



# MARKTOWN UPDATE

A publication of the Marktown Preservation Society

August 2003

## TENNIS ANYONE?

As promised, the Marktown tennis courts have been fully restored including new nets and a great new playing surface. A new timer has been installed on the lighting system for the tennis and basketball courts and a work order has been written which will replace the burnt out lights.

It has been a good many years since the tennis courts in our neighborhood have been functional, and as a result there doesn't appear to be many residents who either



have tennis rackets or the skills to play.

So, what do we do next? Joe Valdez, Superintendent of the Parks and Recreation Department is asking that anyone of any age who would like to participate in a tennis clinic to please register at the Old Marktown Community Center.

Judy Hicks will have a sign up list and as soon as we have enough participants, we should be able to put a tennis clinic together. So dust off those old tennis shoes and get ready to play!

## You asked for it - You got it!

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words and we hope that this one says it all. At one of our neighborhood meetings last year it was brought up that we needed some signs at the edge of the park to remind residents and visitors alike of some basic park rules that need to be followed by all.

Top on that list is to remind passersby that this is a park and to watch out for children. As with all East Chicago City Parks, alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited as well as unleashed dogs and littering.

One of the other problems that the sign addresses is NO MOTOR VEHICLES. While park employees may have a need to

drive in the park, absolutely no one else should be, except for that occasional Police car.

How did we finally end up with the signs? Well that's simple. We worked with the Parks and Recreation Department. We designed the signs,

placed the order and helped Jack Pranaitis of the Parks Department install them. Oh yes, and the Parks Department paid for the signs. That's what we call teamwork and teamwork is what neighborhoods like ours is all about. *One short foot note:* Shirlee Mulholland Snyder, a former resident was in town just a few weeks ago. Her final comment was "The parks have never looked better."



visit us on line at [www.marktown.org](http://www.marktown.org)

# ***Working Together to Clean Up OUR Community***

One of the concepts that the City of East Chicago and local resident Paul Myers keeps emphasizing is that if we are to make positive changes in Marktown, that the residents have to work together. Whether it is a community policing program or a block by block street cleanup program, working together does more than resolve the problems at hand. It provides the participants with a feeling of community pride and ownership.

One of the problems that we face is that there are a number of vacant properties in our community. It is difficult to maintain your own home properly when the house next door or down the street hasn't had the lawn cut in a year or so. While it is unfortunate that conditions like this happen anywhere in the city, the reality is that they do exist.

S o ,



how do we resolve the problem? Well, you could call the city and complain, but what that really does is to pit one resident or property owner against another, and that doesn't help to rebuild the community at all. It will also take at least a month or two for the City to follow their required guidelines before they can go in and resolve the problem themselves.

Early this past summer the decision was made to put together a group of Marktown residents who would volunteer to work with owners of vacant property to clean up the yards. At the beginning of the year there were more than twenty yards that had not been cut in at least a

year, and several which had not been cut in several. Well, we are now down to just two that have not been taken care of. Marktown is looking better every week, and we have done it ourselves!



## ***MARKTOWN BACK TO SCHOOL KID'S FEST PLANNED***

Mark your calendars and set aside some change for your children so they can have a great time at the Annual Marktown Back to School Kid's Festival sponsored by the Marktown Women's Club and the Foundations of East Chicago. This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, August 2nd and will begin with a bicycle parade at 1:30 PM. Children are asked to decorate their bicycles for this fun filled parade for which prizes will be given for the best decorated bicycles and tricycles.

Tickets will be sold for the games so make sure your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews all have a pocket full of change for this great community event.

Food, games, a D.J., moon walk and air slide will all be a part of this year's events. Prizes will include back to school supplies for the chil-

dren along with toys, games and other items of interest for the children.

There will also be a dunk tank and volunteers are being sought for the dunking portion. The last time a dunk tank was used, Rich Suchanuk and Paul Myers both volunteered and it turned out to be quite a fund-raising event. We've been told that Paul has volunteered to be dunked once again. So for children and adults alike, this is your chance to nail him! All in fun of course.

The Women's club is also looking for volunteers to help set up, run and clean up after the event. If you have a chance, see Judy Hicks at the Old Marktown Community Center and she can fill you in on the details.

# ***We're Back and WE are Ready to Make Marktown a Better, Cleaner and Safer Place for ALL OF US!!!***

Same title for the article, just a different author and chairman. I'm Javier Madrigal and my father is Jose Madrigal. I grew up here and my family has lived in Marktown for a number of years. One thing I have learned in life is that I don't know everything, but I know where to find the answers. I also know that there is usually two sides to every story.

I'm taking this opportunity to clear up some misconceptions about the Committee for a Better, Cleaner and Safer Marktown. The Committee began a number of years ago when Richard Suchanuk was first elected as our Precinct Committeeman. Even though Rich chaired the committee, he didn't use his position as Precinct Committeeman to run the committee or the community. He used the committee to do exactly what it was designed to do; make Marktown a better, cleaner and safer place to live and raise a family.

It was during this time that the gears were put in motion for our new community center. As we all know, it always takes a few years to line up all of the funding and support for a project like that and Councilman Santos and Rich Suchanuk were there every step of the way.

It is unfortunate that politics play such a role in a neighborhood as small as this. People are saying things about the committee that just aren't true. The Committee is not Paul Myers's committee any more than it is my committee. It is our committee. We are not trying to compete with the Marktown Women's Club either in activities or in fund raising. We are not going to be sponsoring BINGOs or attempt to turn the Kid's Fest into a block party. That just isn't what this organization is all about.

Back in the 1950's, 60's and 70's Marktown had a number of organizations. There was the Marktown Women's Club, the Marktown Men's Club, the Marktown Civic Club and the Marktown Teenager Club. They didn't compete with each other. They all

worked together to make this a really great place to live.

So, what is it that we want to do? We want to WORK TOGETHER as a NEIGHBORHOOD to resolve the problems at hand. How are we going to raise money? One way is that we have entered into an agreement with Mr. Michels to cut fifteen of his yards. It's hard work, and I think that everyone in the

neighborhood appreciates the fact that we got them cut. We borrowed the equipment and donated our time and effort and it is paying off. We have gotten all of the yards cut and will hopefully be doing them on a monthly basis.

What else can we do? Well, we worked to resolve the dust problem at ISG. We worked with INDOT to remove that pile of debris at the foot of the Riley Road exit at Cline Avenue. We will give the Marktown Women's Club any assistance that we can with the Kid's Fest or any other project they are working on. Got a cat problem? No,

we don't kill them, but we will help to catch them and turn them over to the Animal Control Officer. When the Park Department needed some fire hose to water the park, we made the phone call and picked up the hoses. That's what we do as good citizens.

The Committee is a civic organization dedicated to Marktown. We are not campaigning for office. We are not attempting to get people hired or fired at city jobs. We are not attempting to run this community center, and we don't want to be in charge of the new center when it is completed. We are just here to give ALL of our residents the opportunity to volunteer, to participate and to contribute in making Marktown a better, cleaner and safer place to live and to raise a family. Please, come and join us. This is a really great place to live and the neighborhood has such great potential. As the Mayor said *"Let's put Marktown back on the map."*



## Mark Manufacturing & The Steel and Tube Co. of America

Clayton Mark first purchased the 190 acre tract of land from Henry Clay Frick in 1913 for the purchase price of \$250,000.00 on a ten year mortgage. Of this, only 21 acres were actually north of the rail tracks on what was known as "lake side". The purpose for the plant was to produce basic steel and then to further process it into Continuous Butt Weld Pipe. Mr. Mark was tired of being held hostage by his steel producers and the vast majority of the national tonnage yield was being produced in Ohio and Pennsylvania. It should be noted that the same year that he purchased the land for Indiana Harbor Works, he hired Chicago architect Howard Van Doren Shaw to design and build a 30,000 square foot home for he and his family on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Almost three years elapsed between the time he purchased the East Chicago site (North Harbor) and the actual date construction began in 1916. There were a number of reasons for the delay. The first was the outbreak of World War I with its accompanying conditions of shortages of supply, uncertainty in the money markets, and indifference on the part of the government regulatory agencies.

The actual construction of Indiana Harbor works did not begin until Mark Manufacturing had joined, early in 1916, a group of business interests acquiring control of the Iroquois Iron Company which already had an operational Blast Furnace on the Calumet River. The original schedule called for construction of the plant over a seven-year period, but the United States was nearing the brink of war and the U.S. Government which was formerly disinterested, now asked that a plant be built as quickly as possible. Permission was immediately granted to enclose and fill a section

of lake along the shore line property, an area measuring approximately 3,000 ft. by 4,000 ft. (275 acres). On this fill, ultimately were to be the plant's boat unloading, ore dock, and blast furnaces facilities. By September 1916, pilings for the building foundations were being put in place, and by February 1917 structural steel was beginning to rise. The completion of each individual unit helped speed the construction of others. The following is the sequence in which the Mark Company's new facilities at Indiana Harbor began operating.

September 13, 1917	Billet Mill
October 15, 1917	10" Skelp Mill
April 1, 1918	Plate Mill
April 25, 1918	Blooming Mill
June 28, 1918	No. 4 Open Hearth
July 3, 1918	No. 3 Open Hearth
August 24, 1918	Blast Furnace
September 16, 1918	No. 1 Open Hearth

Simultaneously with the construction of the mill itself, building of a different sort was proceeding on a piece of property west of the steel plant at Dickey Place and 129th Street. This was the construction of a "model city" known at the time as the Mark Town Site.

In 1918, Clayton Mark and the Schlesinger brothers began to explore the possibility of merging their separate but compatible interests, the raw materials holding of the Schlesingers and the steel-producing and manufactur-

ing operation of the Mark Corporation. The marriage was a natural one, and on June 14, 1918, the Steel and Tube Company of America was incorporated.

*(Mark Manufacturing - continued)*

Clayton Mark became Chairman of the  
*Continued on next page. See Mark Mfg.*



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

Board of the Steel and Tube Company of America. Ferdinand Schlesinger was named Chairman of the Executive Committee, and Armin Schlesinger, another brother, was made President. The initial capitalization of the Steel and Tube Company of America was set at \$25,000,000, although newspapers of the day frequently referred to it as a "\$100,000,000 corporation." Some enthusiastic writers even headlined their articles "New Rival to U.S. Steel."

Due to financial losses suffered by the company during World War I and the most untimely death of Ferdinand Schlesinger, the decision was made by the two remaining owners to divest themselves of the Indiana Harbor Works. On June 29, 1923, Mr. Mark and James A. Campbell of the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company consummated the sale of Indiana Harbor Works and a new chapter in the history of steel would soon be written.

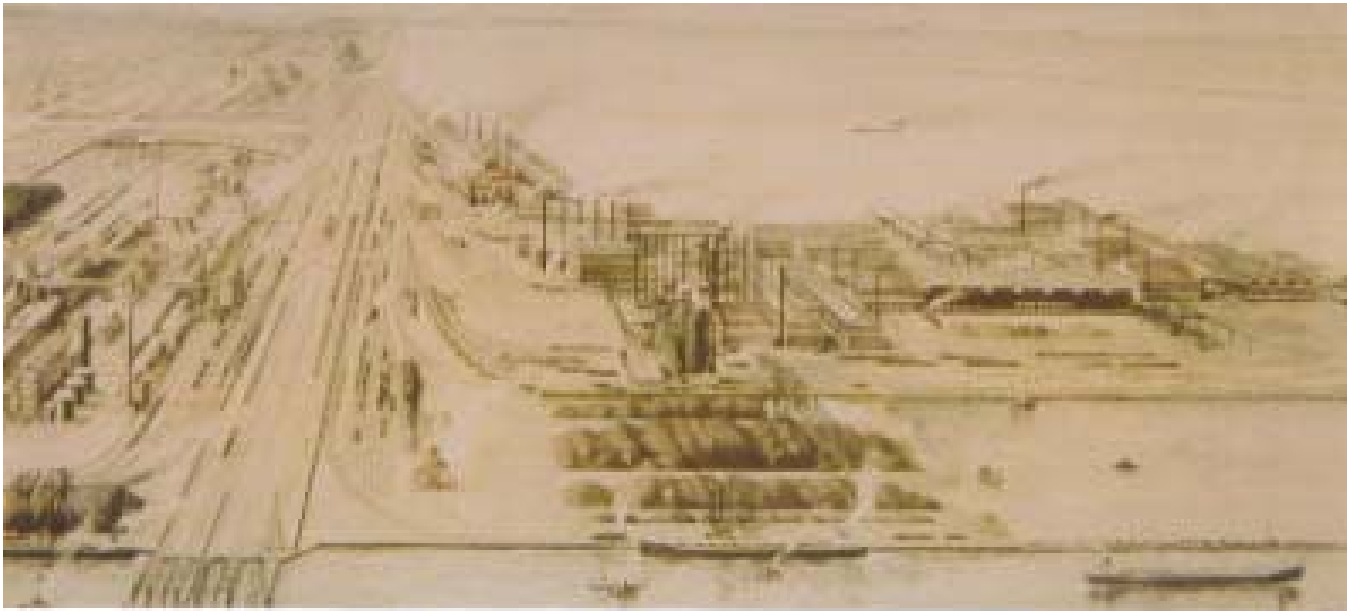
**About the illustration:** Mark Manufacturing Company had just merged with the Schlessinger brothers and formed the Steel and Tube Co. of America. This illustration first appeared in the March 20, 1920 edition of **Chicago Commerce** in an article titled: *Build Home Town to Benefit Employees: Steel and Tube Company of*

*America at Work on Great Undertaking at Indiana Harbor - Plant Sets Speed Record.*

There are only two known copies of this work. This copy was retained by Mr. Addison Beale who had been in charge of construction of the original Mark Manufacturing Co. and then served as the first plant Superintendent of Operations. Mr. Beale remained with the company until the sale of Indiana Harbor Works in 1923 to the Youngstown Sheet & Tube Company. The other print is retained by the family of Clayton Mark.

Virtually everything constructed to the right of the rail line was built on land claimed by filling in Lake Michigan. Several thousand acres of land would be created for Inland Steel and what is now ISG Indiana Harbor between 1900 and 1970 when the U.S. Government finally prohibited further expansion into the lake.

**Editor's Note:** *This article is the first in a series of historical articles. It was first used at the Steel Shores Exhibition at the Lake County Convention and Visitor's Center in Hammond. If you would like additional information on the Marktown Historic District, the surrounding steel mills or historic preservation, please visit our web site or contact Paul Myers at (219) 397-2293.*



*This drawing of Indiana Harbor Works was made by an artist in 1918 to show how the steel mill would look upon completion. We thank ISG Indiana Harbor Works for granting us access to this most unique illustration. Wouldn't it be great to include a mural of this in the New Marktown Community Center when it is completed?*

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

# Correcting Bad Press by Paul Myers

About twenty-five years ago I learned a great lesson about working with the press: Be careful about what you say, for once in print it can haunt you for ever! Unfortunately, not everyone has learned that lesson. This past April and again this past month our Democratic Precinct Committee Person was quoted in the press. I thought I would take just a moment to correct any misconception that may have arisen from her comments.

The first article was in the **Post Tribune** on April 12, 2003. The title of the article was **New Marktown Center Well Worth the Wait** by Michelle L. Quinn. Let me begin by not only quoting Mayor Pastrick's comments, but in agreeing with him wholeheartedly. Mayor Pastrick said **"It's been said that Marktown is one of the best-kept secrets in East Chicago... Make no mistake, that as we break ground here today, all of Lake County will come to know and appreciate Marktown."** Bravo Mayor Pastrick.

So, let's move on to the problem! **"When they set out to create plans for the center, the women envisioned much more than a recreation room for kids"** said Barbara Perez. Well I guess this is the first problem. **"This is a dream, I'm telling you... I've waited 35 years to see it be built."** Barbara Perez has not lived in Marktown 35 years. She has only lived here about twenty years. Where did this 35 years come from? The other problem is that only twenty years ago, back in 1983 when the current community center was rebuilt, those of us who did live here did not ask for a larger or totally new center. At that time we were quite pleased with the renovations of our current center.

It should also be noted that in 1966, in preparation for Marktown's 50th Anniversary, Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, with the assistance and direction of Precinct Committeeman Bill Hess, renovated the building. As noted, in 1983 under the Coastal Redevelopment Plan which was brought to fruition by Mayor Pastrick, our Community Center underwent a major renovation which included the then new kitchen, central air conditioning and much, much more. The majority of the Coastal Redevelopment Plan dealt with the redevelopment of the three parks here in Marktown. But before we move on, let's look at the last line of the quote:

And what about this **"...the women envisioned much more..."**? Is anyone under the impression that the only people that had anything to do with the new center were "the women?" What happened to Mayor Pastrick, Councilman Adrian Santos, Lt. Richard Suchanuk, and yes, Paul Myers? We were involved with the initial planning of this center a good five or six years before Ms Perez even got involved. Can anyone explain why Ms Perez appointed six members of her family to the Community Center Committee?

The next quote is the wrap up. Just to refresh

your memory: **"But perhaps more important, according to Perez, are the other programs her group intends to offer. For example, she would like to see GED classes taught within the building for students who have been expelled."** OK, if you didn't finish high school, whether you were expelled or not, GED classes are currently readily available from several sources in East Chicago. If you really want that GED so you can get a job, or a better job, I wouldn't sit around waiting for the new center to be built. It is probably not going to be opened or functional until late 2004 for early 2005. As opposed to GED classes, how about English as a Second Language? Or Spanish as a Second Language? What about a Head Start program? Wouldn't that be a good idea?

Let's move on. Her final comments take the cake. **"Another item on Perez's wish list includes a halfway house or women's shelter so that women in crisis would have a place to go."** I don't recall this ever being mentioned at either of the two semi-public meetings that Ms Perez called in reference to the New Community Center. But let's look at this just a bit closer. Halfway houses for men or women are created for one of two reasons: 1) for ex-felons being released from prison who may need assistance in adjusting to public life, and 2) Drug and alcoholic patients who are permitted to work 40 hours a week and then have a residence where they eat, sleep and seek counseling. To begin with, there were absolutely no provisions for a separate wing of the building which could accommodate sleeping, bathing, cooking and counseling facilities. Even if it were added, do you want your children or grandchildren exposed to drug and alcohol abuse patients? I don't think so!

What about the last section: **"a women's shelter so that women in crisis would have a place to go"**? Does she mean something like Haven House in Hammond which provides invaluable services to battered women and their children? Great idea, but once again there are two major problems with this. The first is the same as with the halfway house: there are no accommodations for this in the plans for OUR new community center. The second is that even if it were added, it wouldn't be for the women from this neighborhood, because anyone who knows anything at all about shelters of this type can tell you that the first thing you do is get the abused parties out of the immediate neighborhood.

Maybe next month we will take a look at her comments in The Times! We may have to add pages for that one. Come on Marktowners: Let's think about what we say to the press and to each other. We need to begin working together to make Marktown a cleaner, better and safer place to live and to raise a family as opposed to promoting ourselves and our families in the public light!

**It is better to remain silent and be thought foolish  
than it is to speak and remove all doubt!**

## ***Riley Road Exit Cleaned Up!***

Did you ever notice that really large pile of debris at the foot of the Riley Road Exit? It was larger than a Marktown Quad and looked really bad. How did we get rid of it? Paul Myers began by writing a letter to the INDOT Gary Office. While they were nice enough to send us a letter saying that they would take care of it, they never did. Six weeks later when the Gary office couldn't give us a firm cleanup date, Paul called the main office for INDOT in Indianapolis an several hours later the job was completed. A big "Well Done" goes to Paul.



## ***Watering the Park the Hard Way***

This past month, before the summer rains finally began, the sprinkler system in the park had not been repaired and the park was rapidly drying out. What to do next was discussed and debated until Paul Myers got a hold of Val Gomez, the Chief of the E.C.F.D. and had 250 feet of 1 1/2" fire hose donated to the Marktown Park. Not only did Paul make arrangements to have it donated, he also took the time to pick it up and deliver it to the Marktown Park. Once again our parks are green and all it took was a telephone call to Val and a great deal of assistance from Joe Valdez of the East Chicago Parks and Recreation Dept. Oh yes, and a little help from Paul!



## ***The 4th of July Clean Up Was Much Appreciated!***

At 7 O'clock in the morning on July 5th, yes, a Saturday, the street sweepers were in Marktown and virtually every other part of East Chicago. What were they doing? That's simple! East Chicago residents are known for celebrating the 4th of July with a bang, a boom and an awful lot of fireworks. Where you have fireworks you have that terrible paper debris. Mayor Pastrick, the Street Department, and Common Council, and yes, our own Councilman Adrian Santos saw to it that the street sweepers were out early on Saturday to help the residents clean up after their grand evening of patriotic celebration. Now that's teamwork!



## ***"Play Ball" is Heard Once Again In Marktown***

Dating back to the early 1920's there has been baseball played in the Marktown Park, and I don't mean just sandlot ball. When Marktown was first built society was much different. They didn't have many movie theaters and television didn't come about for another thirty years. Companies like Mark Manufacturing and later, Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company sponsored teams in various sports in what was know as City Leagues and Company Leagues. Baseball was one of the seasonal leagues as were basketball and bowling.



***Above: An early photo (1937-38) of a softball team made up of Marktown residents. (i.e. mill employees or family members)***

What we now refer to as the Big Park was always a baseball field, or more accurately two fields. Midway between the larger field in the corner and Broad Street is a smaller field that was installed for the children of Marktown residents.

Back in the early 1970's LTV Steel actually came in and refurbished the larger field and installed a score board. OK, the score board was painted plywood and looked more like a union advertisement, but it was still a score board.

In 1983, under the Coastal Redevelopment Plan, all three Marktown Parks were furnished with sprinkler systems and the parks were refurbished.

Exactly what happened to our parks over the

next twenty years would be difficult to define. Economic downturns in industry, bankruptcies that devastated the city budget and at least one park superintendent that didn't think that watering parks was prudent, all took their toll on our parks.

About two years ago the City of East Chicago stepped forward and began a total evaluation of all twenty East Chicago City Parks. Their decision was that each neighborhood deserves a park and that each park needs to be restored, renovated and improved upon to better meet the needs of our residents. During that process, the



***Above: The new East Chicago City Softball League now plays in Marktown several days a week. A Men & Women's League will begin soon!***

ball fields in the Marktown Park began to be restored to their former glory.

Last year, and again this year, Marktown residents have seen an influx of activities not only at the ball fields, but throughout our parks. The

bushes have been trimmed. The lawn is watered and mowed on a regular basis. Trees have been trimmed and we all enjoy seeing our neighborhood looking better each week.

Oh yes, and about the parking problems at the ball fields. Paul Myers is working out an agreement with USS so that the softball leagues can park at the USS parking lot behind the field as opposed to parking on the streets of Marktown. That's teamwork!

