



A look back at some of New Trier's biggest wins this past fall: Page 4

The New Trier News

VOL. XCIV, No. 7

NEW TRIER HIGH SCHOOL, 385 WINNETKA AVENUE, WINNETKA, IL 60093

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2014

Winnetka works to revive sleepy business district

by Nora Crumley

Driving down Green Bay Road in Winnetka, it is easy to miss the only McDonald's in the New Trier Township area, with its small sign and no sight of the famous "Golden arches" until you are in the parking lot.

Contrary to popular belief, the Village of Winnetka does not have any specific ordinances limiting chain stores and restaurants.

Yes, there are limits on sign sizes, but the fact that Winnetka's McDonald's lacks the traditional drive-through is due to traffic, not any rule about style.

"Having a drive-through at this McDonald's, with the intersection around it, would destroy the traffic pattern and make that intersection worse than it already is," said Andrea Shelton, a Hubbard Woods resident.

Village Trustee William Krucks summarized the Village Council's past practice: "Each application for a business license is treated fairly without discrimination based on ownership or affiliation."

Village Manager Robert Bahan added, "All three business districts in Winnetka (Hubbard Woods, East and West Elm and Indian Hill) have chain stores in them."

Even though there is no policy

against chain establishments in Winnetka, there is a lack of both chain and independently run stores, as the empty storefronts along the business districts streets prove.

The Winnetka Village Board has realized that for the residents of Winnetka to be content with the village, and to make the most of the tax profits from the business districts, they will need to find ways to bring more chain and independent stores to Winnetka.

In order to meet this goal, the Board is currently working with the Urban Land Institute (ULI) to develop plans to bring more stores to each Winnetka business district.

Trustee Krucks understands the challenges of bringing new business to the area. Many chain stores are wary of opening new locations due to the economy and the lack of customers in Winnetka.

"National retail brands have contracted as a result of the recent downturn in the economic climate and have focused their locations in areas with higher customer traffic," said Krucks.

According to Krucks, the Village of Winnetka is also facing problems such as a lack of rental space of substantial size, and a lack of parking in the business districts.

The Urban Land Institute Report was commissioned by the Winnetka



A national coffee chain that is coming soon to Winnetka, part of the Village Board's efforts to attract more businesses | Minturn

Village Board in 2013. Recently completed, it was discussed at the last Winnetka Village Board meeting.

The ULI report gives examples, plans, and cost for improvements and additions to each of the three Winnetka Business Districts: Hubbard Woods, Elm Street, and Indian Hill.

These improvements list ideas to create more parking, create more of a family-friendly environment, and create a better atmosphere and area that would attract both chain and independently run stores.

The Winnetka Village Board is considering doing major work to each of the three business districts to make the village more attractive to

business owners and residents.

Krucks stated that the Winnetka Village Board is "Focusing on the more wide-ranging strategies to revitalize Winnetka's commercial areas while still remaining balanced, economically sustainable, and consistent with existing community character."

The ULI report was also commissioned by the Village of Wilmette and has greatly improved its business districts. The Village of Winnetka is following Wilmette's example.

According to Krucks, the Village of Winnetka has recently hired a new employee to focus on commercial development in each of

the three Winnetka business districts.

If the Village of Winnetka goes ahead with these recommendations all three business districts would be changed to accommodate more businesses. These changes could come to affect New Trier students, since the Winnetka campus is in the middle of one of Winnetka's business districts, Indian Hill.

Many students and residents share a common wish that more restaurants could soon be part of the Indian Hill business district and other Winnetka business districts.

Junior Lily Lyman and sophomore Liza Boscow expressed their desire to see Chipotle and Potbelly added to Indian Hill area.

Willow Road: is the end near?



The beginning of the construction detour on Willow Road | Minturn

by Michael Dugan

Traffic to and from school has increased the travel time and frustration for some of the students and staff at New Trier, as a result of the Willow Road construction.

Construction on Willow and nearby streets have caused some significant problems over the last couple of years, and to some, the end may not seem close enough.

In fact, some believe that with the construction moving towards New Trier's east campus, it will only get worse.

Students' concerns of late have been highlighted by some of the side roads closing and increased construction further east on Willow.

Ivy Dynek, a senior at New Trier, says her route to and from school

has dramatically been affected. "My typical route to school is taking Happ Road to Willow, then Willow all the way to Green Bay, and then Green Bay to Winnetka," she said, "Although Willow is my normal route, I often have to take Winnetka to avoid all of the construction. Driving to school used to take about 10 minutes, but because the construction has gotten so brutal, it now takes about 25 minutes."

According to Contract Administrator Beth Rahe from IDOT Construction, the biggest traffic issue has already been resolved.

"The largest area of complaints was from when Waukegan Road was only two lanes, not four," explained Rahe. "That's why our main goal was to open Waukegan Road back up to four lanes. Traffic is flowing well

now."

The original scheduled date of completion for the Northfield portion of the project was Oct. 31. With that date in the rear view mirror, residents of the New Trier Township are unhappy and dissatisfied with the work that has been done thus far.

People outside the village of Northfield believe that no real effort is being put into the project due to the lack of communication to the residents of the township. Rahe says there is no need to be upset -- information is accessible to anyone.

Stacy Sigman is in charge of relaying information from the village personnel to the residents.

She attends the biweekly meetings and delivers all of the relevant information to the residents via the project's main website (northfieldwillowroad.blogspot.com), where people can subscribe and receive updates through e-mail (updates are also available on twitter [@willowroadcp]).

"If people are informed, they are less likely to be mad," explained Rahe. These updates are directly released to the Northfield residents on twitter or via e-mail subscription.

Wagner road was closed starting Monday, November 11 for 3-4 weeks. Traffic is now detoured west towards Waukegan Road.

So long, farewells, auf wiedersehen, goodbye

by Anna Ferguson

On Oct. 15 students from the Auguste-Viktoria-Gymnasium in the German village of Trier arrived, marking the beginning of a two-week stay in the homes of 15 New Trier students.

In June, these 15 students will travel to Germany and spend two weeks in the homes of their German counterparts.

The organization of this exchange was spearheaded by New Trier German teacher Venera Stabinsky and Auguste-Viktoria social studies teacher Anne Schaaf who contacted each other in 2012.

Stabinsky figures out the logistic of the exchange, organizes the German students' itinerary, organizes field trips and activities, and matches the German and American students.

The exchange is run through the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) and includes an educational project that's centered around a theme which changes each year.

This year's theme was architecture; the German students created a presentation on one of Chicago's historic buildings and the German influence on the Chicago

skyline.

The Germans enjoyed their time in Chicago so much that the farewell breakfast on Oct. 30 was a tearful occasion.

"The exchange offers such a unique experience," said Stabinsky. "It's a big responsibility but it offers both the American and German students a hands on learning experience."

The Germans and Americans were matched based on the applications they filled out prior to the trip. The pairings were based on their family situations, allergies, personality traits, and primarily the students' interests.

The exchange offers students the opportunity to take on new perspectives, open their minds to different ways of life, and work on their language skills.

When traveling to Germany, the American students also take on huge responsibilities, including a good deal of self-advocacy.

Stabinsky said she saw a massive improvement in the skills and the motivation of students who participated. Seeing the practical uses of German made the students even more dedicated to learning the language, she said.