



THE BEACHCOMBER

DUNE ACRES, INDIANA

WWW.DUNEACRES.ORG

November, 2014

Tid Bits around Town

by Carolyn Mellen

The recent Town Clean Up was very successful! Thanks to **Robin Tennant**, we had crews of people pulling bittersweet and other invasives from Mineral Springs Road, around the park area, on Clubhouse dune and on West Road. Several trees were taken down on West Road by hands of our town volunteers. Thanks to all!
(See story and photos on page 2)

Several paving projects are underway – a section of Crest Drive was recently paved with West Road and Summit to follow. The parking lot at the Town Hall is being “fixed” so that it will drain properly and won’t puddle. The Ice Rink is having an overhaul – replacing the sideboards, squaring the rink off and creating a better footpath.

The beautiful Clubhouse exterior renovation is complete with a new coat of paint on the lower concrete level. The color was chosen by our resident architect **Tony Belluschi** and it not only matches the chimney, but it offsets and blends with the restrained logs so nicely.



The new coat of paint on the clubhouse selected by architect Tony Belluschi.

There is a new sign at the front gate informing the public that we have security 24/7, and the phone numbers are listed. This is for use when the officer is on patrol, should he be needed at the gate. Security cameras have been installed at the Clubhouse and soon the Clubhouse Dr. gate will be left open more often allowing people to enjoy the breathtaking view from atop Clubhouse dune. **Mark Hull** has overseen the Clubhouse painting, the Security cameras, the ice rink renovation and all of the road paving and projects. This town would be in big trouble without his help. Volunteers like Mark are hard to come by and so valued. If you see Mark, consider thanking him for all he does. This community thrives because of people like Mark!

On October 18th the Annual Fall Party entertained about 65 of us, including past residents Mary Ann and Ray Tittle and Linda and Jeffrey Swoger. It was great fun to see them. We were entertained by several “locals” such as **Rick Demkovich** on classic guitar, **Heidi Studebaker** at the harp, floutist **Michael Treister** and last BUT not least, **Rob Carstens** jamming on the keyboard, recorder, squeeze box...you name it! It was a great party and our thanks go to Rick and his family for all their work in organizing the party.



Heidi Studebaker and Mike Treister.

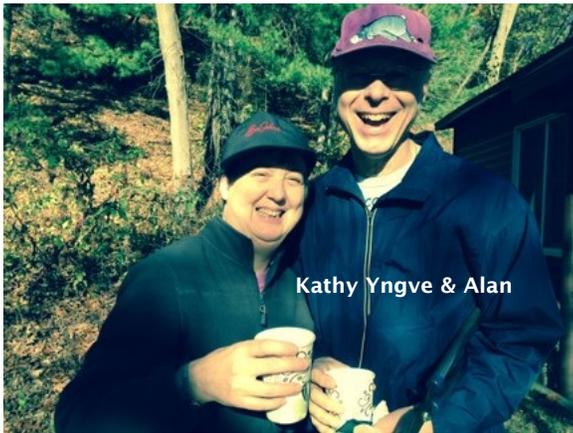
Photo by Robin Tennant

More party photos on page 3

Fall Clean-Up - The Volunteers of Dune Acres Rock!

We had the best time on Clean-Up weekend. The weather was amazing and so was the set up coordinated by Sara Masloroff .

So many people helped out: Jan Bapst led a team from East Road to Crest Park - Mary Ann and John Crayton, Gerry Snyder and Pat McGinn , Cathy and Peter Bomberger , Deborah Franczek ,Mark Hull, Jenny Carey, Shirley and Joel Hull. Kathy Yngve. Sue and Rob Smith, and Lois and Bill Nixon.



West Road bittersweet clean-up was led by Sue Smith, assisted by Carolyn Mellen and Kathy and Bob Lauer.

Kellie Klein led the parks team - Lou Mellen, Dick Taylor, Todd, Lucas and Cole Klein, Len Kareska, and Sylvia Lambert (working on behalf of the Newman's).

Rich Hawksworth's team of Lynn and Mary Boeke, Mike and Vicki Konopacki, Bill Sandrick, Austin and Sarah Bancroft (with Greyden and Brianna assisting) tackled the Town Park surrounding the playground and soccer field.

John Sullivan, Dick Taylor and Mark Taylor cut down several large dead oak trees on West Road.

Leah Harp and her sons Hank and "Santa" Lev, along with Leah Dickey and her son, Mason, tackled raking and moving branches on the Town Park.



Bob Evans picked up trash on West Road.

Everyone appreciated all the cookies and cake that Margo Hartmann, Vicki Konopacki, Ruth Dyleryly and Clarice Gourelly brought.

We are grateful for the donations from Marti and Anthony Belluschi, Anne Haffner, Jane Heenan, Juanita and Jim Elder, Barbara Plampin, Bette and John Norris, Diane and Michael Swygert, Sharon and Bill Tutlewski, and Darlene and Michael Lapinski. Without these donations we would not be able to hire extra people to work, at a cost of \$20 to \$30 per hour.

We have made great progress with the invasives issue this year, and I am so grateful to everyone who made the effort to help us.

*With Deep Appreciation,
Robin Tennant*

WINTER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Things slow down during the winter months, and so does publication of the Beachcomber. The next three publication dates will be January 15, March 15, and May 1. Submissions are due one week before each of these dates.

Thanks to the following people who made this issue happen:

Irv Call	Carolyn Mellen	Susan Smith
Leah Harp	Lou Mellen	Mike Swygert
Bev Hubbs	Irene Newman	Robin Tennant
		Dana Treister

If you would like to contribute a story, photo, poem, art, something from your children or grandchildren, etc, the deadline for the next issue is **January 8, 2015!**

Open Mic at the Fall Party



Rob
Carstens
and
Mike
Treister



Heidi
Studebaker
and
Mike
Treister



Rick
Demkovich
and
Mike Treister

photos by Robin Tennant and Dana Treister

A Comment On Our Club House

The Town Club House is our “social cabin” which we all enjoy. It is generously supported by the Town Board and many of the residents. In recent years we have put on a new roof, installed new doors, repaired logs, blasted and painted it, installed new appliances and furniture and so on. It has heat and smoke sensors with automatic telephone call service. A sprinkler system backed up by high pressure pumps and a huge water cistern to protect the building in case of fire. A beautiful site, a lovely building which is well maintained and looked after. The outside has received a lot of attention with the bushes, shrubs and landscaping efforts that many have worked on. Our Club House is well cared for, well appointed, well landscaped, and well insured. The dedication given to this building is the envy of every public facility and one which we can be truly proud of. Um..... Wait a minute. Not so fast.

Let’s look just a little bit farther down the line into what makes all this happen. The building and all of the emergency equipment is supported by an electrical system that was designed and installed in the 1930’s. One can see insulation falling off the lines, an antiquated transformer arrangement, power poles so weathered over the years that one wonders how they stand. Last spring a limb came down and broke two lines. Some town volunteers twisted the heavy copper wires back together and rehung them on the old poles. It is doubtful any homeowner in town would accept electrical service this archaic.

Electrical gear is not necessarily poor because it is geriatric. However, a quick review of the records indicates that when the pumps were used for Town water supply there were problems. A technician was in every day to monitor and correct them and if there was a shut down for even five minutes people knew about it (because there was no water at their faucet) and someone was called to get it repaired. After the pumps became fire pumps we see the frequency of outages increasing but without the attention previously received. Closer inspection of the log reports shows that the fire fighting pumps have been out of operation for days at a time as a result of an inadequate electrical system. Even with these difficulties there are no immediate plans to improve the situation.

A leaking roof, paint peeling, logs that are weathered and deteriorating can be seen and are fixed. The connection to NIPSCO goes unnoticed and is well out of sight. A modest investment is necessary to replace this decrepit circuit. If one saw flames licking out of the old building and within full view there was an enormous tank of water, but with pumps sitting without power, it would be exceedingly devastating.

- by Irv Call

The Proposed 1917 “Sand Dunes National Park” in Indiana

- by Mike Swygert

THE HEARING

On October 16, 1916, the United States government held public hearings in a Chicago federal courthouse on the “Proposed Sand Dunes National Park.” Stephen T. Mather, Assistant Secretary of the Interior and Director of the National Park Service, conducted the hearing. The purpose was to elicit testimony on whether the proposed national park -- the first to be located in the Midwest -- was environmentally and recreationally justified as well as financially feasible. The Department of Interior’s plan encompassed a park about one-mile wide and 25 miles long, stretching from Miller in Lake County, through all of Porter County, to Michigan City in Laporte County.



During the one-day hearing, forty-two witnesses testified, while many had previously submitted written comments. Virtually all the witnesses who spoke strongly supported the proposal for a Sand Dunes National Park in Indiana, though one did so conditionally. William H. Cox, representing the Pottawatomie Indian Council of Northwest Indiana, stated: “The Indians are in favor of this park, provided that the title is procured from the rightful owner.”

Besides Mr. Cox, witnesses included five University of Chicago professors: Dr. Henry C. Cowles (botanist); Dr. Zonia Baber (geographer) Dr. Otis Caldwell (geologist), Dr. Elliot Downing (field biologist) and Dr. Rollin D. Salisbury (geographer). Also testifying were Indiana University Professor Elliott Bennett, a member of the Indiana Academy of Science; George R. Brennan, historian of the Sons of the American Revolution; and Dr. Abraham Flexner, Secretary, Board of Education of the City of New York. Numerous naturalist and outdoor organizations were represented. Prairie Club of Chicago officials Minnie Moody and T.W. Allison spoke urging adoption of the dunes park proposal,

as did former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior, James Wilson.

Business giants were represented: Julius Rosenwald, president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. spoke in favor of the park as did Mrs. John Dickinson Sherman, president of the General Federation of Women’s Clubs of America. And so were the artists: painters Earl H. Reed and Harriet Monroe, and sculptor Lorado Taft.

But of all the speakers that day, Jens Jensen, representing both the City Club of Chicago and the Friends of Our National Landscape, might have been the most eloquent and outspoken. A small sample:

- There are no dunes in America like those over there in Indiana.
- Nowhere else can be found such a wonderful outburst of flora in the spring as is found in our dune woods, when they are covered with a blue sea of wonderful lupine, phlox, violets, and many other plants.
- We need the dunes; we can never do without them.
- We who live in the midst of the buildings, cement sidewalks, and stone pavements, how can we ever be without such a wonderful vision?

At one point during the hearings, Secretary Mather called on Chicago businessman Henry W. Leman, introducing him to the packed hearing room as “a gentleman who has an interest in the dune country, [being] a large property owner down there.” True, Leman owned close to 600 acres of undeveloped prime Indiana dunes real estate (most of which six years later he leased to William A. Wirt, a Gary banker, investor, and superintendent of public schools, land that today includes much of the town of Dune Acres). Back in 1916, Leman preferred that his dune lands go to the United States government. In the hearings, Lehman testified:

“Mr. Secretary, ladies and gentlemen, I am somewhat an interested party in a financial way in this matter . . . But I am more interested in the preservation of the dunes . . . For health, historical, and natural standpoints, a national park is needed in this large Chicago region more than in any part of the country. I sincerely hope the U.S. Government’s creation of a Sand Dunes National park in Indiana goes through.” [Applause]

BACKGROUND

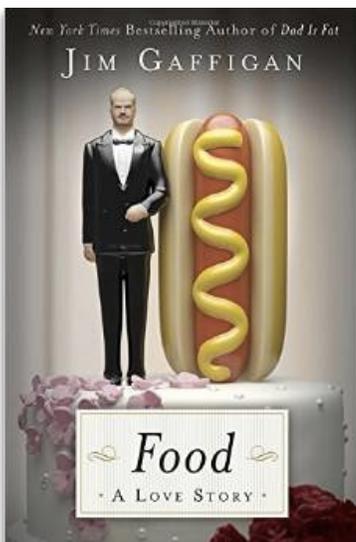
The hearings that explored the feasibility of Congress authorizing a dunes national park in

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Former Dune Acres Resident Jim Gaffigan's New Book:

Food: A Love Story

Dune Acres can be proud of its many published authors. Most famous is long-time resident Harry Mark Petrakis. Another is well-known Dune Acres person – Jim Gaffigan, who grew up here. His second book, *Food: A Love Story* was just published by Crown. Mr. Gaffigan is best known in his roles as a television star, a stand-up comedian, and for his roles in movies. More recently he has added “author” to his list. Last year, he published his first book *Dad Is Fat*. “Its title” he says, “was the first complete sentence my son ever wrote.” *Dad Was Fat* appeared several months on *The New York Times*'s Best Seller Book List.



According to a review in *Parade Magazine*, Mr. Gaffigan's new book “is a brilliantly funny tribute to the simple pleasure of eating – or more accurately, over-eating.” The review continues: “Growing up the youngest of six kids in a middle-class suburb of Chesterton, Ind. [Dune Acres], he learned that eating can be a contact sport.” Gaffigan explains: “You had to eat it before someone else ate it, whether you were hungry or

not.” Clearly, he has extended his highly successful stand-up comedy routines to his successful writing of comedic, autobiographical essays.

While living in Dune Acres, Jim Gaffigan went to La Lumiere, a Catholic school near LaPorte, the same school that John Roberts, Chief Justice of the United States, attended. Subsequently, he graduated from Georgetown University, entered the world of advertising, and then found he possessed a unique comedic talent and the skill to perform at ease and professionally before audiences. As the saying goes, the rest is history.

Note: *Food: A Love Story*, by Jim Gaffigan, is available from Amazon in hardcover (\$15.75) and on Kindle (\$10.99), and from other book chains.

I thank Bev Hubbs for alerting me to Mr. Gaffigan's new book and for asking if I would let D.A. residences know about it. It is a pleasure.

- by Mike Swygert

Sand Dunes N.P.

Continued from page 4

Indiana was due to a Sept. 7, 1916, U.S. Senate Resolution mandating that the Department of Interior investigate and report back to Congress:

In the advisability of the securing, by purchase or otherwise, all that portion of the counties of Lake, Laporte, and Porter, in the State of Indiana, bordering on Lake Michigan, and commonly know as the ‘sand dunes,’ with a view that such lands be created a national park.

Department of the Interior Secretary, Franklin K. Lane, appointed Stephen Mather, Interior Assistant Secretary and Director of the National Park Service, to investigate the question, hold hearings, and compile a report in response to the Congressional mandate. Mather held hearings in Chicago and in Michigan City and took into consideration both verbal and written responses. Moreover, he went out to the dunes, walking miles over a week's time, taking notes and talking with various people about the dunes and the proposed sand dunes national park.



Mather's December 1916 report was supportive of the proposal that Congress authorize and fund a Sand Dunes National Park, but with one major reservation – the acquisition costs. By 1915, nearly all the country's national parks had been authorized and created by Congress from publically owned lands, properties that had never been in private ownership. Of course, the government routinely ignored claims of native-American Indians, including the Potawatomie's, who, during much of the 19th Century, considered northwest Indiana their rightful property.

In 1916, Congress had authorized many of the country's great national parks including Crater Lake, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Rocky Mountain, Glacier, Grand Canyon, Mesa Verde, Sequoia, and Mount Rainier. All of these were public (government owned) lands.

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The Third Coast - Kite-Surfers on Lake Michigan

Story and Photos by Mike Swygert

This past summer, many Dune Acres people may have seen strange-looking colorful, large kites flying not far off the Lake Michigan shore. These kites are not your children's variety. Rather these giant-size wind catchers are harnessed to persons (kiteboarders) riding and jumping the waves below -- and the higher and more challenging the better.

Wikipedia explains that Kitesurfing: "...is a surface water sport combining aspects of windsurfing, surfing, paragliding and gymnastics into one. A kiteboarder rides atop a small surfboard. The boarder harnesses the power of the wind through straps linking her to the kite. Observing the wind movement and changes, she can turn; change directions; and can jibe, go with or against the wind in much the way sailors steer their boats. Up to eight harnesses link the kiteboarder to the kite.

Kitesurfing takes many forms including long-distance races, some gliding, jumping waves and, for the truly professional, letting the kite lift you up and out of the water and then performing a summersault or two. Not for amateurs, kitesurfing is a spectator's delight; an exciting and beautiful thing to watch.

Over the past dozen years, kitesurfing in the U.S. has grown exponentially. In the 2016 Brazil World Olympics, competitive kitesurfing will be one of the sports. After seeing the athleticism of the kiteboarders off the Dune Acres shore, maybe our town can send a team to Rio.



Sand Dunes N.P.

Continued from page 5

The proposed Sand Dunes National Park, on the other hand, consisted entirely of privately held land. This meant that the government would have to fund the purchase of thousands of acres, a cost that Mather attempted to quantify. But it was difficult to do. Most of the expansive, undeveloped dunes were held in large tracts by Chicago-based land speculators. Many of these speculators were associated with the city's thriving meat packing industry. In any event, the cost of purchasing the dunes would be a crucial and likely determinative concern to Congress. Then there was the precedent. Mather reminded those at the hearings: "Land has never before been purchased for a reservation as a national park."

Yet, he believed Congress could be persuaded to consider doing so, given the uniqueness of the Lake Michigan dunes and their location in the heart of America's Midwest, an area where few natural, undeveloped preserves existed. No question,

the Midwest needed a national park and the Indiana sand dunes were the most logical, environmentally, ecologically, and recreationally.

INTERVENTION OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

As it turned out, even if Congress had agreed on the nation benefiting from preserving for perpetuity the Indiana dunes, Mather's report to Congress could not have come at a worse time. By the time the Chicago hearings took place in late 1916, several European countries had for two years been engaged in a multi-country war to become know as the First World War. Naturally, the highest priority of Congress was to fund the costs of war, pushing all discretionary domestic projects off the table.

THIS STORY IS TO BE CONTINUED

But this is only part of the story of the intensifying efforts taking place during the first two decades of the 20th Century to preserve the dunes. The other part tells about how thousands of individuals and organizations came together, worked tirelessly in

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DA Photo Album



Rob Carstens, Lou Mellen, and Bruce Riffle rescuing the swimming platform from a mid-October storm and pulling it off the beach for the winter.

- submitted by *Lou Mellen*



When I sat down for breakfast on Oct. 27, I looked out at the Linden Tree and this fellow was just landing. He rested for about five minutes then flew away with a few pesky crows right behind him!

- submitted by *Sue Smith*



The Harp family enjoying the Chesterton Down Town trick or treating at our favorite spot, Riley's Railhouse! The costumes were made from table clothes left behind by revelers at the clubhouse. Many thanks to the Town Council and to Ms. Mellen for putting fabric, buckets, and other items aside for our school.

- submitted by *Leah Harp*



Skies over Lake Michigan

- photos by *Mike Swygert*

Sand Dunes N.P.*Continued from page*

spreading the word about the dunes, put on programs and pageants, raised money, and in other creative ways lobbied for a national dunes park. These people came not only from Indiana and Illinois, they came from all parts of the country.

They had a goal in common – the preservation of a unique ecological and environmental landscape unlike any other in the nation, at least in the opinion of those who testified at the Chicago hearings. They shared a vision of the bifurcated benefits of preservation -- miles of pristine, uninterrupted beaches for relaxation and recreation for the growing populations of Chicago and the Midwest; and the preservation of the dunes and their environs of woodlands, marshes, and bogs. By the hundreds, these people came on weekends to the dunes, most on the Chicago South Shore railroad. They marveled at the great blowouts and the creeping sand hills called “living dunes.” They were amazed by the unimaginable diversity of plants and the by coming together of four distinct microclimates – dazzling features of the Indiana Dunes region as studied and taught by experts such as Professor Henry Cowles of the University of Chicago.

During the two decades before Dune Acres was founded, a movement to save virtually all the remaining Indiana dune lands for posterity was at full throttle. But the movement failed. It did not happen. Yet, the story of those who tried and who shared a vision needs to be told, for it is a national story. It will be.

SOURCES

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Photographs from Dune Acres Historical Archives, maintained by the Dune Acres Historical Commission.



- Photos by Mike Swygert

A few copies of *The Beachcomber*, printed in black and white, are available every month at the Gate House.



The Fine Print: *The Beachcomber* is published on-line monthly during the summer, bi-monthly during the winter. All information, news, creative contributions, articles, reports, corrections, suggestions, Letters to the Editor, art work, comments and otherwise are welcomed and encouraged. *The Beachcomber* is a grass roots publication not officially affiliated with either the Town of Dune Acres or the Dune Acres Civic Improvement Foundation, Inc. (DACIF). All content is believed to be reasonably accurate and reliable but not “guaranteed!” We apologize if any names are misspelled.

Editorial Board: Carolyn Mellen, Irene Newman and Mike Swygert.
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