

COMMUNITY ISSUES

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# Mallards

space capacity.

This arrangement worked until this season's opening day.

On June 1, the Northside TownCenter's newest resident walked out of his store. "The lot in front of my store was full, but the store was empty."

Ron James, manager of the newly opened Pierce's Northside Market, realized he might have a problem.

"I went back inside and called the Bruns'. They said they would get right on it."

As James waited, the Bruns' contacted Vernon Steadman, the Mallards general manager. Even with all the hectic happenings of opening night, a meeting was held.

The next day, security and sawhorses guaranteed Pierce's parking. James was impressed.

"I could not believe how fast they worked. I've had no problems since that day, and I've got nothing but good to say about the organization."

As the season progressed, the attendance continued to grow. Soon other TownCenter businesses experienced the same concerns. The Mallards increased their security to keep the lots open.

When some expressed dislike of a uniformed security force scaring off customers, the Mallards got rid of the rent-a-cops and put their own college-age staff in Mallard's gear to mind the lot.

Other business had concerns too, but for now, Benvenuto's Italian Grill manager Laurie Ewoldt is content.

"We had a couple of bad days," she said, "but now we're seeing a spike in business on some game days. And you can't beat the name recognition. I mean, seven thousand people driving by your sign has got to be good."



Photo by Marcus Watson

"I used to live next to Wrigley Field," said Linda McDonnell, owner of Box Office Video.

"I know all about parking and fan problems. They're nothing compared to the benefits of a successful ballpark in your neighborhood. Any city would be ecstatic to have a team like the Mallards. People need to lighten up."

Any Mallards parking at the shopping center may be a thing of the past, however, when the all the storefronts are filled, which is the goal of the owners.

"We've told the Mayor and the Mallards that the long-term permanent parking plan cannot include using our shopping center," said Dave Bruns. "The success of our tenants comes first."

The City is considering renovating the Mallards Stadium and building a pool in Warner Park, and will face many parking challenges in the years to come.

At the July Northside Planning Council meeting, Steadman heard from residents about a variety of concerns regarding noise, parking, fan, alcohol and expansion issues. Noise from the weekly Saturday night concerts and the half dozen fireworks displays this summer can be heard as far as Cherokee Park to East Washington Avenue and west to Troy Gardens.

"We expect to be involved with the community for a long time," Steadman told residents when explaining the proposed renovation of the stadium in 2008—turning around the field, dropping the field about eight feet, improving the sound system, but keeping the capacity at 7500 people.

He said the Mallards hoped the City would pick up about a third of the cost.

## Rhythm & Booms to meet with the neighbors

The Madison Fireworks Fund's 2007-2011 agreement with the City of Madison calls for it to "meet with the three surrounding neighborhood associations, the Northside Business Association and the Northside Planning Council within a month of the event to review and discuss methods for improving the event for Warner Park's immediate neighbors."

Ald. Brian Benford asked that the meeting occur each year after residents raised a number of concerns prior to this summer's event.

### What in the world...?

Alert reader David Niehus had the correct answer for last issue's mystery picture:

"It's outside the County Human Services building on Northport.

The old nurses' dorm was cleared of most of the furniture and things, computer monitors included, probably to make room for records."



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