



# MARKTOWN UPDATE

*A publication of the Marktown Preservation Society*

*November 2003*

## HALLOWEEN HAUNTINGS IN MARKTOWN

Halloween has come and gone and with it fall is now officially upon us. The leaves have turned and if they have not fallen they soon will. Friday, October 31st was once again celebrated by what appeared to be hundreds of children from our neighborhood going door to door for their annual trick or treat.

But wait -- what was that bump, that thump in the dark? Was it the neighbor's cat? Was it the drunk neighbor, or was that one of the ghosts of residents past, come back to pay their respect, or just to scare the bejeebers out of the unexpected?

The question of a haunting in Marktown had never been discussed before, at least not in public. At least not out of the privacy and solitude of our homes. But the conversation began.

The telling of the tale of lights being turned on and off at odd hours of the night, of doors being unlocked and then slamming shut and televisions and radios mysteriously turning on at untold hours of the night, all led to but one conclusion - a haunting in Marktown!

If per chance this was the only story of a haunted house in our tiny little neighborhood, then it could be passed off as a few too many last call drinks at the local bar. But it isn't the only story told that dark evening in Marktown, and it probably won't be the last.

Having heard the story another Marktown resident sat stunned and then spoke up. "No, no!" he said "Not another!" He went on to tell the story, the story of an older couple that lived in Marktown years ago. A family that raised four children, and then lived alone. The husband, who we will not name

had quit smoking, or at least that is what he had told his loving wife of fifty or more years. Actually, he had not quit, nor had he gotten rid of all of those ash trays. He kept his favorite ash tray on the workbench in the basement and he hid his cigarettes in a coffee can on a shelf above that bench. When all was quiet, when his wife was either out or fast asleep, he would steal down to the basement for that occasional well deserved cigarette. Years later, that kindly gentleman died of all things, of lung cancer.

Now if this was just a case of another cancer death from cigarettes, there would be no story at all. But years later, the next person who would move into the house would meet this kindly person and share a cigarette or two with him from time to time.

You see, the next person to reside in the house was a

single man in his 20's, who by the way smoked. He did not have a washing machine and seldom if ever went to the basement, at least at first. At least until he met the prior resident.

You see, every week or two, the ashtray that he kept on the night stand next to the bed would disappear. Not just from the night stand, but from the house. And then, without reason, without warning, it would reappear on the workbench in the basement where he and the former resident would share a cigarette or two.

Was there a haunting in Marktown or was it just a story to muse the children (and adults) of this most unique neighborhood? Until next Halloween, don't always assume that the bump in the night was the neighbors cat. It could just be an old friend looking for a cigarette and his missing ash tray. Let's work together as Marktown's own ghost busters!



# ***Saving Marktown From the Wreckers Ball!***

In 1975, during Mayor Pastrick's first term in office, he, Marktowners Bill Hess and James Ginther, East Chicago attorney William Morrisroe and a number of other Marktown residents stepped forward and placed Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places. In doing so we forced the federal government to move Cline Avenue from Dickey Road to its current location. You see, federal, state and now casino dollars can not be used to raze or alter historic buildings or to change their architectural character. Had Cline Avenue gone through on Dickey Road, one-third to one-half of Marktown would have been razed (torn down).

So, besides preventing our neighborhood from being partially torn down, what has being on the National Register gotten us so far? A lot more than what some people in this community either know about or want to talk about. You see, there are some people in this community who have stepped forward publicly and made some really irresponsible comments about a subject that they know little or nothing about. That subject is Historic Preservation. But I digress. Let's get back to what our being a National Landmark has meant to this community over the past three decades and what it can mean to us in the very near future.

One of the very first things that was planned back in 1975 was the restoration and renovation of our 13 acres of parks and the upgrading of our current community center. While construction under the park redevelopment plan did not begin until 1983, the plans were set in motion in 1976 when the firm of Perkins & Will from Chicago submitted their plans and proposals for the Marktown Parks. Included in the plan was a wing on our current community center and an in ground swimming pool to be located in the Pine Avenue Park between Grove Street and Park Street. The Perkins & Will project was not executed due to a lack of available funding and community support.

In 1980 the funding problem was overcome when the Office of the Mayor applied for funding from the Coastal Redevelopment Plan, a federal program that encouraged the restoration of industrialized areas near major waterways. One of the key factors that helped the city obtain funding from the CRP was

the fact that we are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1990 when we began the process of restoring the streets, sidewalks, parkways and lighting in Marktown, we drew upon the Block Grant Community Development funds for the majority of the reinvestment dollars. Again, it was the fact that we are on the National Register of Historic Places that was the deciding factor in not only the design, but more importantly for the funding.

The same is true about the New Marktown Community Center. It was Mayor Robert A. Pastrick, Dr. Timothy Raykovich, Councilman Adrian Santos and all of the members of the Common Council who began lining up the funding for the project eight years

ago. One person in our neighborhood (who will remain nameless) wanted the new center to look like Heritage Hall. But because we are a National Historic District, the architects decided that an aesthetically compatible design would best serve our neighborhood.

And what about individual home owners? This past year we reported that the East Chicago Redevelopment Commission has made Marktown a target area. What does that mean to the home owner? For those who meet the eligibility requirements it means that a \$15,000 grant and an additional \$15,000 of interest free funding is available

to bring your property up to code. Yes, there is one restriction to the use of the funds. You have to meet the Department of Interior Standards for Historic Preservation. Not a bad deal for \$30,000 of reinvestment funds for your home!

Despite what some misinformed residents of this community may say, having Marktown on the National Register of Historic Places is our only hope to see this community restored. Special thanks has to go to Mayor Robert A. Pastrick for not only placing our community on the National Register of Historic Places three decades ago, but more importantly, in keeping our neighborhood in his thoughts and plans throughout his entire term of office.

Let's work together to make the Marktown Historic District a cleaner, safer and better place to live and to raise a family!



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

# Corporate Stewardship Abounds Around Marktown!

Corporate stewardship is not new to East Chicago, nor to the corporations surrounding the Marktown Historic District. In fact, for decades it was a way of life, industrial life that is. Back in the 1920's through much of the 1960's, Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. along with Inland Steel used to put on some of the most spectacular Christmas displays in all of corporate America.

Before the creation of the Pine Avenue Park in the mid 1950's the mill used to maintain the baseball park at Broad Street and 129th Street. And in 1967 when Marktown was to celebrate it's 50th Anniversary, Marktown Precinct Committeeman Bill Hess made sure that the mill did their part in rebuilding our current community center.

But what about that standard corporate stewardship? What about the responsibility of the various industries that have facilities in East Chicago, and more importantly near the Marktown Historic District, to properly maintain and mow their lawns, maintain the landscape surrounding their property and to keep the area weed free? Many of the newer companies like Safety Kleen have come into the area and have set a new standard of excellence. Just drive down Riley Road and see the results of Safety Kleen's stewardship for the past twelve years.

When US Gypsum expanded their facilities up to Riley Road, they too joined in the process and began an extensive landscape program which not only enhances their corporate image, but also makes the approaches to Marktown a great deal more esthetically pleasing.

But what about our other neighbors? Well, sometimes they need a little reminding and that is exactly what the Marktown Preservation Society did this past summer.

As we reported in an earlier edition of Mark-

town Update, we had INDOT in earlier this summer to address the exit ramp areas of Cline Avenue at Riley Road. They got it done and will probably be replacing the concrete barriers with proper guard rails later this year.

A call also went out to BP Amoco. While the vast majority of their property was well maintained and landscaped, the section of Riley Road across from Safety Kleen needed a good weeding and cleaning. They got it done!

An e-mail to Dave Ryan of NISOURCE in reference to their property at Riley Road and Indianapolis raised some eyebrows. While they no longer utilize this site, they got it done!

When we called the plant manager's office at ISG we were fortunate that one of their senior VP's was in town. He took a drive around their facilities and realized that it needed some work. Guess what? They're getting it done right now!

When the Marktown Preservation Society and Paul Myers were asked by the Parks Department to intervene on behalf of the City of East Chicago and the residents of the Marktown Historic District in reference to utilizing the US Steel parking lot for the softball leagues, we arranged to have US Steel to hire a professional landscaping firm to maintain their property and clean up the fence line between our parks and their mill. Don't look now, but guess what? They got it done!

Ispat Inland, our neighbors just over the canal were also contacted about cleaning up their side of Dickey Road. Even after spending over \$120,000,000 on the rebuilding of their blast furnace, Ispat Inland took the time, money and resources necessary to clean up their section of Dickey Road. Now that's what we call TEAM WORK! Let's all work together in 2004 to keep our neighborhood clean!



*Safety Kleen on Riley Road has led the way in corporate stewardship ever since they established their facility on Riley Road, just down the street from the Marktown Historic District twelve years ago.*



*US Steel's most recent acquisition of the old Youngstown Sheet & Tube No. 2 Tin Mill makes them the new kid on the block. That didn't stop them from hiring Allen Landscape to resolve their landscape problems!*

## Marktown's Architect Howard Van Doren Shaw...

Mr. Shaw was an architect's architect. He was born in Chicago, however his father was from Rising Sun, Indiana. He received his undergraduate degree from Yale University and then went on to the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for his architectural training. Upon graduation he married his childhood sweetheart Frances Wells in 1893. The couple then spent the summer touring Europe. Mr. Shaw always stopping along the way to sketch architectural features of notable buildings. Upon his return to Chicago he began his architectural career in the office of William LeBaron Jenney, widely known as the father of the modern skyscraper. A year later he established his own office on the third floor of his parents Calumet Avenue home near what is now R.R. Donnelley Lakeside Press at McCormick Place in Chicago.

Mr. Shaw worked in a clear simple straightforward style and concentrated on the development of a well oriented plan. This facet of his work is reflected on the overall plan of the Mark Town Site and in the design of its individual buildings.

In addition to Marktown and Clayton Mark's own home in Lake Forest, Mr. Shaw also designed Clayton Mark's father's home in Evanston, Illinois. He is probably best known for having designed town homes and estates for the Midwest's richest and most powerful people including the Swifts, Donnelleys and Ryersons. Shaw's work also included collaborating with Ralph Cram on the Fourth Presbyterian Church on what is known as The Gold Coast on north Michigan Avenue in Chicago. Mr. Shaw was responsible for the interior of the church, the foun-

tain and courtyard and the stately three story home for the minister. Along with this Mr. Shaw designed the Tudor Revival wing of the church property that connects that home with the main church just north of the courtyard.

Mr. Shaw also redesigned the Second Presbyterian Church on South Michigan Avenue following a fire in the 1890's. Upon its completion the Second Presbyterian Church was referred to as the Jewel in the Crown of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Chicago.

While Mr. Shaw was born in 1869, his architectural career spanned from 1893 to his most untimely death in 1926. During his career he was

referred to by the young Frank Lloyd Wright as *"The most radical of the conservatives and the most conservative of the radicals."* Unlike Mr. Wright, Howard Shaw did not seek overt recognition for his work, nor did he enjoy public speaking or engagements. He, like the vast majority of his clients, preferred to work quietly on his commissions and then let the work speak for itself upon completion.

If Mr. Shaw was merely a Chicago architect, the story would end there, but he was not. During the thirty-three

years of his architectural career he and his draftsmen are now known to have executed between 400 and 800 separate commissions. While Mr. Shaw is probably best known for his English Country Estates for the well shod businessmen and industrialists, he was not, by any means restricted to this type of work. His work spans from New York to California and from Toronto, Canada to Louisiana.

In 1915 he designed the Market Square



## ***More Than Just An Architect - A True Visionary!* by Paul A. Myers**

in Lake Forest, Illinois. At the time of construction it was considered the first architecturally designed shopping center in North America. A similar Market Square was designed for the Mark Town Site. Unfortunately only one of the several buildings designed was only partially completed.

### **What about Mr. Shaw in Indiana?**

Howard designed a number of estates and homes here in the Hoosier State. The nearest one is here in Hammond on the southeast corner of Knickerbocker Parkway and 171st Street.

It was designed for Morris Dell Plain, the President of the United Gas Improvement Company (later taken over by NIPSCO.) The home was designed after George Washington's ancestral home in England.

There are eight homes or estates by Mr. Shaw in Indiana and at least one factory building for R.R. Donnelley & Company. For more information about Mr. Shaw you may want to find a copy of ***The Architecture of Howard Van Doren Shaw*** by Virginia Greene, published by Chicago Review Press in 1989. While it is by no means a complete history or listing of his work, it is the only book on Mr. Shaw that is currently available.

Prior to Mr. Shaw's death in 1926 it was announced that he would be the recipient of the 1927 *American Institute of Architect's* prestigious Gold Medal awarded for architectural excellence.

To the best of our knowledge, only one Howard Shaw home in Indiana was torn down. That was the Brown Estate in Crown Point which was razed in the 1960's to make way for of all things, a shopping mall.



*The Morris Dell Plain Home at 7109 Knickerbocker Parkway in Hammond was designed after George Washington's ancestral home in England. The landscape was designed by Shaw collaborator Jens Jensen who also did the landscape for the original Marktown Park located behind the Old Marktown Community Center.*

### **A partial list of Mr. Shaw's architectural work:**

- R. R. Donnelley & Sons Co., Chicago
- Lakeside Press Building, Chicago
- Ginn & Co. Chicago - Publisher's Building
- B.F. Goodrich Office Buildings (2) New York
- Market Square, Lake Forest, Illinois
- Model Steel Town, Indiana Harbor
- Fourth Presbyterian Church - Chicago
- University Church of the Disciples of Christ
- Racine Memorial Hall, Racine, Wisconsin
- Goodman Memorial Theatre, AIC Chicago
- Quadrangle Club, Chicago
- Lake Shore Country Club, Glencoe, Illinois
- 2450 Lake View Avenue, Apartment Building - Chicago
- 1130 Lake Shore Drive, Apartment Building - Chicago
- W. B. Martin, Apartment Building, Chicago
- G. F. Swift, Town House, Chicago
- Edward Morris, Town House, Chicago
- Frederick D. Countiss, Town House, Chicago
- Fortune Houses (s) - Town Houses, Chicago
- W. O. Goodman, Town House, Chicago
- Morris Rosenwald, Town House, Chicago
- Lester Armour, Town House, Chicago
- John P. Wilson, Town House, Chicago
- C. C. Bovey, Esq. Town House, Minneapolis
- E. L. Ryerson, Country House, Lake Forest, Ill.
- Clayton Mark Estate, Lake Forest, Ill.
- Cyrus Mark Home, Evanston, Ill
- Robert P. Lamont Estate, Lake Forest, Ill
- Brown Estate, Crown Point, In
- Warren Fairbanks Estate, Indianapolis
- Erskine Country Estate, South Bend, Indiana
- Shaffer Country Estate, South Bend, Indiana
- Dr. Borley Country Estate, South Bend, Indiana
- R.R. Donnelley Factory, Crawfordsville, Indiana

## ***We Have a Choice of Working Together to Make Things Better....***

We have written of the need to WORK TOGETHER in just about every issue of Marktown Update printed so far. We have spoken about our ability to WORK WITH the various city and state agencies and departments to resolve problems and concerns within our community. We have also spoken of the need to work with each other within our neighborhood to resolve the problems at hand.

As the year is now drawing to an end and fall and winter will soon be upon us, we thought we would give all of our residents, property owners and tenants alike, a bit of food for thought, for the future of this community, of this neighborhood lies in our ability to WORK TOGETHER to resolve the problems at hand.

I suppose the best way to start is to discuss what working together on a block by block basis can do for this or any other neighborhood. About fifteen years ago, Paul Myers started a great project on Prospect Street. One of his neighbors, Mr. John Barsich at 420 Prospect had a great idea. He had painted a shield on the corner post of his front porch and on it he had painted his house numbers.

Paul liked the idea and asked for permission to make a stencil of it and use it on the rest of the block. Mr. Barsich agreed and Paul was on his way to uniting the entire block. At first, not all of the residents on Prospect Street were willing to go along with the plan, but before half of the homes had the new house numbers painted on them the rest of the residents realized the merit of the project. Soon, all of the homes on Prospect Street had new house numbers, all lined up and uniform from one end to the other. The program went so well that this past year Paul made it a point

to repaint the numbers and to give them that fresh new appearance once again.

The same thing happened with the American flags that are flown on Prospect Street at holidays. It started with an idea and then moved onto a movement. Each of the residents on Prospect Street chipped in for the cost of the flags. Paul organized the program and put up all of the mounting brackets on the front living room windows of each house. On various holidays throughout the summer months the residents of Prospect Street are greeted with twenty-two U.S. Flags being flown on each and every house on the block.

What these two items shows is that by working together, the residents of just one street can make a difference in the quality of life in their most immediate neighborhood.

If it ended right there it would probably be enough. But it didn't end there. For over twenty years the residents of Prospect Street have worked together in other ways, one of which is the regular cleaning of Prospect Street and the maintenance of the various yards.

Exactly when it started or who started it is unclear at this time, and really doesn't make any difference. But if you ever drive or walk down Prospect Street you will undoubtedly notice that the street is free from trash and weeds and that even the yards of the unoccupied houses are relatively maintained.

Every month or so, someone on the block says to someone else on the block "Hey, let's do a street cleanup," and then the rest is soon history. That's what we call WORKING TOGETHER, and if it works on Prospect Street, it can work everywhere, not just in Marktown but all of East Chicago!



*The residents and home owners of Prospect Street have worked together for years in building maintenance, house numbers, flag display and neighborhood clean up programs. The result of their efforts is obvious to anyone who drives down their street.*

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

## ***Or, Just Keep Destroying This Neighborhood House by House!***

So, what does not working together get this or any other neighborhood? Not much, and if you don't believe me, just look around! While Prospect Street is not fully restored or even fully occupied, it does look a great deal better than many other streets in town. And why? Because the residents WORK TOGETHER!

What does it take to start a great new program on your street? INITIATIVE! That's right, just set back a few minutes and figure out what you need to do first. On the 400 block of Spring, Liberty and Park Street, the residents have all taken the initiative to work together this past year in at least taking the liberty and the opportunity to clean up the street. Did it make a difference? You bet it did!

But let's take a look at one of the problems facing Marktown and other areas of the city. On one corner in Marktown we can always, yes always find garbage in the street and on the sidewalk. Now you could call a city department and complain and you could insist that they come out and write the residents a ticket. You could also call and insist that the Sanitary Solids Department send out a crew every week or two to try to keep up with the problem. But will that solve anything? NO!

So, how do we resolve this as a community? Communication! If you see an ongoing problem like this, take a deep breath, count to ten, and then go speak to the people that are causing the problem. In this case it can and should be resolved by the residents in the immediate area.

Explain to them just how bad it looks. Chances are that it is their children, that for whatever reason, have been throwing their trash on the public street, and then expecting the city

to clean it up.

You see, by speaking with them, you let them know (politely) that people CARE about this NEIGHBORHOOD! If you call and have them cited for the problem, you are pitting them against the neighborhood and you are much less apt to truly resolve the problem. If you have the city clean up the problem for them, you have relatively told them that throwing their trash on the street is OK and that someone else will pick it up for them.

What about other problems in the neighborhood. Is there an unsecured home on your street, or is there a home with broken windows that you would like to have repaired? Again, you can always call the city and have them do the dirty work, or you

can do the RIGHT THING and go talk to the property owner. It is a lot easier to resolve the problem with calm reason and understanding than it is to have the city beat someone to death with the City Code.

The problems that face Marktown and many other neighborhoods in East Chicago and across this great nation can not be resolved by city or town governments coming in and ordering things done. The only way to truly make a difference is by WORKING TOGETHER as a NEIGHBORHOOD. By defining the problems and addressing them in a way that will not pit one neighbor against another.

In the next six months, between now and the spring of 2004, we will discuss several problems such as unwanted weeds, bushes and trees, and more importantly, we will give you some ideas as to how to truly resolve the problems that face our neighborhood. Until then, let's start to think as a neighborhood and start WORKING TOGETHER!



*Above: A U.S. flag is displayed stuck in a fence with a broken flag pole. Others have been nailed to wooden telephone poles or stuck in window frames.*

*Below: A tenant of an out of town property owner posts their street address with a can of spray paint.*

***Let's start WORKING TOGETHER to make Marktown a better, cleaner and safer place to live!***

## Youth Soccer Program Comes to Marktown Park

Earlier in the year, the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department, under the direction of Superintendent Joe Valdez, announced their plans for a new Youth Soccer Instructional Program for East Chicago children from the ages of 5-12 years old. At the same time that they announced this great FREE program they made plans to hold the two day a week program at the Marktown Park.

While Marktown has had soccer here in the past, it didn't always work out well as the previous programs were for an adult league based out of South Chicago. Every time they had a game in the Baseball Park on Broad Street, we not only had problems with the parking, but also with the trash left strewn about



the park when the game was over.

Well guess what? Since the current program is for the children of East Chicago and since it is being run by the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Department, there has not been one problem. In fact, it is truly great to see Coach Benjamin working with the dozens of East Chicago children, including some from Marktown. They are currently using the Old Park behind the

Marktown Community Center. Soccer Moms and Dads can be seen watching their children run through drills and learning the basics of soccer.

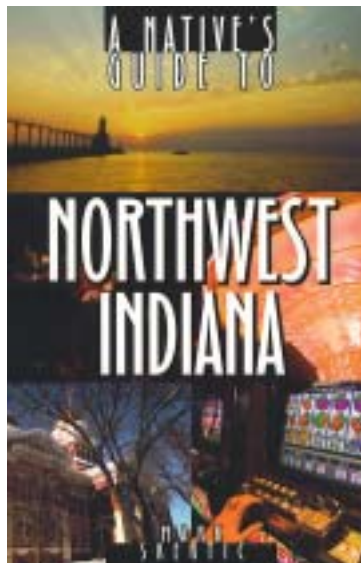
We are very, very pleased to be able to share our park and our neighborhood with the children of this great city. Score one for us!

## Marktown and East Chicago Featured in New Book!

Just when you thought it was safe to go to the book store, here we are in print again! East Chicago's own native son, Mark Skertic who was later raised in Hammond and now resides in Highland has done his old hometown justice with several inclusions in reference to East Chicago, and yes, the Marktown Historic District.

The book titled **"A Native's Guide to Northwest Indiana"** was released in August 2003 by Lake Claremont Press, Chicago. It retails for only \$15.00 and is well worth every dollar.

This great 300+ page book covers places of interest in Porter, LaPorte and Lake Counties. It includes sections on history, winning & dining, outdoor fun, spectator fun, special events, architecture & sights. All of this is provided in a city by city format.



While the section on East Chicago is only eight pages, two of them feature our own Marktown Historic District.

Also included in the East Chicago section is an outstanding thumbnail sketch of the history of our city, references to both the Pastrick Library and the East Chicago Room of the Main Library and a note detailing the importance of the First National Bank Building on Indianapolis Blvd. It also includes basic information on East Chicago's annual Puerto Rican and Mexican Independence Festivals.

This is a great book and is highly recommended for anyone who enjoys the history and culture that is unique to the Calumet Region! It is available at local bookstores just in time for Christmas!



# *Getting the job done! How do we do it?*

How is it that things just appear to just get done? Part of it is that we live in a city that works. The other part is that we work with the city. What are we talking about? That's simple; city services and our ability to work within that system. What do we get for our tax dollars? Let's start with the simple list.

The garbage is picked up in this, and every neighborhood twice a week. Did you realize that in some neighborhoods the garbage is picked up on Saturday's? Well it is. Along with the garbage, we are one of the few cities in all of Indiana that has a fully integrated recycling program. While we place all of our recyclables in one bin, the city actually separates the glass from the plastic and the plastic from the paper. We are an environmentally aware community. Do you have to call to have the garbage picked up? No, it happens just like clockwork, except on holidays when they make it a point of coming back after the holiday just to make sure that our cans are empty and that the trash is taken out! Wow! Who would have thought?

If you need a tree planted or a tree removed, what do you do? Call the Parks Department and they will probably be able to take care of your needs without anyone else having to get involved. Their number is 391-8474.

What about the sewer cleaning? Well, the City of East Chicago cleans out our sewer mains every quarter, and will come into your home and clean out the residential sewer that goes from your basement to the street. Do they charge for it? No. It is a public service.

You see, there are dozens of services available to our residents, many of which are free. But that's not what this article is about.

One problem that we have is in reference to street lights. While from our point of view they are all street lights, from the cities perspective, they are not. We actually have three types of street lights in Marktown. We have NIPSCO lights, vintage lights phase one and vintage lights phase two. If you have a NIPSCO pole light that needs to be replaced all you have to do is call the office of the City Engineer at 391-8355 and give them the pole number.

The only problem with this is that NIPSCO

will probably not send a repair truck to Marktown, or East Chicago just for one light. NIPSCO has a vary large area to maintain and they are going to maximize their resources by waiting until they have six to ten lights out in East Chicago before they dispatch the equipment and manpower to make the repairs.

The historic lighting in our neighborhood is another story. It is maintained by the City of East Chicago so all you have to do to get it repaired is to once again call the City Engineer at 391-8355 and give them the pole number at the base of the pole and tell them what the problem is. Is the decorative globe missing or the light burnt out, or has the pole been knocked over and broken? As this is a city service they will take care of the problem provided the part or parts are in stock.

Even if you don't call this in yourself, Paul Myers does a monthly survey of Marktown street lights and faxes the survey directly to the City Engineer's Office. This makes the repairs a bit easier for the repair crew as they spend less time driving to and from our neighborhood and can get more done throughout East Chicago.

The same is true with junk and construction debris pick up. As we noted in an earlier edition of Marktown Update, if you know you are going to put things out for pick up, please call the day before and let them know. The number is 391-8463. The problem with this is that the city trucks really don't need to make a single pick up in Roxanna and then Marktown, and then Sunnyside.

So, how is it that we appear to have the junk picked up on such a regular basis. Well, once again, it is a point of working with the city administration. Once a week Paul makes it a point of driving through our neighborhood and puts together a list of what needs to be picked up and exactly what is there. The list is then typed out and faxed to the proper department superintendent. Without failure, the city of East Chicago has come out the next day and picked up the rubbish. You see, all you have to do is WORK TOGETHER to make things happen! Let's try it. Let's all WORK TOGETHER and make Marktown a better place for all!

***WHERE THERE IS NO VISION... THE PEOPLE PARISH!***

# **PROPERTY REASSESSMENT AND WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU!**

You don't have to own a home in Marktown to have the upcoming property reassessment affect your life. You see, if you are currently renting and the property tax goes up considerably, you can bet that your rent will go up accordingly. Figuring out just how the property tax reassessment works is probably the equivalent of receiving a four year college degree. It is a very complex issue, but let me try to make some sense of it for you.

To begin, the reassessment and the way in which our property will be taxed had nothing at all to do with local politics. As a result of a suit filed by home owners in Lake County, the Indiana Supreme Court ruled that the old method of evaluating real property for property tax purposes was unfair and unconstitutional. The Court determined that some property owners were paying too much property tax, and others weren't paying their fair share.

In order to correct this unfair situation, the Court required state and local officials to reassess all the real property in each county based on its market value. In Lake County, instead of having local assessors perform this process, the General Assembly passed a law that requires the Indiana department of Local Government Finance to oversee the reassessment directly.

But wait a minute. We have already told you about that in the brochure we provided to you with the October issue of Marktown Update. So, just what does all of this mean to Marktowners? Well, let's try to simplify things. If all of the property in East Chicago would evenly triple in value under the reassessment, then the reassessment would not affect our property tax at all. The same is true if the value on all of the property were evenly reduced by 50%. It still would not affect our property tax.

But here is the problem. If the appraised value of a Marktown Home under the old assessment was \$10,000 and we were raised to \$30,000 while the rest of the city stayed the same, then our property tax would probably triple in one year. Scary isn't it?

So, what do they base the appraisal on? Current market price of similar homes in the immediate area. That's the nice thing about Marktown. We are totally isolated and we now understand that our homes, due to their isolated location in the midst of industry, are NOT going to be appraised against similar homes in East Chicago that might bring a higher price. That's good for us, but that still doesn't explain it all.

The second problem is that they are basing the appraisal price on market value. While I am quite aware than some people have asked \$50,000 to \$75,000 for their homes these past two years, I also know that those homes just have not sold.

I also know that three homes have sold for less than \$5,000 each and that several homes have sold for \$15,000-\$20,000 each. That might affect the appraised value of the overall community.

On November 14, property owners in North Township will begin receiving their Form 11 which is a notice to the taxpayer of the proposed reassessment.

One of the things that helps the property owners in Marktown is that the Marktown Preservation Society has already assembled a data base of each Marktown property. We know exactly the size of each lot and what has been built upon it. When it is time to appeal any assessment in Marktown, it will be easier to do so as a group as opposed to 125 individuals.

## ***What will we need from our neighbors is the following:***

- a.** Sales information from similar homes in Marktown.
- b.** Closing statement on the purchase of your property
- c.** Photos depicting any damage to your property. For those of you who received letters recently from the Building Department, make sure you have them handy as they may assist you in the reduction of your appraised value and ultimately, your property tax.
- d.** Repair estimates.

## **What Comes Next?**

- 1.** The property owner will have to meet with the re-appraisal firm representative. That will be someone from CLT Corporation. If you do not meet with them first, then you can not appeal later to the Indiana Board of Tax Review this year.
- 2.** You will have 45 days after the reassessment (form 11) is mailed to call and schedule an "informal" appeal with CLT.
- 3.** The phone number and call deadline will be listed on Form 11.
- 4.** Have the parcel ID number and property address handy when you call for an informal appeal hearing.
- 5.** Bring all relevant information about your property to the hearing.
- 6.** Notice of informal appeal outcome, a "final assessment notice," will be mailed within weeks of the hearing.
- 7.** Once the informal hearing with CLT is completed and if you do not agree with the final assessment notice, you may file an appeal with the state.

We will discuss the procedures in reference to the formal state appeal in the December issue of Marktown Update.

How can the Marktown Preservation Society help Marktown property owners reduce their reassessment value? By having the critical information needed to compare each six room house against each other six room house. The same is true with all of the property in Marktown. We are the only organization in the county that can reasonably define every property in this neighborhood and help all of us make it through this reassessment. For further information please call Paul Myers at 397-2239. If we need to we will call a special home owners meeting at the Old Marktown Community Center so that we can help resolve this. Let's work together on this most important issue!