

Publication Notes . . .

Ada View is published by Ada Township Board 7330 Thornapple River Drive SE P.O. Box 370 Ada, Michigan 49301 Telephone: 616-676-9191 www.ada.mi.us Hours: Monday - Friday 8 am to 5 pm Closed Holidays

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Printed by Falcon Printing 616-676-3737

Be Winter Wise

Keep a winter Emergency Kit in your car!

- Blanket
Flashlight
Extra Pair of Boots, socks, sweater
Keep your cell phone charged
Bottled water with a few breakfast bars
If stranded DO NOT leave your car running, turn it on periodically for heat only!



Be Prepared

Winter Weather Facts

Meteorologist George Lessens (December, January, February) Averages for Winter Weather

Average Temp. . . . . 25.0
Warmest . . . . . 33.9 1931-32
Coldest . . . . . 18.2 1903-04
Last Year . . . . . 31.6"

Average precipitation in rain . . . . . 6.27"
Wettest . . . . . 13.58" 1897-98
Driest . . . . . 2.08" 1986-87
Last Year . . . . . 4.97"

Average Snow Fall . . . . . 52.1"
Most Snow . . . . . 85.1" 1951-52
Least Snow . . . . . 13.4" 1943-44
Last Year . . . . . 80.1"

Sun Average. . . . . 28.1%
Sunniest . . . . . 41.5% 1998-99
Cloudiest. . . . . 14.6% 1997-98
Last Year . . . . . 32.6%

Artists & Art Lovers Wanted

Ada Council for the Arts is under new leadership and looking for members interested in helping expand the organization and its programs. Call us if you would like to have fun learning, sharing and growing while enriching life in our community. We're especially interested in potential board members. Contact Sue Dehlinger, Arts Council Board President, at 676-1481.

THE ADAVIEW

You Better Watch Out!

Ada Township will "Kick-Off " the Holidays with the annual Santa Claus Parade sponsored by the Ada Business Association. Saturday December 6th, 2003 10:30AM Parade Line-Up (Ada Drive/ Thornapple Shopping Ctr.)

11:00 AM PARADE BEGINS!

(the parade route will start at the Shopping Center turn right on Thornapple and end at Fire Station #1) 11:30AM Meet Santa, free hot chocolate and cookies at the Fire Station (Compliments of the Ada Fire Association and Ada Township Board)

Holidays in Ada Township Santa Claus is coming to Town! Saturday December 6th, 2003 11:00 AM Parade



All items received by Operation Santa Claus are distributed throughout The Forest Hills District.

Encore! Encore!

Mr. Santa Claus has graciously agreed to take time out of his very busy holiday schedule to again honor his annual invitation to return as the Grand Marshal for the Ada Business Association Holiday Parade!



Mr. Claus is the most "seasoned" worldwide entrepreneur in toy manufacturing and set the standard for all toy manufacturers centuries ago.

Throughout the centuries Mr. & Mrs. Claus and their merry band of elves have shared their expertise unselfishly and spread their charitable spirit universally. Mr. Claus told the Ada Township Clerk,

"Mrs. Claus and our little family of elves decided many, many years ago to dedicate our life to bringing a smile to everyone we meet and on one special day every year we would bring happiness to all good little boys and girls." Mr. Claus added "We hope through our example we can inspire others to work year around to bring peace and goodwill to everyone they meet as well."

Mr. Claus again confirmed he has been visiting Ada Township every December 24th for over 150 years but declined to share any stories about the Rupke, Yeomans, Wiley, Pratt, White, Rider, Theodore and other Ada Township families saying their secrets are his secrets.

Thank you Mr. Claus!

Be a Santa Helper!

If you would like to part of Santa's worldwide family and be part of the Holiday activities in Ada Township please contact Santa's Top Ada Elf Fireman Dave at 676-2376

Operation Santa Claus

You may drop off donations for Operation Santa Claus Monday -Friday 8AM-5PM until December 19th, 2003 at the Ada Township Offices.

Items needed;

Toys, Clothing, Canned Goods, Blankets and Household Items. Please bring freshly washed and gently used clothing only. Questions on what is needed or for monetary donations please contact; Robert Gaskell at 949-0197

Inside this Issue

- Historical Updates
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A Note from the Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer
Neighborhood Watch Updates
Safety Tips and, much, much more!

## Christmas Celebrations "I Remember"

Jessie Vandenberg



The commercial aspects of the Christmas season were never very apparent in our house. Ma had a couple of fold-out bells that she hung in the doorway, and we kids made a few yards of paper chain at school. But we never had a tree, advent candles, poinsettias, wreaths, or fancy lights. On Christmas Eve, the children put out their shoes, Dutch style. In the morning, there would be an orange in each shoe, with candy and nuts in the toe, plus a toy and article of new clothing piled next to the shoes. One special toy I remember was a cute doll dresser with three drawers and a real swing mirror. I still had it when I married, and our daughter June played with it until it wore out.

The schools always put on big programs at Christmas time. Schuman School (now disguised as a gray shingle house on the southwest corner of Kraft and 28th Street), was no exception. Practice for all of our recitations, plays, and songs began immediately after Thanksgiving Day. A stage was built of boards placed on top of potato crates. Old sheets were strung on a wire for stage curtains. We always had a lovely tree. Every parent and all the neighbors attended the program, and after a gift exchange all the children received a box of candy.

Our church (East Paris) usually held their Sunday school program on Christmas night. Few decorations graced the platform. Each class had a different part to play, with speeches, skits, pantomimes, and lots of carol singing. Everyone looked forward to the singing of the primary class. Then, as now, there were the extroverts, cut-ups, and the cute, shy ones. The parents loved it. After the program, the boys and girls were treated to an orange and a box of assorted cream candies and chocolate drops. It was a wonderful and exciting time, as

voices other than the pastor's were rarely heard in church, with the exception of congregational singing.

Reminiscing about past Christmases makes me realize, with gratitude, that the Christ child whose birthday we celebrated without commercial frills many years ago, can still be worshiped today.



## AVERILL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF ADA

7144 Headley St. Ada  
November 29th and December 6th  
Open 9:00 am  
to 4:00 pm

### CHRISTMAS WREATHS FOR SALE

12 inch and  
16 inch centers  
Douglas Fir-\$18.00  
and \$23.00  
Fraser Fir-\$21.00 and \$25.00

### SNOW TIME FUN DISPLAY

In the Barn  
Bob sled, old sleds,  
wood ice skates, snow shoes

### DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREES

In the Museum  
Only on  
December 6, 2003

### COOKIES FOR KIDS TO DECORATE

Raffle drawing for the children  
Lucky winner to receive a Free Movie Pass  
Hot Chocolate

### THE GIFT SHOP WILL ALSO BE OPEN BOTH DAYS

ADA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Winter Driving Safety Tips

It's that time of year again: snow, sleet and ice. Driving in the winter months means traveling road conditions, which could lead to unforeseen dangers.

### Preparing for winter driving:

1. Before taking any vehicle on the road in the winter, have it tuned up.
  2. Test brakes, battery, check fluid levels, add anti-freeze accordingly.
  3. Have emergency equipment i.e. Sand/kitty litter, shovel, ice scraper, jumper cables, blankets, flashlight with working batteries.
  4. Cell phone for emergencies.
  5. Keep your fuel tank as full as possible. Condensation will be at a minimum and the added weight will help maximize traction and handling on slick roads.
- Any small problems you had with your car in good weather will be bigger problems in bad weather.

### Safe winter driving tips:

1. Warming car up; never warm vehicle up inside of garages or other closed areas, pull the vehicle out of garage and shut garage door to reduce carbon monoxide build up. Have extra set of keys and lock vehicle up, to reduce theft and accidents.
2. Frost; Make sure to scrape all frost from windows prior to driving, it is very important that all windows be free of frost before the vehicle is driven.
3. Snow; Remove all snow from windows, headlights, taillights, mirrors, and any auxiliary lighting, including license plate area. It is important that all these items are free of snow/ice so you can see and be seen.
4. Dirt/Road Grime; Dirt and road grime will cover the lenses of your headlights and taillights, reducing the brightness of the lights. When traveling for long periods of time stop periodically to check these areas.
5. Reduced Braking Capacity; Remember that you will need to slow down and begin breaking much sooner on snow or ice covered roads. Make sure to leave extra space between vehicles for stopping.
6. Watch for slippery bridge decks; Even when the rest of the pavement is in good condition bridge decks will ice up sooner.
7. 4x4 Vehicles; Do not get over confident in your 4x4 vehicle. Remember that your 4x4 vehicle may help you get going quicker but will not help you stop any faster. Your 4x4 vehicle can lose traction just as fast as 2-wheel vehicle.

### Respect the winter weather:

1. Road conditions; Know the current road conditions, watch local weather forecasts, listen to radio while traveling for updated accident and road conditions.
2. Plan ahead; Leave extra time for traveling, a trip that might take you 30 minutes may take up to an hour in the winter.
3. Speed; Its almost like everybody forgets how to drive when the snow/ice hits again. Remember to cut your speed in half to be safe.

These tips are designed to alert motorists of some of the most common safety concerns that police officers see on the road in the wintertime. If you have any questions or if any issue is not addressed here please feel free to contact me at any time.

Kent County Sheriff Department  
Community Services  
Deputy Todd Probst  
(616) 632-6181 ext. 4182  
todd.probst@kentcounty.org



## A Note from the Supervisor!

Thank you for your support through another successful year for Ada Township! We have all been working hard to continue to preserve our township, improve our parks, trails and over all customer service. My office door is always open to hear concerns and suggestions from all Ada Township residents or stop by just to say Hello!

The Township Board and I wish each and every one a safe and wonderful holiday season!

George Haga  
ghaga@ada.mi.us  
676-9191 ext: 50



## A Note From The Treasurers Office

With the fall season comes holidays, falling leaves and tax bills. You can expect to receive your winter 2003 tax bill the first part of December. Tax bills can be paid by mail, in person, or put in the drop box in front of the township office starting December 1, 2003.

The last date to pay without interest is Tuesday, February 17, 2004 by 5:00 pm.

The 2004 dog tags are available at the Treasurer's Office through March 1, 2004. If you have not received the renewal card, you must have an up-to-date spay/neuter and rabies certificate.

The new Kent County 4H Plat books will be available soon.

The treasurer's staff wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season.

Carolyn ext: 23  
Barbara ext: 27  
Dolores ext: 22

### FROM THE ASSESSOR'S DESK

## PROPERTY TAX LAW CHANGES FOR 2004 ASSESSMENT YEAR

A. Name Change from Homestead Exemption to Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemption  
PA 140 of 2003 provides that, effective January 1, 2004, the word Homestead has been removed from the exemption statutes and has been replaced by the words Principal Residence. While P.A. 140 of 2003 uses the words Principal Residence, the exemption will be known as the Homeowner's Principal Residence Exemption so that a renter does not mistakenly file for the exemption.

B. Change in Status Day for The Homestead (Homeowner's Principal Residence) Exemption and the Qualified Agricultural Property Exemption  
From May 1 to December 31 In the past, the status day for determining whether a property qualified for the Homestead Exemption or the Qualified Agricultural Property Exemption was May 1 of the year of the exemption. Starting in assessment year 2004, PA 105 of 2003 provides that the status day for the Homestead (Homeowner's Principal Residence) Exemption and the Qualified Agricultural Property Exemption is December 31 of

the prior year. This means that, for 2004 assessments, the status day for these exemptions is December 31, 2003. This change makes the status day for the Homestead (Homeowner's Principal Residence) Exemption and the Qualified Agricultural Property Exemption the same as for other exemptions.

C. New Mandatory Language Required on the Assessment Notice Forms (STC Forms L-4400 and L-4400LH) Starting in 2004, this statement has been changed to recognize the name change from Homestead Exemption to Principal Residence Exemption and to recognize the change in exemption status day from May 1 to December 31. The following statement shall appear on the Assessment Notice Form starting in 2004: If you purchased your principal residence after December 31 last year, to claim the principal residence exemption for next year, if you have not already done so, you re required to file an affidavit on or before December 31 this year. November 5, 2003

## News from Ada Park

Those of you that have discovered the new trail along the Grand River (entrance gained through Ada Moorings housing development) may have noticed some huge changes in the past few months. Construction on the new phase of development in Ada Moorings began late in the summer. Access to the trail is now extremely dangerous and we suggest that, for your own safety, you not attempt to access the trail. At this time we do not know how long the trail access will be under construction. We'll keep you posted and let you know when it is safe to again travel on the path.

On Friday, January 2nd we will begin taking reservations from Ada Township residents for shelter and gazebo use in 2004. You can make your reservation over the phone by calling Wendy @ 676-0520. Payment is then due within 10 business days. We allow residents only to make reservations between January - April. Non-resident reservations begin on Monday, May 3rd. The shelter holds approximately 120 people and has electricity, water, restrooms and a large grill. The gazebo, which overlooks the pond, has electricity and a large grill.

Christmas tree recycling will be available at Ada Park again this year. Those wishing to drop off their tree may begin on Monday, December 22nd (yes, we occasionally get trees dropped off before Christmas!). The last day to drop off trees will be Sunday, January 18th. Please make sure to remove all light strings, ornaments, tinsel, rope and transport bags. Sorry, we cannot accept wreaths, swags, garlands, centerpieces or fake trees - please do not bring them to us! Anyone that may be interested in getting woodchips please contact Wendy at the Park Office (676-0520).

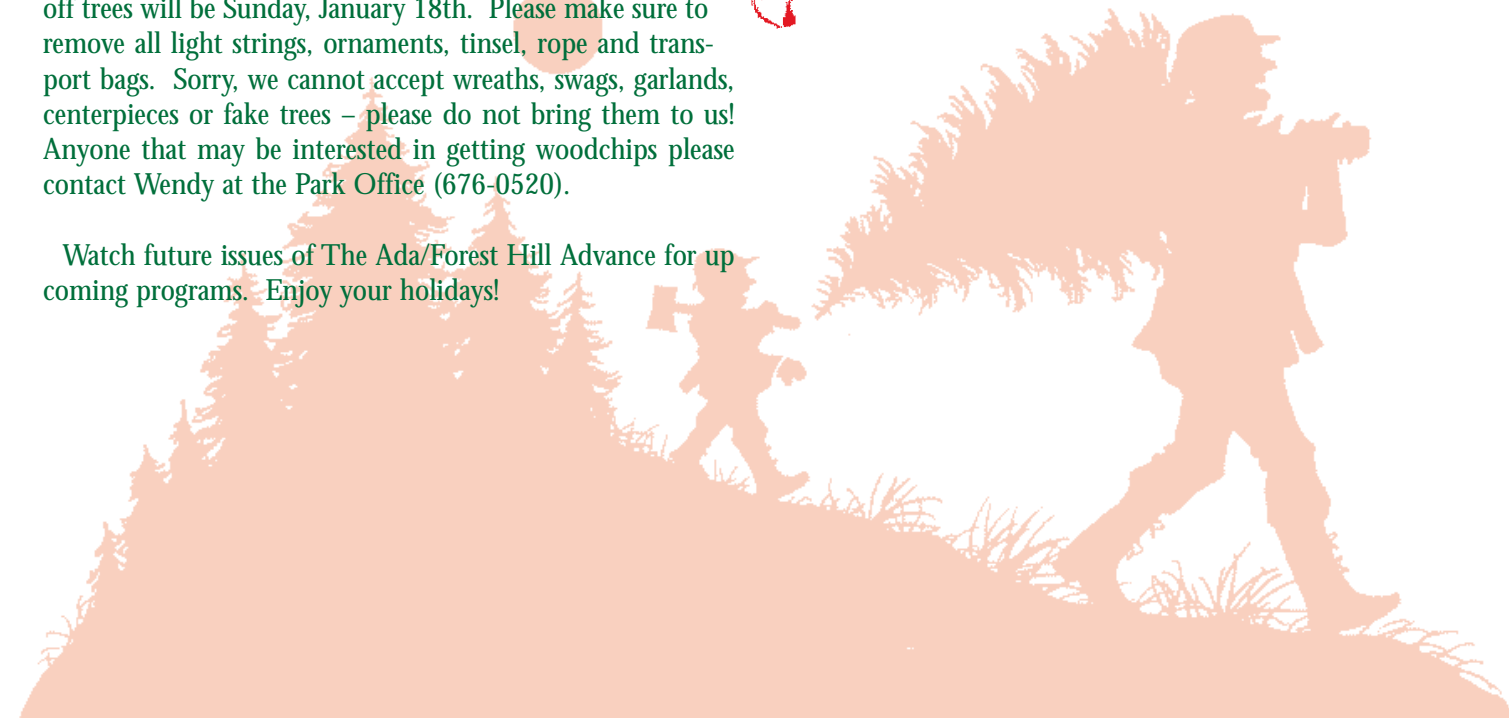
Watch future issues of The Ada/Forest Hill Advance for upcoming programs. Enjoy your holidays!

## Roselle Park Update

Work has progressed and is nearing completion on the Roselle Park Master Plan. The plans that are taking shape provide for facilities and activities in the park enhancing the natural setting and sensitive habitats. Completion of the Master Plan for the park will permit additional building demolition work to be completed in 2004, so development of park facilities may begin.

In the meantime, watch for possible announcements later this winter regarding opening of the park to cross-country skiing. Pending budget and staff availability for snow removal and trail preparations, and if Mother Nature provides the snow, the park may be opened to skiers this winter.

Check with the Park after January 2nd (616) 676-0520 or check the Ada Township website for updates [www.ada.mi.us](http://www.ada.mi.us).



Winter  
2004  
Meeting  
Schedule  
Township Board  
2nd and 4th Monday  
7:30 PM

December 8th  
2004  
January 12  
January 26  
February 9  
February 23  
March 8  
March 22  
April 12  
April 26

Planning  
Commission  
3rd Thursday  
7:30 pm

December 18th  
January 15th  
February 19th  
March 18th  
April 15th

Zoning Board  
of Appeals  
1st Tuesday  
4:30 PM  
  
January 6th  
February 3rd  
March 2nd  
April 6th  
May 4th

## Consider Ada Open Space for Year-End Giving

Residents who are making plans for end-of-the-year charitable giving may wish to consider the "Ada Open Space Fund" maintained by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan. The Conservancy is a non-profit land trust serving 6 West Michigan counties. The Ada Open Space Fund is a dedicated fund account for open space protection in Ada Township. Contributions directed to this fund will be used only for open space protection efforts in Ada Township, in consultation with the Township's Open Space Task Force. Funds from this account have already been used to help finance the purchase of the Roselle Park property.

Township residents interested in the Ada Open Space Fund may contact Jim Ferro, Ada Township Planning Director, at 676-9191, Ext. 31, or Julie Stoneman, Land Conservancy Executive Director, at 451-9476.

## Neighborhood Watch Update

### Attention Snowbirds

Are you heading south? If you would like to be on the "East Precinct" property watch please contact the Clerk's office or call (616) 676-9191 ext:0. We will take your information and forward it to the Deputy Sheriff on duty. Please remember to have an emergency contact phone number to add to your information card.

### Interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch?

It's simple, it's easy and it brings peace of mind to your family and neighbors! It's all about being a good neighbor, a responsible citizen and parent.

Neighboring is best defined as knowing your neighbors, their children and vehicles. This helps each member of the community define suspicious vehicles or persons in our neighborhood to help prevent and deter crime. If you are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch program please contact the Kent County Sheriff Department's Community Service Department at (616) 632-6181

Please Remember to REPORT ALL SUSPICIOUS VEHICLES and/or BEHAVIOR TO THE KENT COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT (616) 336-3113 or 632-6100  
Crime Prevention tips:

- 1) **Don't forget to lock your home and car doors!**
- 2) **Leave an outside porch light on at night!**
- 3) **Know your neighbors!**
- 4) **Do Not Hesitate**



The Ada Township Offices will be closed for the Holiday Season on December 24th-26th December 31st & January 1st

Happy Holidays from The Ada Township Board and Staff

**Note:**  
The Clerk & Treasurer's office will be open 8A.M. - Noon on 12-31-03

## A Note from the Clerk

2003 has been another year of changes and growth within our lives and our community. As we all reflect on our families and friends this Holiday Season we can count our blessings to be a part of a concerned and prosperous community.

As Ada Township continues to grow (over 10,000 residents) we welcome input from our residents, both long term and new. If you have a new neighbor please contact the Township Clerk's Office so we can say "Hello" and send our new residents our "Welcome to Ada" information packet.

My staff and I want to thank everyone for their kind comments and suggestions throughout the past year. We hope this holiday will bring your family a year of peace, prosperity and happiness.

(616) 676-9191

Clerk...Deb Ensing Millhuff ... ext: 21  
Deputy Clerk ...Deb Paulson ...ext: 20  
Receptionist ... Jeannie ... ext: 29  
Accounting ... Jean ... ext: 28  
Administrative Support Staff ...  
Cassie & Michelle ... ext: 34

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season!



## Protect Our Four Legged Friends!

### Remember Cold Weather Kills

Proper shelter is required by Kent County law for all dogs.

It is also needed for all animals to survive the elements!

By law both food and fresh water are required daily for dogs!

But is also needed for all animals to survive!

If you do not have a shelter for your pet please contact the Humane Society of Kent County at 453-7757 to assist you.

Please remember there is a leash law in all of Kent County (including Ada Township), this means your dog must either be properly confined in a fenced area or on a leash when outside.

To keep your best friend out of harms way and to avoid a violation fine...

**Leash 'em up! It's the Law!**

