than 100 years. This is the concept that will be highlighted in an exhibit titled **Cultural Connections: One Region - Many Voices** which opens at the **Lake County Welcome Center** in Hammond on Saturday, May 29 and will continue through July 11th.

The Marktown Preservation Society (MPS) is pleased to be a partner in this outstanding exhibit. Original black and white photographs from the MPS collection will be on display along with the work of nationally recognized photographers David Jordano of Chicago and Tracy Albana, formerly of The Times.

We are very please to announce that the City of East Chicago will also be participating with the assistance of Gloria Dosen, project coordinator for the East Chicago Public Library East Chicago Room. The East Chicago Room is the repository of countless photographs and artifacts that detail East Chicago's most unique heritage.

Did you know that 100 years ago more than 90 different nationalities made East Chicago their home? Well, it's true, and once again this theme will be echoed throughout the entire exhibit.

The East Chicago portion of the exhibit will include photographs from the East Chicago Room along with a display case which will hold a portion of their rare book collection. One of the key concepts that will be explained in the E.C. portion of the exhibit will be the concept of the "Twin Cities." For more than fifty years the city of East Chicago was well known throughout the Midwest as the Twin Cities - East Chicago on one side and Indiana Harbor on the opposite. Do you know why? Well, if you don't you will have to visit the exhibit to find out.

Another item on display will be the recently restored 1935 mural from the East Chicago City Court by East Chicago artist Ernest Kacias. Come and share in YOUR heritage!



This is one of the many photographs that will be used to celebrate the cultural heritage and diversity that is so unique to the Marktown Historic District.

Photo by Tracy Albana

play case which will hold a portion of their rare book collection. One of the key concepts that will be explained in the E.C. portion of the exhibit will be the concept of the "Twin Cities." For more than fifty years the city of East Chicago was well



The Lake County Welcome center is located at 180/94 and Kennedy Avenue in Hammond, Indiana. Come, join us for this most exiting exhibit and help celebrate our history!

We have but three choices; we can burn bridges, we can build bridges or we can restore bridges. Before we build or burn, let's work together to preserve those few precious bridges that we have. Marktown is but a bridge unto the past. Let's work together to restore it before it is too late!

The Tradition of Baseball Continues in Marktown

For David and Ryan Rodriguez of Park Street lacing up baseball cleats is as natural as swinging a baseball bat at a fast ball or sliding into home plate to score a winning run. Their mother Kim says that *"Baseball is in their blood and I'm glad. All of my boys have played ball and seeing these two on the varsity team at East Chicago Central means more to me than anyone can imagine."*

It doesn't take a lot to see the enthusiasm on their faces when either of the boys walk onto the field. While Ryan usually plays left field, David, the older of the two brothers has played just about every position except

first base and he loves every minute of it.

Earlier this season the E.C. Cardinals had the opportunity to play one of their games at the new Rail Cat's stadium in Gary and David was to pitch that memorable game. Afterwards he said *"I can't*

tell you what it was like walking out to the mound on a professional baseball field. I knew that this was my one chance to show what I am made of. I just wanted to cry." They won that game and many more this season. And yes, David Rodriguez was named Player of the Year by the coaches. Well done David and Ryan. All of Marktown is cheering for you now and in the future.



Marktown residents and E.C. Cardinals players Ryan Rodriguez (left) and David Rodriguez (right) are the only Marktown youth in varsity sports at the present time.

Teamwork Makes Ayala Family Picnic Possible

"It probably doesn't take teamwork to make a picnic happen..." said Marktown Preservation Society (MPS) member Paul Myers *"...but it helps."* When the Ayala family decided to have a picnic/birthday party for one of their grandchildren they knew that it would take teamwork and help from everyone. Not knowing what the procedures were for having a picnic in the park they went to Paul Myers and ask what it would take to get the permit, have ten extra picnic tables delivered and yes, what about bathroom facilities?

The answer was a lot simpler than many may think because Paul knew that the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department is always ready to lend a hand for the residents of this great city. *"It was a Sunday afternoon when they approached me and I didn't have a problem sending the request via*

fax to the Parks Department Superintendent that very afternoon. By 9:00 AM on Monday morning we had approval and the picnic was a go."

The Friday before the picnic found Parks Department employees dropping off picnic tables and completing the work on the washrooms at the park maintenance building. Saturday found the Ayala family there early setting up. Approximately 100 people

arrived throughout the day for the bar-b-que and picnic and all had a truly great time.

It took teamwork on the part of the Ayala family to do all of the cooking and to invite all of their family and friends. The MPS and the Parks Department also pitched in but that's what friend, neighbors and neighborhoods are all about.. working together to make life better for one and all. That's what Marktown is about!



Picnic in the Marktown Park is what summer is all about. The Ayala Family knows that and so does everyone else in the neighborhood!

A new motto for Marktown: Try to leave things better than you found them!

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR HISTORIC HOMES

by Paul A. Myers

There is an old adage that says "There are only two things certain in life: death and taxes." We have all heard it said and I think we all understand what it alludes to. This past year the Marktown Preservation Society assisted more than thirty homeowner in our neighborhood in the filing mortgage, homestead and senior citizen exemptions, thus greatly reducing the amount of their property tax. We are very pleased to step forward and be the first to explain a totally new exemption: ***The Historic Property Renovation Exemption.***

One of the first qualifications for this exemption is that the residence be fifty years old or older. Well, that takes in all of Marktown and most of East Chicago as far as that goes. The state statute that covers this is IC 6-1.1-12-22 through 24. It reads:

(a) If the assessed value of property is increased because it has been rehabilitated and the owner has paid at least ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00) for the rehabilitation, the owner is entitled to have deducted from the assessed value of the property an amount equal to fifty percent (50%) of the increase in assessed value resulting from the rehabilitation. The owner is entitled to this deduction annually for a five (5) year period. However, the maximum deduction which a property owner may receive under this section for a particular year is:

(1) One hundred twenty-four thousand eight hundred dollars (\$124,800) for a single family dwelling unit; or

(2) three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) for any other type of property.

(b) For purposes of this section, the term "property" means a building or structure which was erected at least fifty (50) years before the date of application for the deduction provided by this section. The term "property" does not include land.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the term "rehabilitation" means significant repairs, replacements, or improvements to an existing structure that are intended to increase the livability, utility, safety or value of the property under rules adopted by the department of local government finance.

The form required for this exemption is 322A. While they are available at the North Township and Lake County Assessors Offices the Marktown Preservation Society is pleased to make them available to Marktown property owners and anyone else who owns property in East Chicago who qualifies and may wish to apply.

The form is very simple to fill out and is only one page long. It requires simple information based upon the requirements of the state statute. We would recommend a few things before you even consider this exemption:

1. Take "before and after" photos of the property to show the exact problems that were resolved in the renovation process.

2. Put together a budget for the entire project and build in cost over runs that are bound to happen.

3. If you or your family are doing the work yourself, document the renovation by keeping a file of all receipts for materials purchased and if possible a listing of the hours on a day by day basis.

4. If you are having a contractor do any or all of the work, make sure that he is a licensed and bonded contractor in East Chicago and that he has a certificate of insurance covering not only damage to your property, but more importantly, Workmen's Compensation.

5. When the job is completed, make sure you take new photographs to prove the work was done properly.

Oh yes, and don't forget to go to the Building Department at City Hall and ***MAKE SURE YOU OBTAIN THE PROPER PERMITS FOR THE WORK BEING DONE!***

The renovation and restoration of historic homes can be fun and rewarding. Doing the job right the first time is always important. And don't forget that the Marktown Preservation Society is here to help each and every property owner to make this most unique community a cleaner, better and safer place to live, work and raise our families. *We would like to thank Councilman-At-Large Anthony Copeland for giving us the heads up on this one. His tip lead us to do the research into this most important piece of legislation.*

Need to e-mail us? You can contact Paul at pmyers@eastchicago.com

Foundations of East Chicago Provides Funding for the Marktown Preservation Society

The first week of June brought good news to Marktown Preservation Society President Rafael Bejar. With the awarding of yet another round of grants from the Foundations of East Chicago we were pleased to see that two projects submitted for funding by the Marktown Preservation Society have been 100% funded.

The first is a \$7,500.00 project titled **Where's Marktown**. So, just where are these funds to be spent you ask? Do you know where the planter is on Riley Road and Pine Avenue in the Marktown Park? Well, we are going to have another planter identical to this at the corner of Dickey Road and 129th Street.

A number of years ago it was the Marktown Preservation Society that applied for and received a similar grant from the Foundations of East Chicago for the first planter and sign, and they have come through for us once again with this second planter.

Over the past four years since the first planter was installed we have shown the Foundations of East Chicago and the residents of Marktown the importance of working together as neighbors. The first planter has been maintained by members of the Marktown Preservation Society and other residents of the Marktown Historic District.

The second planter will help guide people to our neighborhood and will assist us in improving our community image. With luck the new planter will be installed in late July or early August. With a little more luck we may even be able to get the East Chicago Parks Department to donate several hundred tulips this fall so they can be planted in the new planter. You know, like they

did last year in the other planter.

The second project funded was for **Marktown Update - A Community Based Newsletter**. As you are aware Mr. Dan McArdle has been funding the printing of the newsletter for over a year now. This particular grant will cover approximately \$1,000.00 for the cost of film, processing and postage for the newsletter. These much needed funds will free up the current and most limited funds that we have been using for these items.

Marktown Update is hand delivered to more than 170 homes in the Marktown Historic District. Along with this it is also delivered free of charge to city officials and superintendents of the various municipal department throughout East Chicago. But wait, that isn't the entire circulation. We also mail Marktown Update to more than 200 people throughout the Calumet Region and yes, across the entire United States. People from Washington state to Florida and back have asked to be included in our monthly mailings. With our mailing list constantly expanding and the cost of postage

increasing every year or so, the additional funding is greatly appreciated for this project.

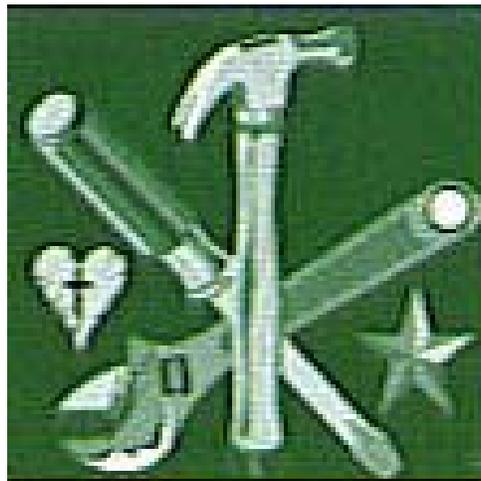
Once again the Marktown Preservation Society has stepped forward to take a leadership position in this community. If you would like more information in reference to other activities or programs offered by MPS, look to Marktown Update or stop by and see one of our officers:

Rafael Bejar, President

Jack Pranaitis, Vice President

Paul Myers, Secretary/Treasurer

Together, all things are possible. Let's all work together to make Marktown of the Dan McGinnis.



The printing of this newsletter was made possible through the generosity of the Dan McGinnis.

Marktown Community Center Made Handicap Accessible A Success Story Worth Telling

Lourdes Hicks doesn't like taking no for an answer, and so it was when our local precinct committee person told her that she wouldn't support having a ramp installed at the Old Community Center that Lourdes decided to take action. As we noted in a previous issue of Marktown Update, Lourdes Munoz-Hicks is an advocate for the disabled.

Her goal was simple: that in accordance with the American Disabilities Act that all public buildings be made handicap accessible, and yes that included our Old Marktown Community Center.

While the initial request was to have the building equipped with a ramp before the May Primary Election, the concept that those in wheel chairs be granted permanent access to the building was equally as important. After all, we do have a number



of senior citizens and even at least one younger person who is relatively confined to a wheel chair. While the Parks and Recreation Superintendent was a bit reluctant to install the ramp, Dr. Raykovich and the Office of the Mayor stepped in to see that the ramp was completed in time for the election.

It should be noted that the Parks and Recreation office where they hold their monthly board meetings is also not handicap accessible. I would think that some intelligent person might want to point out that they need to fix the problem or move their board meetings.

The concept that everyone is to be included, not excluded from the standard and routine business of government appears to have lost its way through the turmoils of the time. Isn't it time that everyone be counted in?

Marktown Residents Participate In "Count Us In" Program

Handicap accessibility is no longer an option, it's the law. That's plain and simple and the Governor's Planing Council for People with Disabilities took a giant stride forward this past election day when dozens of volunteers spent much of the day surveying the more than three hundred polling places in Lake County, completing forms and making an assessment if the polling places meet the minimum standards for those in wheel chairs or have other disabilities.

Why are we bringing this up in Marktown Update? Because four of our residents spent much of election day working on this project. Lourdes Munoz-Hicks for the most part lead the way by telling the others of the program and virtually recruiting them for the project. She was joined by Rose Soto of Lilac

Street, Leslie (Hick) Guajardo of Broad Street and of course Paul Myers (we know where he lives).

Each of the volunteers attended a special training program the week before the election and each had a number of sites to be surveyed. When asked what he thought of the program Paul Myers said

"What an outstanding opportunity to serve those less fortunate than us. I had no idea just how difficult it is to get in and out of some of the polling places in Lake County."

The federal law requires that all polling places be totally accessible by 2005. Here in Indiana we have an extra year because after the Presidential Election this fall we will not have another election until 2006. Our thanks and appreciation goes out to all of the volunteers who are making a positive change.



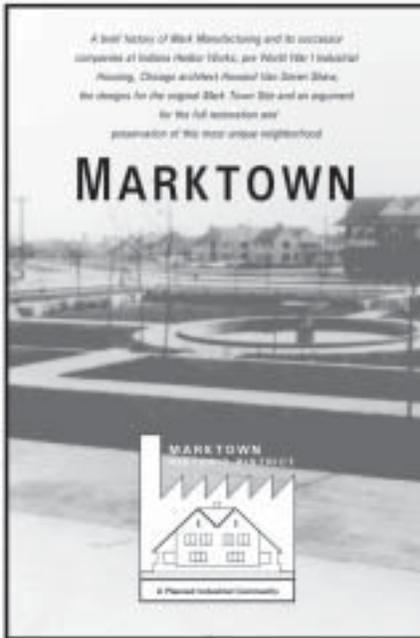
Unless History Lives In The Present It Has No Future

Marktown Booklet Available Later This Month

It's done! After more work than we planned and after having to put the project on the back burner for several months due to the property reassessment the Marktown Preservation Society is very pleased to announce the first edition of this exciting new resource is available. As we noted last month it will be delivered to Marktown mail boxes later this month.

We will also have a limited number of copies available at the Marktown portion of the Cultural Connections exhibit at the Lake County Visitor's Center on Kennedy Avenue and I80/94 in Hammond.

Will we be mailing them out? Absolutely! Unfortunately, due to the cost of the publication and more importantly the cost of mailing, we will only be mailing copies out to those who have fi-



nancially supported the efforts of the Marktown Preservation Society this past year.

So, just what is in this exciting new booklet? Try this: The 20+ page booklet includes a brief history of Mark Manufacturing and its successor companies at Indiana Harbor Works. It has an outstanding section on pre World War I Industrial Housing. There is a section on Marktown's architect Howard Van Doren Shaw as well as a section on the designs for the original Mark Town Site. And yes there is a section that discusses the need for the full restoration, renovation and preservation of this most unique neighborhood.

The booklet is a part of the East Chicago Library's ongoing series of historical booklets which detail the history of this great city. Have questions? Call Paul!

ISG and Parks Department Help To Clean Up Around Marktown

Team work is always the best way to get things done and once again that is exactly what is happening around Marktown. In the summer of 2003 the Marktown Preservation Society wrote letters to the various industries on Riley Road, Dickey Road and 129th Street and asked that they pay a bit more attention to the degree of stewardship at their properties. Not only did they agree, but they made a positive impact in the appearance to the roads and streets that lead to our neighborhood.

Without any prompting from anyone this year International Steel Group Indiana Harbor Inc. and the East Chicago Parks Department have been busy taking care of business and things are looking better each and every week.

Several weeks ago Parks Department personnel were seen cleaning up the grounds around the Riley Road exit of Cline Avenue. Brush was cut back,

weeds cut down and the trash that blows into this area every winter was cleaned up.

This past month found workers from ISG cleaning up on Riley Road behind the old Mill Gate Inn and at the vacant lot just north of Michels Bar & Grill. What most people don't know is that ISG doesn't even own these two parcels of land. No, they decided to clean up these most unsightly areas because what looks bad on these lots looks bad for them and yes the Marktown Historic District.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to both the East Chicago Parks Department and ISG for doing such an outstanding job, all without any prompting from residents of



this community.

Now it is our turn. Let's all work together to clean up Marktown and make this a truly cleaner, better and safer place to live and to raise our families.

***Let's Work Together To Preserve Marktown's Unique History
And Architecture For Future Generations***

Another Benefit of Being Precinct Committee Person

by Paul A. Myers

Just when we had all of the benefits of being Democratic Precinct Committee Person figured out, look what they have managed to do. This past month on Arbor Day the City of East Chicago was named a "Tree City" for having planted as many trees as we have these past few years. It is a great honor and it shows that we are environmentally aware of our surroundings.

On Friday, May 14th a Parks Department fork lift escorted by a Parks Department truck delivered two trees to the Marktown Historic District.

Any guesses where they were planted? If you guessed in Fred Avila's yard on Park Street (the vice-democratic committee person) and on Barbara Perez's home on Grove Street that her son Dante lives in you are absolutely correct.



As we noted in a previous article, full employment and charity begin at home and that is exactly what has happened here. Did anyone offer you a free tree at the expense of the City of East Chicago? Not unless you are related!

And no, they didn't even offer free trees to the Republican Precinct Committeeman. But then again, he's far too honest to have taken any even if offered.

Follow-up: We thought you might like to know that on Monday, May 24th the two trees were removed from their yards. It appears that Mrs. Perez had asked Parks Superintendent Joe Valdez for two trees for Marktown. She just didn't bother to tell him they were for her private property. Maybe someday we can live without thieves and liars next door.



New Marktown Community Center Construction Update

I hate to be the one that has to say this but no, they will not begin the construction of the proposed New Marktown Community Center this year. Before we go any further I would like to say that I personally don't think this was an empty campaign promise. It is my personal belief that Mayor Pastrick truly intended to see this center built, but it just won't be built this year. I also don't think that it is the administration's fault. Let me explain.

As most of the residents in Marktown who pay property taxes know, the tax bills have been delayed since last November. East Chicago only collected 70% of the 2003 tax revenues and absolutely none of the 2004 installments. This past month a Superior Court Judge threw out the Cole Layer Trumble property reassessment. The Lake County Treasurer has said that the adjusted bills cannot be sent out for at least eight months. What this means is that by the time East Chicago receives any additional property tax revenue they will have waited over a year just to complete the 30% due from last year, not to mention that there is a chance that none of the 2004 revenues will

be received at all this year.

Because of this the decision has been made, and rightfully so, to utilize the gaming funds to keep this city functioning. From my perspective I would rather be promised a new community center in the future than to be told we will never get one at all.

One last comment. No, they aren't picking on Marktown. All of the projects that were to utilize gaming revenue have been put on hold. The Tod Park project, historic street lights throughout the city and the new fire station/police sub unit have all been set aside for the present time. Why are we the one that has to tell you? Because that's what we do! We try to keep you informed of what is going on in Marktown!

P.S. --- The Marktown Preservation Society has addressed a number of problems in reference to the current community center to Mayor Pastrick and the Parks Department Board of Commissioners. Hopefully they will understand the need to do the right thing. We are also soliciting a contribution of \$2,700,000 from sources outside of Marktown so that the New Marktown Community Center can still be built.

***Collecting information is the first step towards wisdom.
Sharing information is the first step towards community.***

RESPECTING YOUR NEIGHBORS AND THEIR PROPERTY: *An important concept in Marktown and all of East Chicago*

by Paul A. Myers

In 2003 Marktown Update included a pair of articles titled: "**Fixing Broken Windows... Pulling Weeds and Eliminating Graffiti!**" (September '03) and "**We've Fixed the Broken Windows. But We Need Everyone's Help To Truly Fix the Problem!**" (October '03). The articles did exactly what they were suppose to do. They defined the problems, the solutions and made everyone aware of the situation. The rash of broken windows ceased and the break ins of vacant properties were eliminated, that is until this spring when the weather warmed up and the new people who moved in over the winter months started venturing into the neighborhood more and more.

Before I go any further I need to clarify several things. This is not a problem that is restricted to just Marktown or even East Chicago. This is a regional problem caused primarily by the elimination or reduction in the number of federally funded or subsidized housing units in Chicago. While the subject has been addressed at a number of regional forums no viable solutions have been brought forward. This is also not a racial problem so please, don't pick up the phone and start calling the local press and saying that Paul Myers is insensitive or even worse, a racist. If you know me at all, you know that just isn't the case.

There are solutions to the problems at hand but they can only be applied on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. Before we discuss the solutions, we must define the problems.

The Problems: To simplify things greatly, the primary problem is that the younger members of the families that have moved here this past winter have never been taught to respect the property of others. They see no harm in breaking into homes, vacant or occupied. They see no harm in stealing from others, whether it be a bicycle, lawn equipment or other property. They see no harm in breaking windows on cars or homes.

Another part of the problem is that the parents are either unwilling or unable to keep the young people in their charge under control. It is also very important to remember that the vast majority of the problems in this and other com-

munities are the direct result of families that not only rent, but that rent from property owners who do not live in the immediate neighborhood. In renting to tenants they are only concerned with obtaining the rent and not in the social fabric of the neighborhood itself.

I think that you all remember the problems caused by the Montanez family that originally rented from me on Spring Street. When I realized what they were doing I evicted them. Unfortunately they moved into a home on Liberty Street which was owned by an out of town property owner. Their crime spree only got worse but fortunately for all of us they finally moved out.

An Example of the Problem: A family has moved into this neighborhood this past winter and rents from yes, an out of town landlord who lives in Hobart. There are four last names on their mail box. I personally caught one of the older boys breaking into a vacant building. During the confrontation with one of the parents we also discovered that they had stolen a bicycle that very morning. In the conversation that ensued I found that the young man who had vandalized the property had been taken from his grandmothers home in Chicago and brought here because he was doing the exact same thing in Chicago. We did recover the bicycle and much to my dismay, one of the younger children that I had personally tutored at the Community Center was also involved in the theft and concealment of the bicycle.

While I had assurances from the adult members of the household that this type of activity would not be permitted, that just hasn't been the case. This last month I kept hearing the noise of a BB gun being fired. One of the older boys was laying in bed shooting up the back of the garage across the street from where they live. I told him what I thought of his actions in no uncertain terms. About two hours later I heard the same noise again. When I looked down the street one of the adults that lives in the home was washing down the street and just behind him was the same youth shooting at birds with the BB gun. The adult knew what he was doing this and did nothing to stop him. Not only don't they respect the property

of others, they also don't respect life itself.

I would also like to point out that the last time I spoke to the adults of the family they told me that the problem isn't theirs. It is all of the other children in the neighborhood who now constantly visit their home. What is important to remember is that we did not have these problems until they moved in. They have fostered the crime wave, the vandalism wave and the gang wave with the attitude that this is but another ghetto that they can destroy..... and it is not!

While this is a substantiated case and not a fictional example of the problem it should be noted that there are at least three families in Marktown who have moved here from the projects in Chicago, rent from out of town property owners and have absolutely no concept of what living in and being a part of a neighborhood is all about. It is apparent that their lack of respect for property that they do not own (public or private) is endemic and most unfortunately fostered by the parents who just don't care.

The problem is also compounded by the fact that absolutely none of the children in this household attend school. That's right, they are stay at home kids who have little or no adult supervision so they amuse themselves by seeing how far they can push the envelope of their destructive behavior in our neighborhood.

The Solution: There are several concepts that can be applied to this problem. The first and foremost is that of attempting to educate the family members in reference to what is socially, morally and legally correct in this or any other neighborhood. This is done initially with the adults and ultimately with the children though the participation of the (non) supervising adults who are ultimately responsible for the actions of any and all children residing in their home.

If we are unable to educate them in reference to the inappropriateness of breaking into homes, theft and vandalism, then we must work together to either prevent the problem or to at least be willing to press charges and pursue the matter through the judicial process of the courts.

That means that we have to stand up for each other in all such matters. If you see someone, anyone vandalizing property or breaking into

your neighbors home YOU NEED TO GET INVOLVED. The least that you can do is call the police. If you can identify the person, be willing to not only sign a statement, but be equally as willing to testify in court. If you are not willing to stand up for the safety and security of your neighbors property, then how can you expect them to intervene on your behalf at a later date?

Another thing that we can do is to not only file complaints with the East Chicago Police Department, but we can also personally notify the property owner either by phone or preferably in writing. If you do so, please make it a point of sending a copy of the letter to both the Chief of Police and to the East Chicago Building Department.

If you need the name, address or telephone number of any of the property owners in Marktown, please feel free in calling me at my home (397-2239). If I do not have a current listing I will make it a point of getting the information for you.

Things to Remember:

1. The East Chicago Police Department cannot be on every street in every neighborhood 24 hours a day. We are here and we have to take the primary responsibility for looking out for one another.

2. Do not get personally involved if a crime is being committed. CALL the POLICE and take written notes as to what happened and what they looked like.

3. If it is a problem that can be resolved by speaking with the child or the parents, please take the time to try and work out the situation BEFORE it escalates.

4. If you want respect, you have to start by being respectful to others. This also applies to property. Throwing garbage in the street is a sign of disrespect for your entire neighborhood. Picking up someone else's garbage is a sign of a community working together to resolve the problems at hand.

Let's all work together to make Marktown a truly great place to work, live and to raise our families. Let's make this a cleaner, better and safer place. This is OUR neighborhood and until we are willing to stand up for it, no one else will!

(June 2004)