

- 3 Get the scoop on Glendale road project at meeting for residents and business owners, 7 p.m., City Hall. Can't say we didn't warn you.
- 4 Junior Chamber of Commerce Meeting at South Bend Chocolate Company, 57 Franklin, 7 p.m. Then gorge on chocolate.
- 5 Shop 'til you drop at downtown Valparaiso Sidewalk Sale. Enjoy lunch out, invite your friends. Friday and Saturday sales.
- 6 It's Saturday and time for music. Hear "Me and Tim" at Billy Jack's, 2904 Calumet, 10 p.m. until 2 a.m. and guess what? No cover!
- 7 Today is National Friendship Day. Do something nice for a friend, or someone who used to be a friend, or someone you wish was your friend.
- 8 Snacks, naps, and learning: YMCA preschool (ages 3 to 5) open house at Banta Center, 605 Beech Street, 9 to 11 a.m. or 6 to 7:30 p.m.
- 9 Be heard: public hearing on Vale Park road extension, water quality is topic, 7 to 10 p.m. at County Building, 155 Indiana Avenue, room 205.

Saving Silver Lake

Dorothy Graden believes the wetland you save should be your own

by Julia Versau

Dorothy Graden was once a mild-mannered kindergarten teacher. She has a soft voice, a humble spirit, and a genuine interest in the kinds of things that teachers of five-year olds must do: tell stories, do finger paintings, count with little colored blocks. Graden likes nature, too. Enough to take her kindergarten classes outside to sit in the grass, look up into the leafy branches of trees, and examine mud puddles. Political activism wasn't Graden's strong suit. That is, not until two years ago when she discovered that a long dormant plan for extending Vale Park Road from Valparaiso Street to Campbell and beyond was getting the dust blown off it by the city.

That's the beginning of the story of the political-environmental brouhaha over Vale Park Road. The ending may come soon, after a public hearing set for August 9 for which Graden's group – the Friends of Silver Lake – and northwest Indiana environmentalists pushed hard. No one knows yet whether the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) will decide (or decline) to issue the permit the city's Redevelopment Commission (RDC) needs to construct the roadway extension. The problem with the proposed Vale Park roadway is that it cuts through a wooded wetland area – maybe the last within Valparaiso city limits, and one described by experts as a quality bio-system with a diversity of plant and animal life. Graden and the Friends of Silver Lake believe it should be protected.

"It's simply a natural area in the city that should be saved from the destruction that inevitably comes with road construction and development," Graden says. "We plow through natural resources like this wetland as if there's a dozen more in the wings – and there are not."

Graden and her group, which includes a lot of citizens in the neighborhood near the wetland as well as scientists, environmentalists, and educators from throughout the city, have had an effect already. Pressure from the Friends of Silver Lake sent the RDC back to the drawing board to come up with a scenario that was less invasive than the original plan.

What was once a standard size road construction project without mitigating virtues has become a narrower strip of two-way street with provisions for a boardwalk, bike path, and – according to the RDC – plans to take care of the wetland.

Is everybody happy? Far from it. Though no one on the RDC will come out and say it, members seem peeved that its modified plan hasn't mollified critics. And the Friends of Silver Lake are not happy campers, either. The group's response: thanks, but no thanks.

The city claims it needs the east-west route for growing traffic. The extension of Vale Park Road, penciled in on the Valparaiso streets master plan years ago, is needed now, says Mayor Jon Costas.

"It's a critical part of our thoroughfare plan," said Costas. "We need Vale Park to extend from Highway 49 where a diamond exchange will be built by 2009 all the way to Route 130. It's an issue of traffic management. We're not in the business of building roads to nowhere – and I think the vast majority of citizens want the road."

What do the citizens want? That's the \$64 million dollar question. Graden believes there are more and more people waking up to the realization that natural areas and important resources they once took for granted take a back seat to asphalt if no one speaks up.

"We're accused of being people who only care about what's happening in their own backyards," Graden said. "But you have to save what's around you, what you see, what you know. I'm not going to save something in Utah or Rhode Island – I have to work to save resources right here in Valparaiso."

Local struggles are here to stay. Environmental initiatives, once the bailiwick of the EPA and state regulatory agencies, are more and more hashed out at the county, city, and township levels where citizens have a handle on the landscape and the players. That's why Robert Redford, who now spends as much time in citizen activism as he does on movie sets, recently hosted an environmental conference to which he invited not senators and governors, but the mayors of medium size cities from throughout the U.S. In some parts of the country, groups of local citi-

continued on page 10



Dorothy Graden at Silver Lake

citizens have a handle on the landscape and the players. That's why Robert Redford, who now spends as much time in citizen activism as he does on movie sets, recently hosted an environmental conference to which he invited not senators and governors, but the mayors of medium size cities from throughout the U.S. In some parts of the country, groups of local citi-

Saving Silver Lake

continued from page 1

zens pony up the money to buy precious parcels themselves, preserving woods and prairies and wetlands wherever they can.

Walt Breiting, president of the Valparaiso Chain of Lakes Watershed Group, has supported Graden's mission from the beginning. He said smart cities are the ones that save irreplaceable natural resources and biosystems that help keep air and water clean.

"Building roads used to be the way for cities to do their economic development," Breiting said. "Today, the cutting edge trend is to find a way to go around what is valuable, not plow through it."

Breiting said there are a host of economic and environmental issues that have captured the interest of taxpayers and should be given more consideration by the Redevelopment Commission. He cited the high cost of engineering and constructing a road through a wetland - a project that has climbed from an original estimate of about a million dollars to well over \$2 million now. And that's without the long term maintenance required. Breiting and many of the educators and scientists who have commented on the proposed Vale Park extension also say the wooded wetland's value as an educational resource is high.

"The Silver Lake wetland is as top-notch an ecosystem laboratory as you will find," he said. "Our students should walk there and study there, not be encouraged to speed through on a patch of asphalt."

It is a conundrum. Citizens say they want city planning that is forward-thinking, but often bridle at the extra minutes it might take to get to the grocery store or movie theater. On the other hand, the logic of building roads through the last remaining natural areas in a city's inventory is ultimately disappointing: residents go a little faster, but only to more and more paved places. It's the kind of logic that leads to: Hey, let's fill in Lake Michigan so motorists in Muskegon can get to Milwaukee expeditiously.

Chuck Williams, a city councilman and a member of the RDC, contends the road construction will affect .07 acre of the wetland - about, he said, "the size of someone's bedroom." Because there'll be 1500-plus homes built on the west side in the next ten years, he said, the extension is necessary.

"The opposition is passionate, but this road has been part of the plan for thirty years," Williams said.

Graden thinks that's faulty logic, too. The Vale Park extension idea was idly conceived before anyone really

analyzed the site, and when the whole area - including the land where Valparaiso High School now sits - was peppered with wetland and woods. Doing something ill-advised just because someone drew a line on paper thirty years ago, says Graden, is not city planning at its best.

The RDC makes other claims that some residents near the wetland dispute. Williams, for instance, said there's a need to get high schoolers driving to and from Campbell Street off Appletree Lane (now the main thoroughfare east to Calumet). While some residents admittedly want the teens somewhere else, others don't see the urgency.

"We're going to destroy a precious resource because we can't stand a four and a half minute traffic jam?" said a neighborhood resident who asked that his name not be printed. "Besides, if we're smart, we'll keep them right here where we can keep an eye on them and make them slow down. Better yet, let's put these young people back on school busses and improve the air quality some."

There are few values that trump cars in this country, but the Friends of Silver Lake vows to save the Silver Lake wetland or exhaust themselves trying.

"We can't give up," said Cindy

McCormack, a member of the group who lives in Portage but teaches in Valparaiso. "Years from now, people will think we were nuts not to save parcels like this one when we had the chance. I'm following my gut on this one - and my gut says there's got to be a better plan than this."

Dorothy Graden will start teaching again in less than a month. She'll have a couple dozen new little faces in her classroom, eager to learn to count with red and blue cubes, and hear stories, and walk around the schoolyard comparing oak leaves with maple. These are the people Graden thinks about when she gets tired of the struggle to save Silver Lake.

"I think it's the right thing to do, especially for the young people in our community," Graden said. "Valparaiso has an opportunity to make a spectacular save here and I have not lost hope."

Editor's Note: The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) will hold a public hearing open to all citizens on Tuesday, August 9 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Porter County Administrative Building, 155 Indiana Avenue, room 205. The hearing will specifically address issues of water quality associated with the Vale Park extension. Additional information is available from IDEM's Marty Maupin at 317-233-2471 (mmaupin@idem.in.gov).



Choose Walgreens... Be More Active and Involved



SAVE \$600 **1899⁹⁹**
Sale Price

Sundancer™ 3-Wheel Scooter

- Easy to maneuver indoors and outdoors
- Runs up to 25 miles on one charge
- Front basket and batteries included
- 300 lb weight capacity



SAVE \$200 **799⁹⁹**
Sale Price

Pride Go-Go® Ultra Travel Scooter

- Precision handling in tight spaces
- Easy to operate
- Disassembles easily; convenient to take anywhere
- Free basket, upgraded seat, and battery included



SAVE \$150 **879⁹⁹**
Model 570 Sale Price

Pride 3-Position Luxury Lift Chair

- Plush and relaxing pillow-back design for comfort
- Overstuffed seat cushion and arms
- Reclines to sleeping position
- Quiet, smooth lift system
- 375 lb weight capacity



SAVE \$130 **699⁹⁹**
Model C-30 Sale Price

Pride 3-Position Lift Chair

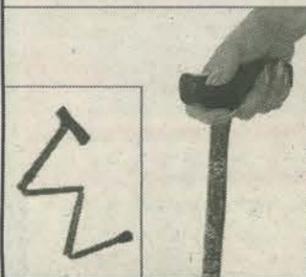
- Offers a variety of comfortable positions
- Battery backup system in case of power failure
- Quiet, smooth lift system
- Available in many colors
- 375 lb weight capacity



SAVE \$50 **179⁹⁹**
Sale Price

Featherlight™ 4-Wheeled Walker

- Weighs only 12 lbs
- Push down brakes
- Comfortable padded seat for resting
- Storage basket under seat to safeguard valuables
- Demi model available for users 4'8" to 5'4" tall



Free Gift with Purchase of Jobst Stockings

Buy any two pairs of Jobst support stockings and receive a free 4 oz bottle of Jolastic® Washing Solution. Created especially for elastic garments - Jolastic cleans quickly and easily without damage to the fabric.

Save 25%

Adjustable Folding Canes

- Folds into compact case that fits into coats or purses
- Comfortable contoured handle
- Adjustable height
- Assorted designs

Jobst Support Stockings

- Help relieve tired, achy legs and swollen ankles
- Various degrees of compression
- Available in styles for men and women

Visit our Chicagoland or NW Indiana showrooms.

Berwyn
7173 W. Cermak Rd.
at Harlem Ave.
1-800-207-3803

Schererville, IN
1680 U.S. 41
at U.S. 30
1-888-492-5442

Chicago
7919 S. Cicero Ave.
1-800-794-5188

Valparaiso, IN
3020 N. Calumet Ave.
1-888-492-5442

Skokie
3606 Dempster Rd.
1-800-794-2188

Sale prices good through August 20, 2005.
Cash and credit cards only please. Home delivery available.

Trouble Hearing?
Accurate Hearing Aid Services
942-8881 • 462-7409

Instant CASH PAID!

- Gold • Silver • Diamonds
- Tools • Coins • Collectibles
- PlayStation • Guitars

AMERI PAWN

Valparaiso 219-465-7262
Lake Station 219-962-5455
Crown Point 219-663-8331
LaPorte 219-326-7296

SC SENIOR CARE Insurance Services

7998 Broadway
Merrillville, IN

1 Block North of U.S. 30 on Broadway - next to Ethan Allen

- Senior Care Medicare Supplement Plan
- Prescription Discount Programs
- Underage Disability Medicare Supplement Coverage
- Long Term Care & Home Health Care Plan
- Life & Final Burial Expenses
- Affordable Rates • Excellent Service

Fred M. Ulayyett
Licensed Insurance Agent
219-736-9450
Or 800-821-0604
www.seniorcareinsurance.com