

Park Dist. Board hears plans to enhance river

By Christy Mazza

At the Park District Board meeting held on Tuesday, Feb. 11, John Rabchuk, a representative from the River Corridor Foundation, presented plans to enhance the Fox River.

"It's based on some new and wonderful things that are happening around the country that are actually based on some old ideas that we've had for a long time [to utilize] our most precious physical asset which is the Fox River," said Rabchuk. "We've done a lot of things along the edge of the river, but we really haven't utilized the river to its full extent."

Rabchuk was referring to cities around the country, including Charles City, Iowa, Denver and Portland, Oregon, that have made changes in the river that runs through them in order to drive tourism, among other things.

"We think that there are some more things that we could be doing," Rabchuk said. "We've done all these things along the edge of the river, but we think there might be an opportunity to do more."

Rabchuk went on to discuss several of those opportunities, which he referred to as active river projects. Each of the possible projects are already being done somewhere in the country successfully.

The first is creating a whitewater environment. Rabchuk explained that this would create a space in the river, using wing dams that channel water into the middle thus increasing the velocity so

kayaks and canoes can make their way through this area. He added that a side effect of these particular environments is that they clean up the water because of the turbulence created.

A second possibility is installing floating gardens. Rabchuk explained that plants are put into wire baskets with the roots hanging in the water, cleansing it. When the weather becomes cold, the plants are sunk in the water so they don't freeze. Walkways can be installed around the planters, creating a botanical garden.

Competitive and active recreation on the river, including rowing and kayaking competitions, is another active river project mentioned by Rabchuk.

Installing elevated bike trails is another possibility. Trails would hang out over the edge of the river, which could provide better access to the river from street level and widen the existing trail, explained Rabchuk.

Rabchuk also mentioned installing interactive water playgrounds, which are water features in which families can play.

The final active water project presented was the possibility of moving the dam roughly to where the railroad tracks cross the river which could fix the flooding problem at routes 31 and 64.

The next step, according to Rabchuk, is to create community focus groups and gather ideas from all stakeholders, since there are many. After ideas

are gathered, a consulting engineer would be hired to determine which projects would be ideal for the Fox River and for St. Charles. This would include cost estimates.

Rabchuk does believe that the projects could be completed using very little public money.

"We think there is some money available if we have plans that are well laid out," Rabchuk said.

"I think this is a great idea," Treasurer Bob Carne said. "We see it, and we agree that...we are underutilizing [the riverfront]."

In the end, the board agreed to join in the task force and, in concept, agreed to support financially without giving an exact amount.

Rabchuk mentioned that the hope is to have concrete plans completed for a project or projects by the end of 2014.

Rotary Club magically hosts fundraiser events

By Magdalena Bromberg

The St. Charles Rotary Club held a fundraiser in the form of three magic shows during Valentine's Day weekend. The magic shows were just one of the many fundraisers the club holds throughout the year in order to acquire funds for community projects and scholarships, according to Rotary Club President Bob Brown.

"This is one of the many ways we make money to benefit the people," said Brown. "In the past eight years, or so, we have given away over a \$100,000 in scholarship money."

The idea of doing a magic show for a fundraiser was put forth by one of the magicians and former Rotary Club President Scott Piner.

"I approached Bob about it," Piner said. "I did a similar show in Geneva and it went well."

In addition to persuading Brown and other Rotary Club members to move forward with the shows, Piner persuaded fellow magician and East sophomore Arman Sangalang to get involved, as well.

"I like performing," Sangalang said. "Magic is my outlet."

"We were both eager to work together," Piner said. "We both share an interest in magic."

Both Piner and Sangalang performed at each of the three magic shows, which were held over the weekend. According to Piner, both magicians worked together to carefully select tricks that were family friendly and inspiring.

"I hope people get interested in magic," Piner said. "It's a gift to be able to get hooked into something."

"I'm a fan of magic," attendee Mary Ellen Bielat said.

Both Piner and Sangalang are very eager to work together again very soon.

"We are hoping to do this again soon," Piner said. "If we could do this every month, it would be great."

All proceeds from each of the magic shows goes directly toward the Rotary Club's future community projects so that it may continue fulfilling its mission of "service before self."

Library Board receives construction plan update

By Christy Mazza

and felt that it was appropriate to donate these pieces to the library. This is