



## Grand Rapids Y Service Club

Y Service Clubs International - Mid East Region

November 15, 2013

### OUR MISSION

Y Service Clubs International is a world-wide fellowship of persons of all faiths working constructively together based on Christian teachings, in partnership with and supporting the YMCA. Its mission is to strive through active service to develop, encourage and provide leadership to build a better world for all humankind.

### CLUB OFFICERS

**Pres:** Neil Topliffe

**Pres. Elect:** Ethan Ray

**Secretary:** Martha Beals

**Treasurer:** Ken Haines

**Asst. Treas:** Tom Johnson

**Past Pres:** Pete Chadwick

### BOARD MEMBERS

Henry Capogna

John Duivan

Mark Radtke

Bob Smith

Bob Williams

### ACTIVITY CHAIRS

**Chaplin:** Gary Davis

**Run Thru the Rapids:**

Syd Baxter & Kent Mudie

**Santa Claus Girls:**

Bob Smith

**White Elephant Sale:**

Bill Streeter, Chair

**Sparks Editor:**

Neil Topliffe

[Sparks Editor](#)

President Neil Topliffe called the Service Club bi-weekly meeting to order at the downtown David D. Hunting Y with the opening invocation given by Martha Beals, followed by the pledge.

**Guests were introduced:** Kevin Morrison, Camp Manitou-Lin Overnight Director (Syd Baxter), and Charlie DeVries, ITC Energy (Henry Capogna). Total of 35 in attendance. Birthdays were recognized (Beals, Marks, O'Malley) & Grateful Dollars received.

### Club News

- **Kent Mudie** announced that the net income from Run Thru the Rapids was \$14,387.
- **Santa Claus Girls** work continues on sorting and setting up of deliver routes work for our club members at the Spaulding Ave. Amway warehouse. Contact Bob Smith, 531-0199, for details.
- **Bill Streeter** reminded everyone that we need to contact him BEFORE going to the White Elephant Sale site for the rest of this year. He needs to work out permission with present occupants about when we can drop things off.
- **Neil Topliffe** lifted up **Carl Mescher**, Gary's father, whose memorial service was Saturday in Lansing. He was a 51 year YSC member in Lansing and a long time supporter of our club. **Memorial Gifts** to our new "Y Service Club Endowment Fund" (checks made out in that name) may be made **in memory of Carl** and sent to treasurer Ken Haines, 7075 Bonaire Ct NE, Rockford MI 49341.
- **Next board meeting** Thurs., Dec. 19 – Site to be determined

### NEXT MEETING

**DECEMBER 6 12:00 PM**

**Brian Edwards, Publisher of MiBiz + other publications**

**At David C. Hunting YMCA, downtown**

MiBiz is a print and electronic business news media company providing up-to-the minute news about West Michigan businesses. [Visit the web site.](#) See Edward's bio on Page 3. Invite a friend or business colleague.

## Our Motto

*To acknowledge the duty  
that accompanies every  
right*

*Happy  
Birthday*

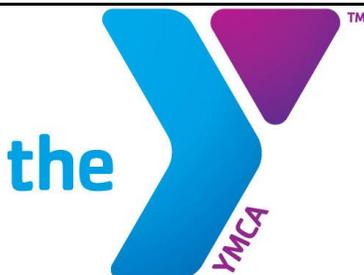
**Martha Beals 11/15**  
**Chuck Marks 11/18**  
**Chris O'Malley 12/2**



Find us on  
Facebook

[-White Elephant Sale](#)  
[-Run Thru the Rapids](#)

**Grand Rapids Y Service Club**  
475 Lake Michigan Dr NW  
Grand Rapids MI 49505  
[www.gryserviceclub.org](http://www.gryserviceclub.org)  
[www.runthrurapids.com](http://www.runthrurapids.com)  
is a member of  
Y Service Clubs International.  
[www.ysmen.org](http://www.ysmen.org)  
[www.ysmenusa.com](http://www.ysmenusa.com)



## Community Commitment & Safety is ITC Focus

Electricity is something we don't think much about; hit the light switch and the room lights up. But last Friday we discovered that it's not just local power companies that make it all happen, but also major transmission line companies like ITC, that deliver heavy loads of electricity to most of Michigan and six other states.



Karyn Boyd, Senior Community Affairs Director of ITC in West Michigan, noted that the 10 year old company has invested \$2 billion in transmission upgrades over 8,400 circuit miles to insure a more stable infrastructure for our area.

The challenge, she said is working closely with communities to make possible the safety necessary. "No one likes having trees cut down which is why we are active on community boards, and government agencies to not only explain what is being done but finding projects to partner in planting new trees in the community." Customer service is a key factor in their business plan. "This company believes in doing the right thing and safety," she added. The importance of worker safety is reflected in ITC currently at more than one million safe employee hours without a major mishap.

The company transports 26,000 megawatts of power over 15,000 miles of transmission lines. They engage in daily inspections, including use of low flying helicopters to keep the transmissions safe and dependable.

## REPORT: Andy Page Camp Manitou-Lin Update Meeting with Y Service Club Members 11/15/2013 (Notes by Neil Topliffe)

At my request Andy Page met with Y Service Club members prior to our meeting to give an update on the future directions of Camp Manitou-Lin and to respond to questions or concerns regarding ending the services of

## December 6 Speaker Brian Edwards Bio



Brian Edwards says he's either fearless or really dumb. He's been trying to build a media company based around print publications since late 2008. He runs **Revue Holding Company Inc.**, publisher of the regional business paper *MiBiz*, as well as *Revue West Michigan*, a regional entertainment guide, and *Recoil*, a West Michigan monthly magazine devoted to satire and counterculture.

Earlier this year, the holding company also acquired a web development firm that works with media companies, professional service firms, nonprofits and manufacturers.

Revue Holdings is the latest in a series of start ups for Mr. Edwards, who co-founded one of the state's largest PR firms (Lambert, Edwards & Associates Inc.) and helped launch a West Michigan hospitality company, a Detroit-based automotive electronics firm, and a Dallas-based furniture company.

He is a proud graduate of the **reigning** 3 time Big 10 football champion -- the University of Wisconsin Badgers.

Greg Dodd. I found the meeting to be helpful and frank, including some hard questions and comments from members regarding how to stop a sense of camp directors turnover only to be repeated. Here are some highlights of what I heard Andy report to us. He and others from Camp Manitou-Lin will be our speakers January 10 when we will have further updates. Andy again said he is willing to meet personally by phone, email, and face-to-face to answer any member's questions. {Neil}

- “The camp is not going away, we are looking to strengthen and make it even more viable in the years ahead,” Andy shared.
- The concern for the past few years, which continues, is strengthening the resident camping program and finding new ways to make the camp more viable financially – not unique to Camp Manitou-Lin but important none-the-less
- A Task Force met Friday afternoon, made up of Andy, a camp board member, camp staff member, corporate board member, camp parent, and others, with the task to investigate options regarding staff structure, fees, better participation of campers by branches, etc. Felix Perrara, GRCC senior faculty member will be the facilitator.
- Andy has had extensive phone conferences with John Duntley, Senior Camping Specialist at YMCA of the USA, plus three local YMCA camp directors in Rochester NY, Seattle, and Ohio, learning of trends and how those camps have had recent successful years.
- Two of those people will be visiting Camp Manitou-Lin December 11 to explore the facility and make initial observations, with a further report to the task force coming out of the visits
- One reality Andy noted is that there are 22 other association related camps in West Michigan which makes it crucial for Camp Manitou-Lin to clearly identify its place and what unique components it has to offer. His initial sense is that the Y camp needs to be lifting up the Horse Camping options and doing a better job of converting day campers to resident campers.

### Question and Answer Period:

- What will you not continue?  
We aren't at that point but we need to find ways to build resident camping. Right now 2/3 are day campers and we aren't getting the conversion like we want. It was noted that day campers sleeping on the floor the last night might not be an incentive and Andy agreed, noting that post evaluations lifted up that fact.
- What is the certification level of Camp Manitou-Lin and is that affecting our program?  
We are at the highest certification you can have. Marketing is a key part in strengthening our program, particularly with our Y branches. We are seeing only 5% of those attending Manitou-Lin coming from our branches. They have their own day camps yet we have the facilities and variety for both day camps and resident

(cont'd pg. 4)

**“If you somehow positively impact one child and they get a sense of self and confidence and even just happiness, and they bring that back to their family and their school, camp can affect millions of people.”**

— A Y camp counselor  
[www.ymca.net/camp](http://www.ymca.net/camp)

camps. We as a Grand Rapids Y need to look at this fact moving forward.

- What has been the repeat or retention rate of campers?  
We have had 12% retention in 2012 and 48% in 2013 with the national Y camps rate last year being 67%. If we don't improve on retention we can't reach financial solvency like we need to do.
- What is the focus of the camp, summer or year round?  
We certainly have facilities for year round and it is used year round but by far our biggest attendance is in the summer months and where we can grow and help us most financially and programmatically.
- What are you doing to break the cycle of involuntary turnover of staff? This recent situation is not new at the camp. You can't grow the camp with leadership changes every couple years!  
This is a primary reason for having a task force and getting outside help, so we can end that cycle. We can't afford to get a new executive and put him/her in the same situation. We have to be sure of a plan for sustainability. We will be working on a new job description and looking at a possible change in staffing structure. Our plan is for the task force to have a report to boards by the spring.

*Participants for some or all of the conversation:  
Jud Ross, Bill Smith, Ron Bickel, Bill Peterson, Gary Davis,  
John Duiven, Chuck Marks, Wally Andersen, Loyd Winer,  
Neil Topliffe.*

### Projected Y Service Club Speakers 2013-14

December 20	Bob Smith - Santa Claus Girls
January 10	2013-14 Camp Manitou-Lin Program Highlights
January 24	Mary Ann Weaver, President Michigan Disability Alliance
February 7	Rick Stevens & Larry Dodge, ABVI
February 21	Cheryl Cox, Scoutreach
March 7	Rev. Randall Bertrand, Street Kids on the Edge
March 21	Dan Gaydou, GR Press / MLive