

You may purchase a dog license at the Treasurer's Department until March 1, 2004.

Surviving Solicitors

Cascade Township has an ordinance requiring solicitors to be licensed. Any person who travels from house to house attempting to take orders for the sale of goods or to collect monies for charitable organizations must obtain a license from Cascade Township. This license requires the solicitor to wear a picture identification badge, signed by the Township Manager, on his or her person in full view.

If you encounter a solicitor who is not wearing an identification badge, please call the Township (949-1500) or the Kent County Sheriff's Department non-emergency number (336-3113) immediately.

If a licensed solicitor causes you any problems, please report this to the Township.

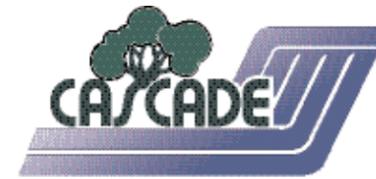
As always, report any suspicious person in your neighborhood to the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

Neighborhood children selling goods for school are not required to be licensed.

Cascade Charter Township

2865 Thornhills Ave SE
Grand Rapids MI 49546
phone: 616.949.1500
fax: 616.949.3918
www.cascadetwp.com

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Winter 2004

A Newsletter from Cascade Charter Township

Snowplowing

Snowplowing contractors and the residents they serve should be aware that State law prohibits the disposing of "snow, ice, or slush onto or across a roadway or the shoulder of the roadway in a manner which obstructs the safe vision of the driver of a motor vehicle". The law further states that no snow, ice, or slush can be deposited on any roadway or highway (see MCLA 257-677a).

We recommend that residents who have a snowplow service make sure the snow from their driveway is deposited on their own property, not in the roadway, the road right-of-way, or a neighboring property. The road right-of-way extends wider than the paved section of roadway.

If you call the Township with problems or concerns regarding a snowplow contractor, it is helpful if you can identify the contractor.

The Cascade Community Foundation sincerely thanks all those who made

"The mission of the Cascade Community Foundation is to enhance the quality of life in Cascade by building a permanent endowment fund"

Members

Rob Beahan	Michelle Bottrall
Mary Carpenter	Wendell Christoff
Bill Green	Michael Julien
Carl Kerekes	Jack Lewis
Sandra Parrish	Claude Robinson
Susan Roeder	Pat Vredevoogd

A Generous Heart

This past holiday season, Cascade Township employees along with the Firefighter's Association were able to purchase needed items for the St. John's Home Kids First Program. Through the generosity of our employees' donations, as well as donations from Meijer, Inc. and Wal-Mart, approximately \$1,200 in cash or gift cards was collected, as well as non-perishable items.



Our holiday shoppers took advantage of holiday discounts and fulfilled two families' wish lists. Both families needed practical items, such as clothing, shoes, and outerwear, learning games and books for the children, as well as a few



games, surprises and treats for each family. The Kids First Program needed games, books, art supplies and toys for the children, as well as a couple of items for the house, such as a griddle, VCR, dictionaries, etc.

It is a wonderful feeling bringing joy to the faces and hearts of those who really need the extra help.

We thank everyone involved for their generosity!

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

2003 Township Goals - Much Accomplished, Much To Do

Dear Fellow Cascade Citizens:

Each year your township board sets the priorities for itself and our community's government. This is my annual status report on our progress towards meeting those goals in 2003, and for the several multi year projects, where we are headed in 2004.

Establish a Sidewalk Construction Policy for Non-residential Areas

Done. The Township Board approved the new policy for commercial areas on March 12. We will continue to see construction of additional sidewalks in all our commercial areas as a result, with the eventual completion of a sidewalk from the I-96 freeway to our community's village area.

Complete the Cascade Library Expansion Study (and address the needs for a Historical Room in the expanded facility)

Done, as to the study. Working with our Library Advisory Board and the Friends of the Cascade Library, we have identified a need for an addition to the Cascade Library for a Program/Community Room and space for our Historical Society.

This expansion, if built, will cause no additional taxes to our community. It will be funded by a combination of the dedicated tax fund from the special Library millage passed by our community in 1994 and private charitable contributions. Fundraising efforts have already begun.

Your township board decided to delay approval of this project until after the expected August request for operating millage renewal by the Kent District Library. If county voters renew the District Library's operating millage, then our community can go forward with expansion of our Cascade Library.

Complete construction of the water line Thornapple River crossing as required by the City of Grand Rapids water department

Bids have been received, a contract awarded, and all easements obtained. Construction of the very needed second river crossing for our community's water lines will be com-

pleted in Spring, 2004. Construction of this line will add reliability and pressure to the water system east of the Thornapple River, and greatly assist our firefighters as well.

Create a Community Outreach Program to help the Township Board receive resident opinion

Delayed to 2004. Later this year we will add survey questions to our website (www.cascadetwp.com). And later this month we will meet with leaders of our community's neighborhood associations to increase our dialogue with neighborhoods. At this point we do not plan a community-wide survey due to its cost (printing, postage, compilation, etc).

Develop a Master Plan for McGraw Park

Done. Your Township Board approved the master plan for this natural area park along the Grand River on April 30. Highlights include signage, parking expansion and bench seating along the existing riverfront path. We will also study the advisability of rest rooms and a canoe and kayak (non-motorized) launch site.

Develop a Financial / Budget Committee to plan future financial needs of the Township

Done. Your township board has established a budget subcommittee of its members to work with the township manager during our annual budget process. Two main concerns were addressed in 2003 - the ever-decreasing amount of state revenue sharing (down about \$300,000 to our community in just one year!) and the need for additional long term funding for our fire department.

Despite the \$300,000 reduction in general fund revenue sharing from the State, we have been able to continue our overall level of service to our community through



NEWS FROM THE CASCADE DISTRICT LIBRARY

The Library is the place to be this winter. Some of the fun winter activities are:

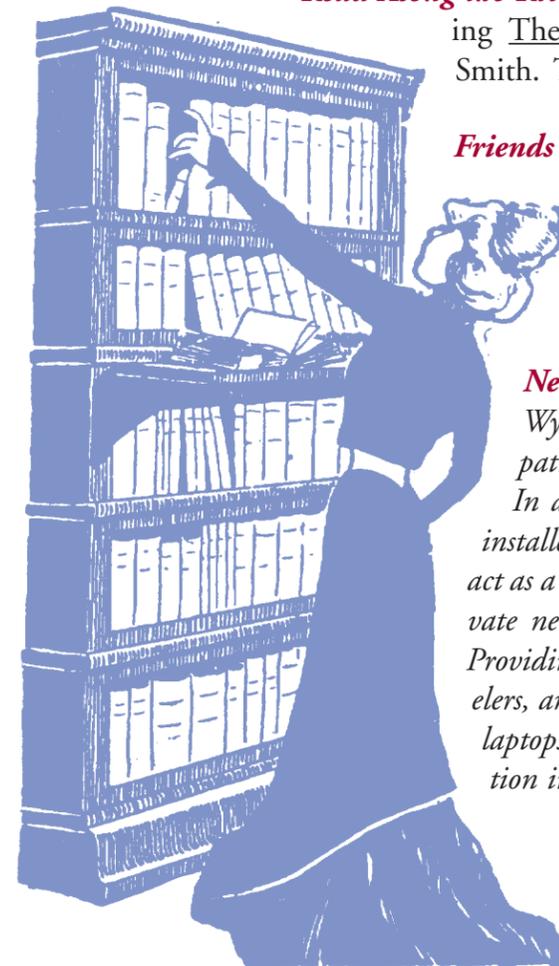
The Great Key Chain Library Card Swap. Swap your old KDL card or replace it free of charge through April 30, 2004. Get one wallet card and two key chain cards to give to family members so they can pick up your holds.

Let It Snow Reading Club for Adults. Now through March 31, 2004 read 10 books and receive a free "Let It Snow" mug or tote bag.

Read Along the River, One Book. One County. Join your neighbors in reading The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency by Alexander McCall Smith. The author will be visiting Grand Rapids on April 26, 2004.

Friends of the Library Book Discussions. The Friends of the Library will be discussing Anatomy of a Murder by Robert Traver on Monday, March 8th and The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold on Monday, April 12th. Both discussions will take place in the Cascade Library at 9:30 a.m.

New to Kent District Libraries. *The Cascade, Plainfield, Wyoming, and Rockford branches were recently equipped to allow patrons the ability to use their own laptop computers at the library. In an effort to take the hassle out of using the library, KDL has installed connections for laptops and has installed a Linux server to act as a router. The server isolates all patron traffic to a completely private network with no ability to cross over into the KDL network. Providing access for laptop computers helps many business people, travelers, and others to stay connected. Internet connections for those with laptops is yet another way in which KDL provides access to information in a variety of formats to fit the needs of most individuals.*



Winter tax bills are due in the Treasurer's Office by 5:00 p.m. February 17th to avoid penalty and late fees.

Supervisor's Message Continued

CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

You can help preserve the Heritage of Cascade.

A membership in the Cascade Historical Society is more than a great idea. When you purchase a membership, or purchase a gift membership for someone you know, you are also giving an important gift to the Community. With your membership, you help support the CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY as well as a variety of projects aimed at preserving a rich and lasting heritage.

In addition, you help ensure that the past is kept alive and that future residents of the community can experience the unique continuity that can be found in Cascade.

If you are looking to show your support and help preserve the rich heritage of the Cascade Community, you can choose from Senior, Student, Individual, or Family Memberships. We also have Friends, Business, and Corporate Membership levels.

Cascade Historical Society is dedicated to ensure that present and future generations will not only know the significance of traditions of the area, but also will learn from the past and recognize the need to preserve the historical heritage which has been bestowed upon them.

CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY meets at 10:00 a.m. on the 1st Thursday of each month at 2839 Thornapple River Drive.

PLEASE SUPPORT US BY BECOMING A MEMBER OR GIVING A GIFT MEMBERSHIP.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Business) _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Corporate	\$100	Business	\$ 50	Friends	\$ 25
Individual	\$ 10	Student	\$ 5	Senior	\$ 5
Family	\$ 15				

Mail your membership application to:
CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI. 49546

Make checks payable to:
CASCADE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Please use separate piece of paper for additional names.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

- ❖ Please post your address on your mailbox so it is visible from the street in both directions.
- ❖ Check your smoke detectors monthly. Replace batteries every 6 months.
- ❖ Do not use extension cords and multi-plug adaptors in your home or garage. Use power strips that are "fused" or install more outlets.
- ❖ Keep storage at least 3 feet away from your furnace and water heater. Do not store flammable and combustible liquids near or in the same room where "flame fired" appliances are located.
- ❖ Cascade Fire Department offers many services to residents including CPR Training, tours of the Fire Stations, Blood Pressure checks, Child Safety Seat installation, and Fire Safety talks. The Fire Department will even bring a truck to your Neighborhood Association picnic.
- ❖ In case of any emergency, please dial "911". For non-emergency services, call 949-1320.

careful cost management and some use of our general fund "savings account" from prior years. So far the decrease in state revenue sharing funding has been managed. We shall see what 2004 brings, as the State of Michigan faces possible further cuts.

The Budget Subcommittee has determined that the biggest and most important financial challenge facing our community relates to funding the Cascade Fire Department (see below).

Review the Long-Term Funding Option for Staffing, Equipment, and Facility Needs of the Fire Department

Done. We will need an additional tax millage (size to be determined in early 2004) to continue to operate our Fire Department on a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week basis in 2005 and future years as we have done for the last 10 years.

We have increased the contribution to the Fire Department's operations from our General Fund to \$400,000 in 2004. This general fund contribution plus the small fire millages passed many years ago pay for our community's fire protection. While the general fund contribution increase helps preserve 24/7 protection for all of us this year, the increasing cost of all fire departments must be paid somehow.

Our community has a history of passing tax millages that are dedicated to a specific community purpose, like police, fire, library, and pathways. You will hear much more about the funding of our fire protection later this year.

Determine the Township's options for our property at 2501 Thornapple River Drive

Done, as to determining the best option. After reviewing options for the site (which was purchased to facilitate construction of the pedestrian pathway) we have determined to sell the property and restore the funds (about \$300,000) to the pedestrian pathway dedicated tax fund. Only one unsatisfactory bid was received in December and it was rejected. The property will soon be listed for sale with a realtor.

Later this month our township board will meet to set goals for 2004. Please feel free to call, email, or write any of us, or Township Manager Jay Cravens, with your suggestions and comments.

Finally, thank you very much for your support of the board, the township manager, and all of our hardworking township staff during 2003.

Best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2004.

Michael R. Julien
Township Supervisor

Cascade

From the desk of your assessor

In the last Newsletter, we reported that the filing deadline for new homestead exemptions had been changed to December 31st of each year. On December 30, 2003, another bill passed the State House that changed that deadline back to May 1st. If you were confused about the deadline, please be assured that we were too. **If your parcel is currently non-homestead for 2004, you now have until May 1, 2004, to file the new Principal Residence Exemption.**

ASSESSMENT CHANGE NOTICES will be mailed on or before February 24, 2004.

If you are a new homeowner and do not receive your notice by March 1st, please call our office.

Registration of deeds and taxpayer name changes can take up to eight weeks.

In addition to change of assessment, the notice will indicate:

- if there was a transfer of ownership in 2003;
- if there is a Principal Residence Exemption (formerly known as homestead exemption) on your property for 2004.

BOARD OF REVIEW will hear assessment appeals on March 8 and 9, 2004.

- Appointments will be made beginning on February 26. An appeal application and instructions will be mailed to you when you make an appointment.
- Sales data and comparative information will be available in the Assessor's Office and in the Cascade Township Library beginning February 26.
- Letter appeals are acceptable if you are unable to attend a Board of Review hearing. Four copies of your letter and supporting documents must be received no later than March 8, 2004. Please send them to:

Cascade Township Board of Review
2865 Thornhills Ave. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546

- An appeal to the Board of Review, either in person or by letter, is a prerequisite for an appeal to the Michigan Tax Tribunal.

Proposal A Reminders.....

Property Transfer Affidavits must be filed with the assessor for any transfer of ownership that occurred in 2003.

Principal Residence (Homestead) Exemptions...

FILING DEADLINE for new exemptions is May 1, 2004.

Exemptions in effect January 1, 2004, stay in effect for the calendar year.

You must rescind your exemption within 90 days of the date you no longer own or occupy the property as your principal residence. Exemptions expire on December 31st of the year you move out.

Taxable Value Cap.....

It is the **taxable** value that is capped by Proposal A - not the assessed value. The taxable value is used to calculate your taxes and is capped at 5% or rate of inflation unless there was a transfer of ownership in 2003, any new construction, field work, reappraisal changes or any other omitted real property. If there was a transfer of ownership on your property in 2003, your assessed value and taxable value will be the same in 2004 because the taxable value was uncapped. 2.3% is the inflation rate established by the State for 2004.

A special note to those who have purchased property in Cascade Township during the last year.....

Please be aware that Proposal A does not authorize the assessor to automatically set the assessed value of a property which has sold at one half the sale price. An individual sale price may or may not be a good indicator of the true cash value of the property for a variety of reasons. Section 27(5) of the General Property Tax Act states that "the purchase price paid in a transfer of property is not the presumptive true cash value of the property transferred."

Did you know?

- ✓ Annual changes of assessment are based on sales in your neighborhood. We have at least 75 sales neighborhoods in Cascade. Your neighborhood rarely consists of just the homes on your street.
- ✓ Your taxable value can never exceed your assessed value.
- ✓ The May 1st filing deadline for Principal Residence Exemptions applies to new applications only. You do not need to reapply each year.
- ✓ The assessor is not permitted by State Law to set your new assessment at one half of your purchase price.
- ✓ It is your responsibility as a taxpayer to review your property record card periodically to be sure you agree with all the information that is currently of record.
- ✓ The assessing staff is available Monday thru Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Feel free to come in or call 949-6176 if you have any questions on your property. The assessing system is quite complex, and we are always willing to help our taxpayers understand how the system works.

BOARD OF REVIEW MEMBERS

Three Cascade Township residents who have been appointed by the Township Supervisor hear the assessment appeals. The current members are Barbara Manus Averill, Bruce Poppen, and Phyllis Gillie. Phyllis is new to the board for 2004, replacing Paul Schuur who served very capably for ten years. We are very grateful to Paul for his many years of dedicated service.

Publication Notes.....
2865 Thornhills Ave SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 949-1500
www.cascadetwp.com

2003 Township Board

Michael Julien, Supervisor
Mickie Kleinhessel, Clerk
Mary Carpenter, Treasurer
Robert Timmons, Trustee
Ronald Goodyke, Trustee
Sandra Frost Parrish, Trustee
Richard Jones, Trustee

Zoning Board of Appeals

Rob Beahan
Jack Lewis
Mel Casey
Gary Crawley
Robert Timmons
Christopher Estes

Planning Commission

Eric Richards
Jim Koessel
Fred Goldberg
Jack Lewis
Lorissa MacAllister
Brian Logue
Tom McDonald
Claude Robinson
Richard Jones

Board of Review

Bruce Poppen
Barbara Averill
Phyllis Gillie

Editor: Jeanie Neve
Deputy Clerk

Connections

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE

*February 24th is
the Kent Intermediate Schools
Special Election and the Forest Hills
Public Schools Millage Request.
For absentee ballots,
call Forest Hills Schools at 493-8800.*

JULY 4TH PLANNING IS UNDERWAY!

Members of the Cascade Community Foundation are busy planning an exciting new event for the 4th of July weekend.

If you would like to volunteer your time and be involved with the 1st Annual Cascade Community Foundation Walk, please call Jeanie Neve at 949-1500.

"The Good Ole Days"

Kids used to have an awful lot of fun sliding in the "Good Ole Days". They said the sleds were better, the hills were more slippery, and that they coasted twice as far as kids do now.

The Flexible Flyer was the sled of choice. Boys and girls who lived in the village had their favorite hills. One of the longest "slides" according to Orval Kilmer, a long time Cascade resident, started at the Cascade cemetery, curving down the hill, crossing the bridge, and ending up in the village. That was many, many years ago.

Whether you have lived in Cascade Township one year or fifty, learn about its history by joining the Cascade Historical Society or come for a visit on February 5th or March 4th at 10:00 a.m. in the Cascade Museum, 2839 Thornapple River Drive.

From the book "I Remember" by Jessie Vandenberg