



Wildwood Park

Newsletter December 2014

Wildwood Park Runners/Walkers: Our Streets are our Trails

[Thanks to Sam Gillie for contributing this article. Sam is our neighbor on North Washington Road.]

I've been running up and down the streets of Wildwood Park since 2005. We are blessed with a web of streets and hills to challenge all levels of walkers, runners, and cyclists... All with little traffic in our enclosed Park. Some call it a sound barrier wall; I like to brag we are a gated community! However you want to describe it, we are lucky and it is great to see so many take advantage of what we have. You can easily wind your way around the neighborhood and get a couple of miles of exercise. But did you know we also have a variety of trail options right out our back door? If you want to go out for a six mile run or bike ride, you could go off of Portage road to the Tow Path trail out west and you would make it out by the Canterbury ball diamonds. The Tow Path here goes along the edge of the wetlands and makes for awesome sunrise/sunsets and tons of wildlife to spot, all along a well-traveled safe trail!

Another option is going East along Jefferson Blvd. thru Swinney Park and the Historic West Central neighborhood, along the bike lane down Wayne Street: and in 3 miles you are at the Library, Parkview field, dinner at JK's or Toscani's, or breakfast at Cindy's!

A third option is heading thru Swinney Park and then head south on the greenway to Foster Park. Three miles will bring you to you the tennis courts where there are restrooms and a drinking fountain (except winter months).

Whichever way you travel on the trail system makes the city small and easily navigable. Although I have never had any troubles in the park or on the trails, it is always better to go out with a friend. If you want to find a fellow Wildwood Park resident to join you in the neighborhood or on the trails, I have created a Facebook page called the "Wildwood Park Athletics". The page can be used to post when you want to go out and connect you with others who might want to join you.

Hope to see you out there!



Sam Gillie

How Vera Bradley Designs Got Started in Wildwood Park

Being a member of Wildwood Park's Welcoming Committee can have its surprises, such as when Pat Miller (then residing at 1712 Hawthorne Rd) went to visit new neighbor Barb Baekgaard, who had just moved into the Park. The following article was written by Amy Wimmer Schwarb, and was called "True Colors," in the June 2009 issues of Indianapolis Monthly (copyright reserved, permission to reprint granted by Indianapolis Monthly). We have shortened the article a bit. The photo (not taken from the article) shows Barb Baekgaard on the left and Pat Miller on the right.

"We started about as simple as anyone could start," says Patricia R. Miller, a co-founder of Vera Bradley Designs. "We had an idea and \$250 from each of us."



Miller and co-founder Barbara Bradley Baekgaard have told this story—of two neighbors who came up with an idea for pretty, feminine luggage and launched a multimillion-dollar company from the basement of a Fort Wayne home—too many times to count. Since the company's founding, the tale has appeared on Vera Bradley product tags and marketing materials, and in hundreds of news stories about the brand's success. It goes like this: In 1975, Baekgaard, a mother of four, had just moved from Chicago to Fort Wayne and was redecorating her home in the city's 1920s-era Wildwood Park neighborhood. She was hanging wallpaper when her new neighbor, Pat Miller, stopped by to introduce herself. Miller, a lawyer's wife, former schoolteacher, and mother of three, had her 5-year-old son Jay in tow.

After greeting Miller at the door, Baekgaard asked her: "Do you know how to hang wallpaper?"

Miller didn't, but she was willing to learn. Soon, the pair started papering together and eventually launched a wallpapering business called Up Your Wall. "Barbara was wonderful at telling jokes; I was a good audience. She liked the doors and windows, and I liked the straight walls," Miller says. "Anyone in business knows that you're good partners if you each bring something different to the table but you agree, for the most part, on the result."

After a few years, they began another business, selling clothing lines through twice-a-year home trunk shows. In 1982, just a month before their spring show, they traveled together to Florida with their families. During a layover at the Atlanta airport, they noticed that men were traveling with canvas-style carry-ons in dull colors like black, beige, and navy. And the women? They were using the same bags. "A lightbulb," Miller says, "went on." Wouldn't women, the friends thought, love to travel with bags that were functional and feminine?

Back in Fort Wayne, they pooled their money (borrowing \$250 from each of their husbands), hit a fabric store, and asked a seamstress friend to assemble some prototypes. The partners hoped to debut the line at their spring trunk show but needed a name that wasn't closely associated with either of theirs. They wanted honest opinions, not sympathy sales, from their customers.

The women settled on the poetic name of Baekgaard's mother, Vera Bradley. (Miller's mother's name is Wilma Polito; the choice, Miller notes, was easy.)

The women sold all of the bags and figured they were in business. But they kept operations simple: Baekgaard's 19-year-old daughter designed the company's first logo. Headquarters was the Ping-Pong table in Baekgaard's basement. Their children helped fill orders while watching television but were forbidden from answering the phone during business hours. Baekgaard's mother, Vera Bradley herself, was hired as the sales rep for South Florida.

Vera Bradley Designs filed its Indiana incorporation documents on November 15, 1982. By the end of that year, the company had grossed more than \$11,000 in sales.

The earliest Vera Bradley retailers included Marshall Field's in Chicago, but the founders mostly focused on individually owned gift shops. "We did that at first because we didn't have the capacity to inventory," Miller says. "And also, if you lost a small customer, it didn't hurt that much."

Yet while Vera Bradley was emerging, its hometown was hurting. The same year the company got its start, besides losing International Harvester, Fort Wayne suffered its worst flood in decades, which forced the evacuation of 9,000 residents and damaged nearly 2,000 homes and businesses. "It was pretty bleak. We put an ad in the paper for home sewers, and the phone never stopped ringing," Miller says. "We then encouraged sewers who were good to start their own business. Barbara and I knew that our forte was design, marketing, and sales; we weren't going to be very good at production."

Vera Bradley topped \$1.5 million in sales in 1987. Just as the partners had complemented each other in wallpapering, they brought different strengths to the purse business. Baekgaard had an eye for design; Miller, a flair for sales and marketing. "Selling was never a problem," Baekgaard told *magazine* in 1987, the year Vera Bradley moved into a new 26,000-square-foot building. "We had a problem producing enough of them."

News and Tips from the Police Department



Deputy Chief Haffner reports that, to date, crime in Fort Wayne is down fourteen percent from last year; there has been a decrease in the Southwest quadrant in every category of crime. To keep this trend going, please help deter crime (especially as we approach the holidays):

- If you must leave your purse or other valuables in your car (including purchases while you are at the store) do not simply shove them under a seat. Put them in the trunk, and make sure the trunk is locked. Thieves circulate within parking lots, looking for theft opportunities.
- Christmas trees with lots of gifts under them, visible from the street, will invite thieves who are casing the neighborhood to come back when you're not home. You can wait till Santa delivers the presents on Christmas Eve; or you can place your Christmas tree in way that any gifts under the tree are not visible from the street.
- Beware of your surroundings when you use an ATM machine. Make sure the ATM machine is in a well lit area, and that no one appears to be simply "hanging around" for no apparent purpose.
- Keep an eye on vacant houses in our neighborhood. If it appears that a door or window is open or unlocked, please contact Neighborhood Code Enforcement. If you see someone in a home that is supposed to be vacant call 9-1-1. If the home is truly vacant, then when it snows there should not be footprints in the snow leading to or around the house. If the footprints suggests someone may be inside, then call 9-1-1.
- Is there a vehicle on the street which has not moved for a while call 3-1-1 and ask for Parking Control. On the other hand, if an inoperable is on private property, even if it is sitting in a driveway, call 3-1-1 and ask for Neighborhood Code and explain the problem.

The original letter was printed as an unsigned editorial September 21, 1897 in the New York Sun. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial.

Is There a Santa Claus?

We take pleasure in answering at once and thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time out great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of THE SUN:

"DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old.

"Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus.

"Papa says 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.'

"Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

"VIRGINIA O'HANLON.

"115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET."

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, VIRGINIA, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would

be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, VIRGINIA, nay ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

What Do We Do about Deer in Wildwood Park? Not Much.

A neighbor saw some deer in his backyard last month. They were two young bucks (a five-point and a two-point), duking it out. So he called Animal Control to see what should be done. They said they view them as wildlife; not much they can do.

By the early 1900's, essentially all deer in Indiana had been eliminated by hunting and habitat destruction. In 1930's deer were introduced into the state (principally white tail deer). By the 1950's, populations had been re-established (mainly in southern Indiana), and modern hunting programs were begun.

Now Indiana enjoys (?) an exceptionally high deer population. The side effects have become obvious in the State Parks where bushes, trees, and plants have been destroyed by deer. Limited hunting has been introduced to cull those herds. There is no gun hunting allowed in Fort Wayne, so deer have come in to our area and are multiplying. There are few natural predators (before Europeans arrived in this area the natural predators were cougar, wolf and wolverine). So deer population in the urban areas is on the increase.

Please remember: Animal Control will do nothing. This is a wildlife issue. We suggest: don't feed the deer. You do not want deer to hang around here. Deer aggressively browse the understory (bushes, saplings, brush), which results in shrub or ground nesting birds leaving the area. As deer graze the desirable plants, invasive species (for example, invasive Stiltgrass) come to dominate the wild areas. Scientific studies in and around Bloomington, Indiana have demonstrated the negative impact that wild deer have on the environment.

If deer hang around for the winter, what do you think will happen to your garden next spring?

So please do nothing to attract deer to our neighborhood. If deer are still a problem (eating your saplings and plant seedlings), we may have to look in to deer repellent, a nonlethal way of shifting the deer problem to some other neighborhood.



News and Requests from the Fire Department

The Fort Wayne Fire Department is still offering free Smoke Detectors. Not only is the smoke detector free, but the Fire Department will install it your house for free. Call 427-1479. (There is no required income level; this is not a poverty program. It is a fire safety program.)



Also: please help the Fire Department and Police Department by shoveling out around fire hydrants so that if there is a fire, the fire truck personnel can easily get to the hydrant. In the same vein, if your house number is simply painted on the curb or affixed to a rock, make sure the curb or rock is cleared of snow so that police and fire can readily identify your home in an emergency.

Annual Meeting is Coming in February – What Agenda Items Should be Included?

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

The members of Wildwood Park Community Association, Inc., an Indiana nonprofit corporation, officially meet once a year (more often if there is a Special Meeting). This Annual Meeting of Members receives certain reports (President's report, Secretary's minutes, Treasurer's report and recommendation for dues, perhaps a report from our Neighborhood Liaison Officer). But, in addition, official business is transacted. The agenda will likely include a discussion of (and a vote on) whether to incur unusual (extraordinary) expenses and to charge supplemental dues (one time or multiple year basis), to fund re-landscaping at the Park at the Point. We have not yet received a cost estimate, and we have requested a few alternatives to see what it would cost to re-plant the west side of the Park at the Point with bushes, shrubs, desirable trees, and flowers; construct informal walkways and paths through this landscaped area, and install a couple of benches for people to sit on. Is this something the members want? Right now we simply "maintain" the western part of the Park by cutting down dead trees, spraying for weeds, eliminating invasive species of bushes, etc. There is so much more we could do with that area.

We may want to talk about whether to acquire the approximate 1.0 acres of bare land just off the Ardmore access road behind the houses on South Washington Road and next to the sound barrier. We had thought about putting trails through this area, planting trees and bushes, and making it a "wild area."

Do you have ideas for what should be on the agenda? If it is something that needs to be voted on then it must be on the agenda so that everyone knows what issues will be decided. If it is not something that needs to be voted on, we can squeeze it into "new business," but we would like to know what the topic is.

Please send your agenda items to grant.shipley@gmail.com. The Agenda is a formal listing of what will be taken up for decision or discussion at the Annual Meeting. A copy of the Agenda will be sent out to all members in a Meeting packet that includes the Notice of Election for Directors, a proxy form if you cannot attend, ballots and other documents needed for the Annual Meeting.

Your Board of Directors

The Officers and Directors of Wildwood Park Community Association:

Debra Devine, 459-1530
3502 Portage
devinegoddess@comcast.net

Michael Galbraith, 432-1475
1518 Hawthorne Road
macgalb@aol.com

Brad Huff, 432-6935
3442 S. Washington Rd.

Lloyd Porter, 432-1260
3727 N. Washington Rd.
lloydjersha@gmail.com

Grant Shipley, 432-7645
3322 North Washington Rd.
grant.shipley@gmail.com

Robert P. Sandoz
3521 Saginaw
tifosi3@hotmail.com

Bill Deller 672-8127
3524 South Washington Rd
jamesf1983@comcast.net

The directors have elected the following officers:

President: Grant Shipley

Vice-President: Lloyd Porter

Secretary: Mike Galbraith

Treasurer: Steve Souers

3505 North Washington Rd.
432-8717

ssouers@hallercolvin.com

Asst. Treasurer: Julie Walda

1625 Hawthorne Rd.
432-6374

cjwalda@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President:

Lenny Duff

3704 Mulberry Road
459-0708

Lennyduff@frontier.com

Our Website is:

www.wildwoodpark.us

Letters to the Editor to:

Wildwoodparknewsletter@gmail.com