

The Breeze

Of
Park Point

April 2007

Vol.36 issue 4

Calendar

Park Point Community Club Meeting
April 19th, 7PM
At Lafayette

Buoys and Gulls Club Mtg
Tuesday May 8th @ 1 PM
BAYPOINT ESTATES
APT BLDG
1902 St. Louis Ave.
(Use lower East entrance)
Bingo every Thursday
(Also @ Baypoint Estates)
11 AM
Bring your lunch
Coffee is provided

Park Point Rummage Sale
June 8th & 9th

Grandma's Marathon
June 16th

Park Point Art Fair
June 23rd & 24th

Signs of Spring: The Opening of the Portland Malt Shop on Park Point!



On Park Point? Well, sort of. The new atrium addition at the Franciscan Health Center contains a "streetscape" with the facades of such Duluth landmarks as the Duluth National Bank, Sir Benedict's Tavern, and yes, the Portland Malt Shop. Check it out if you get the chance.

The mission of the Breeze is to serve the community by:

- 1) Publishing the minutes and financial statements of the Park Point Community Club
- 2) Informing the community of upcoming meetings, events, happenings and projects
- 3) Providing a forum for Park Point residents to air their concerns
- 4) Sharing the history, stories and anecdotes that make Park Point a unique place to live

Pine Forest Petition Drive Lands 1400 Signatures

by Dave Johnson

Our petition drive was quick, but very effective, and everyone who signed it should take pride in the result. At this writing, we have gathered approximately 1400 signatures. (I tried to stay conservative with that estimate.) Considering how few petitions were actually out there available to sign, considering the quick start and short duration of the drive, even considering the blizzard that tangled up volunteers, the total is astounding. I thought 500 signatures would have been dandy. The petitions themselves are something to see. They're stained, beat up, some have notes scribbled to us. Familiar names mix with out-of-state names, saints, sinners, old folks and kids. They're great reading! We have some assembly to do, but soon we'll present them to the Federal Aviation Administration. With the success of the petition, everyone working for the preservation of the Minnesota Point Pine Forest can be positive of this heartening thought: We aren't alone. Thank you, everyone.

The Breeze

Editor: Alan Dartanyan
726-0110

Submissions

The deadline is May 4th for the May 2007 issue. Please send submissions to Alan Dartanyan at breezeditor@msn.com by e-mail or deliver to 1540 Minnesota Ave.

Park Point Community Club Officers:

President: Open

Vice President: Dave Poulin
3101 S. Lake Ave.
722-1511

Secretary: Dave Johnson
722-98764

Treasurer: Chuck Flaig
1511 Minnesota Ave.
727-2814

Committees

ART FAIR

Carla Tamburro
727-2661

ENVIRONMENTAL

Kinnan Stauber, 722-6255

HOSPITALITY

Diane Gould, 727-4067

LAFAYETTE SQUARE RENTALS

Barb Greene 940-2613
Barbinha69@aol.com

S-CURVE SIGN

Dave Johnson, 722-9764

SUNSHINE

Pam Griggs
727-2158

Park Point Community Club

P.O. Box 16326

Duluth, MN 55816-0326

www.

parkpointcommunityclub.org

An Old Timer Passes Away

Old Timers. There are not many of that special breed of Park Pointers left. These are the people that have lived on the Point for at least 80 years. They've seen incredible changes to the community including the construction of Park Point School, the development of the park area at the end by the WPA, the conversion of the Duluth Canal Bridge to a lift bridge and the Corps of Engineers' project that used dredge spoils to construct the artificial island between 20th and 24th, later called Hearing. They fought to keep the little Park Point School open and bemoaned the loss of their fine, working class neighborhood as the wealthy "discovered" the Point. Pete Mackay was an Old Timer. Although he spent his first 4 years on the mainland, his family moved to the other side of the bridge in 1918. What a fortunate thing for our community.

Pete grew up like other boys of his day, with sand between his toes and a love for any vessel that would float. He crewed the sailboat Shamrock. He met the love of his life, Louise, when he and his brother Norman took a break from ice boating to check out the girls at the Oatka Boat Club.

In a 1991 Breeze interview I had with Pete and Louise on the occasion of their 50th anniversary, she remembered the scene. The young men hollered out, "Hi girls, do want a ride? If you have any wind come on down."

Pete was 24, Louise 17. The ice boat ride led to their marriage three years later. Pete was unemployed at the time and he recalled it was Louise's baby-sitting money that bought the license.

Pete was always full of fun and kindness. The Mackay connection to his Scottish heritage ran deep. He was the patriarch of the Mackay clan, and always enjoyed a good joke about what he was really wearing under his kilt.

Pete and Louise raised three children, Jim, Tom and Mary, in their little house on the dunes at 4103 Minnesota Avenue. The property had belonged to Pete's grandfather and was the place of many a Mackay clan celebration.

The couple's only time away from the Point was a 4 1/2 year stay in Texas when Pete worked for the Smith Detective Agency. He later worked for the Hotel Duluth and was the first retiree from the DECC, just short of its grand opening in 1966.

On March 14 Pete died at Bayshore Health Center. He was 93. He will be missed greatly by his family and by those of us on the Point that were fortunate enough to know him.

Jan Olson

Duluth Out Loud: A Sense of Place

"Duluth Out Loud: A Sense of Place," a poetry reading to celebrate Duluth and the surrounding region, will take place on Saturday evening, April 28th, 2007, 7 pm. at the

LaFayette Community Center, 3026 Minnesota Avenue, Duluth.

Sponsored by Lake Superior Writers, and organized by Duluth poet laureate Bart Sutter, the poetry reading will feature twelve poets, including Cal Benson, Gary Boelhower, Deborah Cooper, Jean Alice Jacobson, Jim Johnson, Paul Lundgren, Liz Minette, Sheila Packa, Ellie Schoenfeld, Bart Sutter, Ryan Vine, and Connie Wanek. The reading is free and open to the public; refreshments will be served; and books by the participating poets will be offered for sale by Northern Lights Books & Gifts.

For further information, please contact Lake Superior Writers, www.lakesuperiorwriters.org or 218-722-3094.

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Thank you to all who supported our teens by attending the Swing Dance on March 25th. The proceeds go toward funding their Pilgrimage in August.

Love Does That

All day long a little burro labors, sometimes with heavy loads on her back and sometimes just with worries about things that bother only burros.

And worries, as we know, can be more exhausting than physical labor.

Once in a while a kind monk comes to her stable and brings a pear, but more than that, he looks into the burro's eyes and touches her ears,

and for a few seconds the burro is free and even seems to laugh,

because love does that.

Love frees.

Meister Eckhart (13th Century Mystic)

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An Alex Kind of Day

As I Looked out my front window at the swirl of snow, I saw a funnel of white shooting toward me, catching in the pine bows and clinging. I didn't stop to think about the mountains I'd be moving in the morning. Instead I smiled and thought, "This is an Alex kind of day."

When the weather deteriorates on Park Point, wind pounding the breath out of everything, rain coming in buckets, sand blowing so hard it nearly peels the skin, lightning flashing fast enough you'd swear you were in a laser show, thunder sending your dog to the basement, snow so blinding you wished you'd worn a plastic bag over your head, I recall a young man who would find these conditions exhilarating. I remember a young man with a camera and a passion for weather's worst.

Alex Sahlberg was my neighbor and friend. When he was first plopped down on the beach as an inquisitive infant, I observed something strangely interesting about him. He didn't amuse himself with the toy shovels and buckets provided by his parents Kathy and John. He amused himself with a child-made discovery. Alex learned very early on that if he tossed and twirled the sand in a particular way, he could create a sandy image that looked like the tornadoes we see on the weather news.

Alex never stopped making tornadoes. As he grew he might take a break from this study, this observation of motion. Perhaps he'd swim and play in the water with his brother Peter. Or the boys would launch a log or paddle their kayaks. But soon Alex would go back to the twirl of sand, the Alex vortex. Along the way, Alex with younger Peter close at his heels, began photographing weather. He convinced his parents he should use the family video camera to record storms. At the age of eleven his career as a storm chaser was launched. We in the neighborhood were guaranteed a front row seat to the Sahlberg boys' storm chasing activities. In the worst of weather, we could peak out our windows to a deluge and see Alex dashing about with the video camera, Peter nearby to help his brother in pursuit of his passion.

Two years ago on April 13 the Sahlberg family, their neighbors and the world tragically lost this amazing young man. Alex died unexpectedly from respiratory distress due to aspiration. Only 18, he had become recognized as a weather expert in our neighborhood. More amazingly he had produced a weather video that he was marketing. He had made a significant impact on weather novices and experts all over the country. Alex's website, his internet contacts with storm chasers, his internships with local TV weather personalities and contributions to the stations as a weather watcher together with his extraordinary video footage had already earned him a highly regarded reputation.

Since her son's death Kathy Sahlberg has kept his memory alive by making his work available to everyone. She had the first production, "Extreme Northland", put on DVD. Alex was preparing a second production before his death but it was inaccessible because no one knew his computer password. Peter, willing to sit at a computer for as long as it took to decipher the code, figured out his brother's password and was finally able to access the newer footage. Thus, a second DVD, "Lake Superior's Winter Fury", was compiled.

One evening I watched both DVDs. The first tells the tale of a squeaky-voiced little boy who was mesmerized by wind, hail, rain, snow, whatever extreme weather came his way. The camera jumps from one lightning bolt to another. He tries to capture every raindrop no matter which direction he has to move. He is everywhere at the same time; you can feel the excitement in his discovery of each hail stone. As the footage continues, a noticeable change comes in sound and movement. The observer hears Alex's voice getting lower, his control of the camera improving. The observer notices Alex beginning to see more than just the fury of the weather. He focuses and holds on small details. He incorporates music. The photojournalist is born.

By the second DVD Alex has captured some exquisite moments; the sunrise over Lake Superior, droplets of water on tree branches, a ship moving through the fog under the Aerial Lift Bridge, waves washing the sand on the beach behind the Sahlberg house.

We learn of Alex's death on this DVD. Tributes from TV news staff and eulogies at his memorial service are touching. We also come to learn more about a young man with an uncanny sense of humor, a love of animals and a willingness to befriend others who may never have had friends until they met Alex. When I finished watching, I looked out my window. It was snowing, but just lightly. I wondered when the weather would turn again, when things would get a bit surly outdoors and I could proclaim, "It's an Alex kind of day." What a better world we would all live in if we all had that positive passion that filled my neighbor and friend Alex.

Jan Olsen

Park Point Community Club March 15, 2007 Meeting Minutes

Members of the Park Point Community Club were already arranged around Lafayette's long tables, exhaustion still showing in shovel-weary, blizzard-battered faces. It was March 15, the notorious date in world history when Julius Caesar was stabbed to death by his senators and advisors. Dave Poulin shifted in his president's chair and nervously eyed the club secretary. The secretary, a high-strung type, in turn reacted with poorly-concealed tension at finding himself under such unblinking scrutiny. The awkward moment passed without incident or assassination, and President Poulin brought the meeting to order. It was 7:03. Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Fire Department Report: Regular club meeting procedure was suspended to allow for tonight's guest speaker. Carmine Langlois is one of Park Point's three firemen that staff Firehall 5. He opened his remarks with a word of thanks for the neighbors on Park Point who shoveled out fire hydrants after the blizzard. There are about 3200 hydrants in Duluth; the snow buried hundreds of them. Langlois also reminded the club that changing to Daylight Savings Time means it's time to replace smoke detector batteries.

He then introduced his main topic, major changes planned for Firehall 5. The City of Duluth has budgeted money for a new Park Point fire hall (2007-08 budget) and a new fire truck (2008-09 budget). The existing building (2138 Minnesota Avenue) is in tough shape, and is a bad match for the equipment, procedures and fire rigs of today. **City officials have prepared a plan to replace the existing fire hall at its present site, but they are also looking at Lafayette as a possible site for the new fire hall.** This is a new development, so details are sketchy.

Langlois fielded an informal question-and-answer session about perceived needs in the Park Point community. By an overwhelming margin, emergency responses on Park Point are medical in origin. Dick Gould stressed that Park Point's need for a quick-response ambulance is a priority that must be incorporated into planning any new facility.

This led to a discussion on Duluth Fire Department staffing guidelines. Firehall 5 has three firemen, each working a solo shift. Park Point is the only fire hall to have only one person on duty at a time; all other Duluth fire halls have three or more. All Park Point's homes and businesses, apartments, nursing facilities and public buildings, from the Aerial Bridge to Sky Harbor, rely on one fireman and his 500-gallon fire truck. Fortunately, response time from the main downtown fire hall is exceptional, and they do communicate with the bridge during emergencies. Langlois noted that the DFD had added a firefighter to the staff of Firehall 5 in preparation for the recent blizzard. The blizzard also reinforced their need for a 4-wheel drive vehicle.

Fireman Langlois finished with an invitation to the community: Stop in and see Firehall 5; get to know them and the issues facing their building replacement project. They can check your blood-pressure, too!

Police Report: Officer Mike Tinsley had joined in the discussion about emergency services on Park Point. After Fireman Langlois concluded his remarks, Mike began his own report by distributing his monthly statistics summary. Park Point is comfortably non-criminal through the winter. Also, there is good news for the upcoming summer: Mike has been working to get extra patrols down here on particularly frantic days. Remember that when you next roll through the stop sign at Bay Side.

Charlene Shimmin brought up a thorny issue for the Club to grapple with. Every year since its inception the Park Point Art Fair holds an artists' banquet. Beer and wine are served at the event. Charlene is concerned about Club liability and the potential for underage drinking. Officer Tinsley spoke about laws governing park events and alcohol; as the sponsor of the banquet the Park Point Community Club has always had all necessary permits and has met all legal requirements.

Mike Tinsley finished with a word about neighborhood crime-watch programs. They work better in problem areas. Park Point is just too diddley-darn law-abiding to hold the attention of crime watchers.

(continued next page)

Committee Reports: Finished with their reports the two men in uniform took their leave of the Club and departed. Their presence had given Dave Poulin a sense of security that was suddenly gone. "Beware the Ides of March," he muttered to himself, echoing the long-ago warning to Caesar. He stared pointedly again at the club secretary (he'd never noticed how shifty the guy looked) then called for reports.

Youth Committee: A letter to the community club from Chuck Campbell (City of Duluth Parks and Rec. Department) thanks all the community volunteers who pitched in to keep Lafayette's skating rinks open this year. This developed into a discussion about Lafayette's popular summer recreation program. About 50 kids participate in the City-sponsored program on any given day. For many years the PPCC has supplemented funding for the program's staff and supplies. **Motion:** The Community Club shall contribute \$1500 to the City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Department for the sole benefit of the Lafayette Summer Youth Program. This amount includes money for necessary supplies. **Motion passed.** This was the first of two required votes.

Hospitality: Thanks to Diane Gould for again having coffee and snacks ready for the club meeting! (The club secretary rose to fetch a cookie for himself, but Poulin's intimidating glare - why *did* he keep looking over? - sat him back down.)

Art Fair: Director Carla Tamburro had an optimistic report for the Club about the status of the 2007 Art Fair. Artist entries have increased substantially over last year. Jury selection of those entries will take place in Lafayette on Saturday, March 17. There will be an Art Fair committee meeting later in April. This year's fair will again coincide with a Harley-Davidson rally in town. This happy coincidence has proven in the past to be a profitable one for our artists. Perhaps a shipping company could set up a temporary stand at the Fair? Jake Kapsner will be pursuing a closer working relationship with Canal Park businesses leading up to and throughout the Fair. Jake had also researched the alcohol issue after the last meeting. The Club discussed the issue again; nothing had changed on the topic in the intervening half hour since the earlier discussion.

Environment: Dave Johnson reported on the petition process; it's good news so far. Dick Gould spoke emphatically about the advantages to be gained by moving the airport to either Morgan Park or the moon. Existing Sky Harbor property would become prime land for developers. Dick suggested that a Barker's Island-style series of townhouses would contribute a lot of tax money to Duluth. Moving the runway west onto newly-dredged sand remains a strong option. The Club discussed birds in the Pine Forest for a while; the topic reinforced the importance of the forest to migrating flocks.

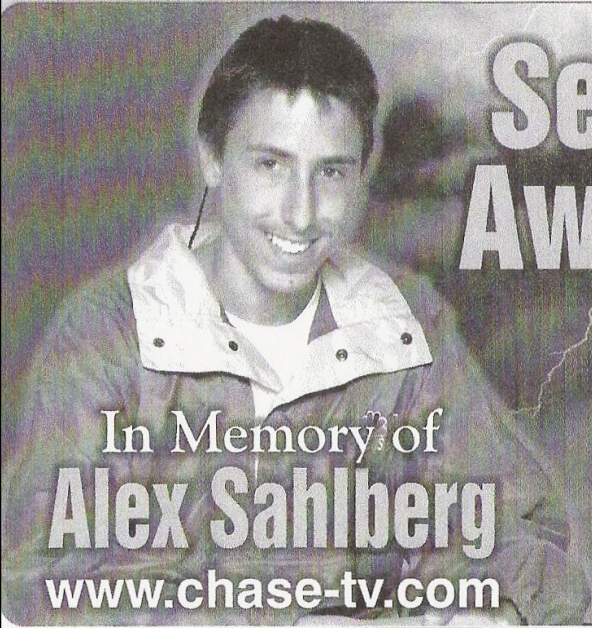
Charlene Shimmin brought up the topic of the small pine forest behind Our Lady of Mercy Church. The church building needs work, and one plan subsidizes the work by selling the land to a developer. Charlene is concerned about the fate of the forest. Spring is a time for volunteers on Park Point. Tree-planting days and boardwalk work are all on tap; watch for notices coming soon to an S-curve sign near you. Dick Gould is researching costs for materials for an eventual Pavilion Boardwalk. It'll be a doozy, with a grand view from its deck during the Art Fair.

Rummage Sale: Charlene Shimmin reminded everyone that this year's sale will be held on June 8 & 9. There are no plans for a Rummage Sale Keg Party afterward.

Breeze: Editor Alan Dartanyan bit the end off his cheap cigar and spat it towards his wastebasket. Abruptly he jammed an ink-stained thumb down on a brass intercom switch and barked, "Get me rewrite. We gotta tell the story of the 2007 Blizzard! I want storm photos, storm stories, the works. We'll make it a special edition." The reedy voice of the club secretary crackled back through the intercom. "Do you want to make that in the form of a motion?" **Motion:** The PPCC shall financially allow - and encourages the publication of - an extra 'Storm' issue of the Breeze. **Motion carried.** Park Pointers with contributions can contact Alan.

There was a move to adjourn; it was passed quickly by the group. Then, ominously, the Park Point Community Club fell silent. At the front of the room Dave Poulin racked his brain to remember whether Julius Caesar had been attacked before or after his last community club meeting. Suddenly he swung and pointed accusingly at the secretary. "Et tu, Brute?" he snarled in Latin. Shrieking like a schoolgirl, the secretary fled into the night. It was 8:45.

Respectfully Submittling, Dave Johnson, Idiot Secretary




Severe Weather Awareness Week


April 9-13

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Alex Sahlberg

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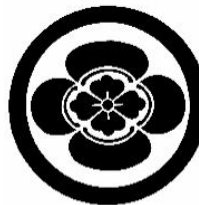
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COMING SOON : PARK POINT GARAGE SALE

June 8th & 9th Friday - Saturday 8AM - 5PM

The 27th Annual Park Point Garage Sale is less than 2 months away. Hope you are getting ready. Again, Questions to ask: when deciding if you should put in the sale: When was the last time you used it? If you moved would we take it with? Do you need to replace it?

Have you told your friends and family about the sale? Please help get the word out about the sale.

If you have extra space in your yard and would like to have a food stand in your yard, please call. We expect to have food vendors looking for yard space. **IMPORTANT:** All food vendors must have proper health permits. St. Louis County Health Department does check food vendors for licenses.

Please NO RUMMAGE SALES THE WEEKEND OF THE ART FAIR. Both the Rummage Sale & Art Fair are sponsored by the Park Point Community Club.

Editor's Corner

Those of us raised on the saying "If March comes in like a lion it goes out like a lamb" were a little confused this year. Beginning with a blizzard and ending with an ice storm, March 2007 kind of put a lie to that. And as the heavy coating of ice brought even more tree branches crashing down, it makes the offer of free brush and limb disposal from Hartels/DBJ Disposal even more valuable. You'll find an insert in this month's Breeze detailing the offer, set for Saturday April 21st.

The Blizzard Breeze is coming!

You will notice in the minutes that the Community Club has given me the go ahead to put out a special edition of the Breeze, centered around pictures and stories of the March 1st blizzard. Special Edition means I'm not on any firm deadline, just putzing along as I find time and material. And I'm still seeking more pictures and stories to use, so keep them coming. I can't print them all, but I want to get as much variety as possible. Send digital photos to breezeditor@msn.com, or drop off pictures at 1540 Minnesota Ave. I will return them if you like.

Aside from that, there are some exciting things happening. The petition drive has been very successful and should at least add considerable clout to our efforts to protect the Pine Forest. And Park Point is scheduled to receive a new firehall in the next year or two.

The article at right describes two proposals for the new firehall: either building a new one at its present site on 22nd Street, or attaching it to the Community Club building at Lafayette on the 31st Street side. The city is seeking citizen input on the proposals. Don't hesitate to write the Breeze with your thoughts.

City Develops Plan for Lafayette Firehall

by Dave Johnson

On Thursday, March 22, members of the Park Point community met with representatives from the City of Duluth and the Duluth Fire Department. The meeting was called to discuss a new idea being promoted by the City, and it could result in the most dramatic change to Lafayette Square in eighty years.

Half a mile closer to town from Lafayette stands Firehall 5. It's a Park Point landmark, but it has a serious job to do, and now the aging structure no longer meets the standard requirements of the Duluth Fire Department. An example of this is plain to see: The fire truck itself barely squeezes through the main door of the garage.

Over the past year the City of Duluth has developed a plan to replace Firehall 5 at its existing site, 2138 Minnesota Avenue. Construction will take place under the 2007-2008 city budget time frame. No doubt about this: Park Point needs - and will somehow be getting - a new fire hall. The plan for the existing site is comprehensive; details include two garage bays that open onto 22nd Street instead of Minnesota Avenue and better living quarters for the personnel. The City is all set to move ahead on the project, but a new idea has officials taking a second look at Lafayette, and that led to the March 22 meeting.

Terry Groshong is the acting City of Duluth architect, taking over the department for the retired Jerry Johnson. He proposes Park Point's new fire hall could be attached to the south end of Lafayette, replacing the wooden stairs, the hill and the existing handicapped-access ramp. Building requirements are similar to those proposed for the other fire hall; it would have two garage bays, and would require a large access driveway or turnaround. Groshong emphasized this plan is in its infancy, and community input will determine whether or not the plan is worth pursuing. He also said the addition would be a "green" building, designed around principles of sustainability and recycled materials.

There are advantages to having one building serve as a complete community center. Having a fire fighter stationed at Lafayette brings safety and a stabilizing influence to the nearby beach and the summer youth program. Financing for the new building would include key improvements to Lafayette such as public bathrooms behind the building and a long-awaited new roof. Part of the financing for the Lafayette project would derive from the sale of the existing Firehall 5.

There are disadvantages as well. The public rink and ball field would be irrevocably reduced. Parking would still be at a premium; perhaps more so, unless the public field is sacrificed completely. Lafayette's prize-winning garden would also be reduced. Relations between the City of Duluth and Park Pointers have occasionally turned sour in the past; that's especially true for issues affecting Lafayette. As a consequence, members of the community are approaching the plan with patience and some skepticism. Liz Mackay has agreed to serve as the committee chair on this issue. Her goal is to gauge the opinions of Park Pointers about where the new fire hall should be located. Please make your opinion known.

The Breeze

Park Point Community Club
P.O. Box 16326
Duluth, MN 55816-0326



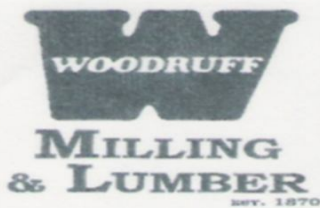
Park Point Resident

Numbers You can use

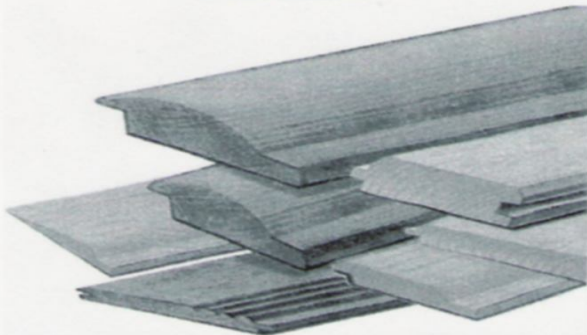
Got (non-emergency) issues you'd like to discuss, but don't know who to call? Here's some numbers you can use: Parks Maintenance Division : 723-3425 (after hours 723-3333)

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