Countryside Happenings

In 2010, the City will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. The City will once again offer its Thursday night summer concert series and to celebrate the 50th, we will have a giant cake at the final concert of the summer. Look for more information in the summer issue of Countryside Connections and the summer Recreation Brochure.

Early this spring, the City has been celebrating some grand openings and re-openings of businesses in Countryside.

On February 7th, Casa De Montecristo celebrated its grand opening with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Casa De Montecristo offers cigar lovers an elegantly housed collection of rare and vintage cigars. They also have over 200 brands of cigars, and over 3,000 different sizes of cigars. The first floor retail area is richly designed with antique wood and walk-in humidors for loose cigars. There is also a lounge where people can smoke cigars and enjoy coffee or soft drinks. Downstairs, there is a 4,000 square-foot VIP lounge, which has a movie theater, conference room, elevator and climate controlled lockers to store cigars. The look of the club is similar to an old fashioned speakeasy with its tin ceilings.

On February 26th, the Mazda Autobarn celebrated its grand reopening with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The Mazda Autobarn invested over $3 million dollars by remodeling their existing building and transforming it into a Mazda Retail Revolution dealership. The Mazda Retail Revolution dealership is one of only a handful of Mazda dealerships in the Midwest which offer customers a high tech and user friendly experience when buying a car. The 33,000 square foot dealership has touch screen monitors throughout the store which allows customers to view vehicles with various options prior to purchase.

On March 12th, Tavern on LaGrange opened for business (photo on page 5). Mayor Conrad and Elected Officials were present to welcome the long awaited business to Countryside. Tavern on LaGrange offers a variety of dishes including steaks, seafood and pasta. The upscale restaurant also offers live music on Friday and Saturday evenings with no cover charge.

The Supersonic Gas Station and Car Wash located at 5300 S. LaGrange Road reopened at the end of March (photo on page 6). This new service station has a coffee bar, offers fresh baked goods and has a new state of the art car wash.
Police Department

Passing of Former Chief D’Urso


Charles began his career with the City of Countryside in October 1970. He worked his way up through the ranks serving as a Patrol Officer, Sergeant, Lieutenant and was promoted to Chief of Police in January 1993. In 1996, Charles served as the president of the West Suburban Chiefs Association, and after he retired, became a “Life Member”. Charles is credited with building the Countryside Police Department to what it is today. Charles retired in January of 2003 after 33 years of service. Charles was an extremely dedicated professional who cared deeply for his profession and for the individuals he worked with.

Beware of Scams

F.O.P. Fundraising

Some of our residents have received phone calls asking them to donate money to the Countryside F.O.P. They were told that money would be used to purchase new bulletproof vests for our officers. THE COUNTRYSIDE F.O.P. NEVER SOLICITS BY PHONE. These calls were not placed by any representative of our department. You should always be cautious about requests for donations and sharing your financial information with any phone solicitor.

U.S. Census Scam

Please be alert to any fraudulent attempts to lure you into a census scam. The Census Bureau does not conduct the 2010 Census via the Internet.

They never ask for your full social security number, PIN codes, or passwords. They will also never ask for money or donations. If someone identifies himself as a Census worker, ask for a 2nd form of ID. You can also call the regional office 630-288-9200 to verify that you are in a survey.

“Gypsy” Scam

A “gypsy” scam commonly targets senior citizens. Two or more subjects will come to the door with an excuse to gain entry to your home. These criminals will pose as City or utility workers, roof repair workers, or handymen. Once inside the home (or doorway), one individual will distract the homeowner, while the other steals from the homeowner.

If someone comes to your door and you do not know them or you feel uncomfortable about the situation, DO NOT LET THEM IN. CALL THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY. This type of criminal is very convincing to a homeowner. If you see something suspicious in your neighborhood, please call us.

Connect - City Update

Last fall, the City of Countryside implemented a mass notification (Reverse 9-1-1) system called Connect-CTY.

The purpose of this system is to notify residents of urgent police, fire, or life emergency situations. We have had the opportunity to utilize this system several times to notify residents of important issues, such as water shut-offs due to water main breaks, and we are pleased with the results.

If you reside in Countryside and are unlisted and wish to be notified in the event of an emergency, please visit our website at www.gocountryside.net or stop by the Police Department. By clicking on the “Sign up Now—Blackboard Connect” button on our website, you can sign up for the service or edit your information.

Coyotes

Coyotes are common throughout Illinois and are occasionally spotted in Countryside. Although coyotes are generally afraid of humans and not normally a danger, they do pose a risk for small pets. There are precautions that you can take to discourage coyotes from coming near your home and to keep you and your pets safe.

Don’t leave cat or dog food outside and don’t feed any wild animals. This will encourage coyotes to come around as well—and they will lose their fear of people.

Keep cats indoors at all times.
Walk your dog on a leash.

Don’t leave pets unattended outside, especially at night.

Secure garbage in areas where coyotes can’t access it; keep yards clean of refuse and brush.

Report aggressive, fearless coyotes to Cook County Department of Animal and Rabies Control at 708-974-6140.

If you are approached by a coyote, you should yell, wave your arms, and/or throw something at the coyote. Do not run away.
13th Annual Kids and Cops Basketball Game a Success!
On February 18, police officers from Countryside, Hodgkins, and LaGrange challenged the Gurrie Middle School 8th Grade Basketball Team to a game of hoops (photo above). The event raised money for the Cari Cook Memorial Fund. We were fortunate to have Matt Cook and his two children in attendance. The City Council presented the Cook family with a check at the March 10th City Council meeting (photo below).

The 8th graders won the halftime free-throw contest, but in the end, the “Cops” won the game 31-29. We would like to thank Officer Ernie Millsap for organizing this event. We would also like to extend a special thank you to Mayor Robert Conrad for attending and to all of the volunteers and sponsors who made this event possible.

Gail Paul was appointed the City Administrator on February 24, 2010. She held the position of Director of Finance for the City since April, 2007. Gail has over 15 years of governmental experience. She started her career in public accounting working as an auditor for Price Waterhouse/Coopers. Her responsibilities included auditing many industries including insurance, manufacturing, retail and governments. Gail began her governmental career as the Comptroller at the Village of Oak Lawn in 1992. She later was promoted to Finance Director/Budget Officer, the position she held until moving to Countryside.

Gail received her Bachelor of Science Degree in 1987 and her Masters of Accountancy Degree in 1988 from DePaul University. She became a Certified Public Accountant in 1987 and a Certified Public Finance Officer in 2001. Gail has lived in the Chicagoland area her entire life. She currently resides in Oak Lawn with her husband John and their three sons Elijah, Spencer and Dominick.

In her current capacity, Gail will work with all department heads in defining the strategic direction of the City in relation to the needs of the community and the mission of the City of Countryside. Her duties include the preparation and presentation of the annual budget; review and justification of capital improvements including funding alternatives; the promotion of economic development; resolution of resident, business and staff concerns; recommendations on staffing and personnel matters; and the continuation of responsive community relations. Gail stated, “I am looking forward to the opportunity to make a difference in the City especially as we begin our next 50 years.”
Community Briefs

Brush Pick-Up Program
Branch and brush pickup is provided for residents April 1 through October 30, 2010. Public Works crews will cover the City on a weekly basis.

Residents are asked to observe the following rules for branch/brush pickup:

The cut ends of tree limbs must face the street and be stacked along the parkway in order to facilitate handling.

Tree limbs should not be over 10 feet in length or over 4 inches in diameter.

Tree stumps are not accepted at the disposal site and will not be picked up.

Do not include vines in the branches put out for pickup as they will become entangled with the limbs creating a dangerous situation during handling.

City ordinance forbids the depositing of grass clippings, leaves, or any other debris in the branch pile or on the street.

This service is provided to Countryside residents only. Contractors providing tree and brush trimming services are responsible for the removal of all materials they cut.

Please allow 7 to 10 working days for pickup.

For additional information, please call the Public Works Department at 708-354-3390.
Ward 1 Report
Alderman Robert Pondelicek
Alderman Michael Smetana

Please welcome Steven’s Collectibles to their new location in Ward 1 at 35 East Plainfield Road.

Commercial real estate developers have strong interest in both the former Pleasantview Fire Protection District and Motel properties.

A proposed retail/boutique business named “What a Deal” will be opening in the former Oak Flooring building (9930 West 55th Street).

Cooper’s Hawk Winery will be moving their headquarters and winery to 430 East Plainfield Road. Wine tasting, tours and sales will occur at the facility. The addition of Cooper’s Hawk to Ward 1 and the City is a wonderful example of a corporation reinvesting in Countryside.

Tavern on LaGrange opened for business March 12.

The City purchased a small piece of property on the frontage of the Bally Total Fitness property to improve the ingress and egress into Countryside Plaza.

Aldermen Pondelicek and Smetana wish all Ward 1 residents a wonderful Spring!!!

Ward 2 Report
Alderman Karen Michalczyk
Alderman John Von Drasek

Work and progress continues at the former Al’s Hardware property. The revitalization of the building is a great example of commercial reinvestment in Countryside and Ward 2.

The City recently submitted a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to the Cook County Department of Planning for $110,000.00 to resurface Prescott Road in Ward 2. The proposed grant would be matched with $110,000.00 in funds by the City.

The City will be resurfacing Sunset Avenue this summer. The project will be funded by the Community Development Block Grant which the City was awarded in 2009.

Ward 2 resident Maida Ng will be leaving in June to go on a mission to Costa Rica through the Hinsdale Hospital Medical Staff Auxiliary Junior Board. The mission will consist of medical visits, dental visits, a kids camp and construction projects. They will be visiting two orphanages, and a total of 250 children will receive dental cleansings and fluoride treatments. To donate items, please call Maida at 708-955-5218.

Community Briefs

Memorial Day Service

A memorial service for Veterans will be held at Memorial Park on Monday, May 31, 2010 at 11:00 am. Following the service, members of the Robert E. Coulter, Jr. Post 1941 will hold a service.

Garage Sale and Block Parties

Permits are required for all garage and estate sales, as well as block parties. These permits are free of charge. Two garage/estate sales are permitted per household every year. Applications are available at the City Clerk’s office or may be downloaded on our website.
Ward 3 Report
Alderman Sean McDermott
Alderman Wayne Straza

Casa De Montecristo on 55th Street opened for business February 7.

Supersonic Petroleum has completed their renovation of the former Clark gas station, and opened in March (photo below).

The former Max Madsen Mitsubishi property is presently being marketed by a commercial development firm.

The carry out portion of Via Bella (5412 LaGrange Road) is open for business. They are open seven days a week at 4:00 pm. They are offering a full menu for take out until the sit down restaurant is open to the public.

Alderman Straza was reappointed by Governor Quinn as the Vice Chairman of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission. Alderman Straza has been on the Commission since 1987.

Mayor Conrad, Alderman Pondelicek, Jim Afshari (owner) and members of the Countryside Business Association helped cut the ribbon at Supersonic Petroleum on March 19th.

Community Briefs

Countryside Welcomes New Businesses

Vision Quest Athletics
6475 Joliet Road
Personal Training Studio

Locinox USA, Inc.
6475 Joliet Road

Right Med Home Healthcare
6555 Willow Springs Road

Jeanine Cunningham, LLC
1415 W. 55th St.
Law Firm

Tavern on LaGrange
5403 S. LaGrange Road
Restaurant

Casa de Montecristo
1332 W. 55th Street
Cigar Shop

Midwest Gold Buyers
40 W. Plainfield Road
Precious Metals

Moy Yuen
5532 S. LaGrange Road
Carry-out Restaurant

Countryside Farmers’ Market

The West Suburban Chamber of Commerce is pleased to sponsor the second annual Monday morning Farmers’ Market in Countryside. This weekly event will be held on Joliet Road, in the parking lot just west of the William Tell, in between the William Tell and the Best Western. The market will run May 10 through October 25 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm rain or shine. The market will offer the finest locally grown fruits and vegetables, homemade fudge, baked goods, and a variety of specialty items. For more information on the Farmers’ Market, please call the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce at 708-387-7550.

Countryside Connections  www.countryside-il.org  www.gocountryside.net  Spring 2010 (Page 6)
Code Enforcement

Spring is upon us and Community Development will be resuming their code enforcement patrols of the City. We would like to take this time to make you aware of some of the things they will be looking for. All vehicles must be parked on an “improved” surface of either asphalt or concrete. Recreational vehicles (boats, campers, trailers) may not be stored in the front yard on the driveway. When stored in the side or rear yard, they must be placed upon either asphalt or concrete and be screened on three sides by fencing or non-deciduous plants that are at least five feet in height.

Your yard must be kept free of garbage and clutter. Your address must be prominently displayed on the front of your building in a contrasting color and be clearly visible from the street. Your building shall be free from peeling paint, broken windows, missing siding / soffits / fascia. All dead, diseased, or dying trees shall be removed from your property.

Please be reminded that no work is to be performed without first obtaining the proper permits from the Building Department. Work that does not require a permit includes painting, carpeting or flooring, landscaping (as long as it does not change the grading of the land), or sealing your driveway. Most other work around your home or business does require a permit and if you are ever in doubt – please call and we will be happy to help you.

For more information or to answer any questions you may have, please call the Community Development Department at 708-354-1860.

Signs Around Countryside

The City of Countryside values every business in the community, but also has many ordinances which must be followed to maintain the look and feel we have all grown accustomed to and value in the City.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the more common issues we face every year around this time. Temporary signs, portable signs, balloon and blow up signs are specifically not allowed within the City unless you first obtain a ten day special event sign permit. It is as simple as filling out the form, which is available on our website (countryside-il.org), and submitting it to the Building Department. The first four of each year are FREE! Regardless of a permit, signs are never permitted in the right-of-way along roads. These signs are considered trash and will be disposed of regularly by City staff. Please make sure your address is clearly visible on the front of your building, unit, and or storefront. This is very important for the Police and Fire Department to be able to quickly respond in an emergency. All businesses are required to have “Properly” identified handicapped accessible parking spaces, regardless of the existing conditions. Finally, most work and repairs in commercial buildings require a construction permit. If you are in doubt, please call first and we will be happy to discuss it with you. Code enforcement is beginning and we will be watching for these items, and others, in the coming weeks and months. As always, if you have any questions about signs, accessible parking spaces, or anything else, please feel free to contact Community Development at 708-354-1860.
Programs Suspended Effective May 1

The following programs have been eliminated and/or suspended beginning May 1 due to budgetary constraints:

- Library Reimbursement Program
- Pool Reimbursement Program
- Senior Citizen Cab Ride Program
- Bus Trips for Senior Citizen Group
- Spring Clean Up Program

For more information, please call 708-354-7270.

Even Though the Spring Clean Up Has Been Eliminated...

Please be aware that with your regular weekly pick-up, GROOT will pick up one large item each week.

In your regular weekly garbage pick-up, the following are items that GROOT does not pick-up:

- Yard Waste (including brush)
- Radioactive material
- Volatile and highly flammable and/or explosive material
- Hazardous and toxic waste of any kind
- Concrete and/or dirt
- Liquids and paints
- Materials that are excessive in size and weight that is unmanageable by GROOT’s collection crew.

For more information, please call 708-485-0900.

Recreation Department

News from Flagg Creek!

Stop by the golf course this spring and check out the short game practice facility. Whether you want to work on your chipping, pitching or putting we have the area to improve your swing, it is a great addition to our driving range. The covered deck is a perfect place to relax after a round of golf or anytime. Enjoy the ambiance as you have a sandwich or a beverage from our full service bar & grill. Remember the course is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner during the season.

Remember as a resident of Countryside you are entitled to resident rates at the golf course. If you do not have a current resident ID stop by the clubhouse at the golf course with your driver’s license and a current bill and we will take your picture. The one time fee for the card is $5.00.

For more information, please call 708-246-3336. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Summer Concert Series

The Thursday night Concerts in the Park will be back in 2010. Look for your summer Recreation Guide in early May for a complete listing of all the Thursday Summer Concerts. All concerts are held rain or shine at Countryside Park. Once again, we’ll offer food from a local Countryside vendor and our ever so popular raffle and give-a-ways during intermission. For more information, please call 708-485-2595.

Countryside families enjoy a Thursday evening Concert in the Park
Countryside Business Association members, who represent more than 400 businesses in Countryside, benefit from networking events, electronic and printed publications, programs for small business and, perhaps, most importantly, the knowledge that they are part of a collective effort to establish Countryside as a stronger, more visible community in the Chicago-area competition for economic growth. Countryside’s quality work force, strong community infrastructure and diverse economy create unique opportunities to start and stay in business.

The Countryside Business Association hosts monthly Business After Hours (BAH) events. The February BAH event was held at the Continental Auto Center, the March BAH event was held at Harry’s on 55th and the April BAH event will be held at Flagg Creek Golf Course.

The City of Countryside and the Countryside Business Association worked together in 2009 in promoting the 12 Days of Christmas Extravaganza. The Extravaganza promoted shopping in Countryside where every individual who spent $100 or more could enter to win a $1,000 shopping spree. At the February City Council meeting, five winners were announced, and those winners were presented with their gift cards at the March City Council meeting. Two of the winners, Craig Langele and John McCarty are Countryside residents! Congratulations to all of the winners:

- Doug Hoogstra
- Craig Langele
- John McCarty
- Stephen Polasek
- Karl Williams

Stay connected to businesses and residents! Join the Countryside Business Association as we continue to support our businesses and community to a bolder and more exciting Countryside.

For more information, or if you are interested in joining the Countryside Business Association, please call Lauren Narducci at 352-3580 x293
Mayor Robert A. Conrad
City Clerk Sharon Sweeney
Treasurer Steven Jasinski
Alderman Sean McDermott
Alderman Karen Michalczyk
Alderman Robert Pondelicek
Alderman Michael Smetana
Alderman Wayne Straza
Alderman John Von Drasek

5550 East Avenue
Countryside, IL 60525-3689

Countryside Calendar

April
6 Plan/ZBA Commission 7:30 pm
6 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
14 City Council 7:30 pm
20 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
21 Flagg Creek Administrative Board 6:30 pm
28 City Council 7:30 pm

May
4 Plan/ZBA Commission 7:30 pm
4 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
12 City Council 7:30 pm
18 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
19 Flagg Creek Administrative Board 6:30 pm
26 City Council

June
1 Plan/ZBA Commission 7:30 pm
1 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
9 City Council 7:30 pm
15 Senior Citizens Club 6:30 pm
16 Flagg Creek Administrative Board 6:30 pm
23 City Council 7:30 pm

Phone Numbers to Know
Clerk’s Office 708-354-7270
Recreation 708-485-2595
Community Development 708-354-1860

Websites to Know
City of Countryside www.countryside-il.org
Cook County Clerk www.voterinfo.net
Pleasantview Fire Protection www.plvw.org

Websites to Know
Police Non-Emergency 708-352-2171
Public Works 708-354-3390
Water Billing 708-485-2465

Shopping/Business Information www.gocountryside.net
Flagg Creek Golf Course www.flaggcreekgolfcourse.org
West Suburban Chamber www.westsuburbanchamber.org

Countryside Connections www.countryside-il.org www.gocountryside.net Spring 2010 (Page 10)