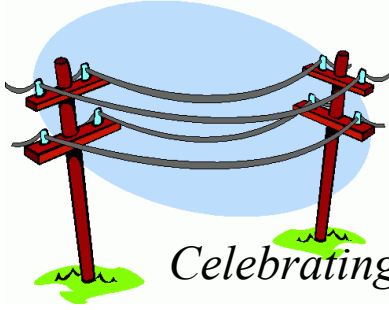


The

LEAVENWORTH

EXCHANGE



Celebrating together as friends and neighbors

Volume 25
Issue 10



October 2010

Guest Speaker October 21 Meeting Melinda Pearson

Ms. Pearson is the Director, Parks, Recreation and Public Property Department for the City of Omaha. She is an appointee by Mayor Suttle, moving up from Lincoln to take the position. The LNA is a unique association in that we have three separate parks within our boundaries. And of course the Turner Boulevard Trail runs through our neighborhood and will ultimately connect with the entire trail system. These areas are under her direction. Please attend and hear what Omaha has in store for our parks and recreation.

Topic to discuss can include parks maintenance, the potential of using the Dewey Park building as a Midtown Community Center, and the proposed dog park in Hanscom Park.

VA Homeless Project In Midtown

By Jim Thompson

The VA in collaboration with a group called Volunteers for America has plans to put up a new building at 39th and Pacific. This building will attempt to place 100 homeless veterans. It will also serve as offices for 26 VA Medical Center staff. If you have not heard of this project, I would be surprised. In August a public meeting was held that seemed to raise more questions than were answered.

Because of the complete lack of coordination with any neighborhood entity since the start of this project, the VA has decided to now form an advisory group from representatives of nearby neighborhood associations. Myself and Phil Abraham have put our names in the hat, but if anyone else is interested let us know. Another public meeting is planned for Oct. 14 at Field Club.

Why should the LNA be concerned about this project? First of all, the proposed tenants will most certainly become part of the fabric of the entire neighborhood. These folks will likely be looking for work, frequenting business establishments, etc. One of the questions I posed to the VA was what their plan is to assimilate these individuals into the neighborhood? We have a lot to offer with the green space, trail, businesses, restaurants, etc. Others at the public meeting questioned the congestion of housing so many people in such a small space. Remember the various "Housing Projects" that have been torn down in favor of scattered site housing? Alternatively to a 5-story structure, it was suggested to care for these people in a village concept, made up of a number of small housing units. By the way, the cost to the taxpayer is about \$1000 per month for a 320 square foot efficiency apartment.

We discussed this topic briefly at that last General Membership meeting. And I encourage continued discussion to meet the goals of assisting the cause of caring for the homeless veteran and maintaining the purpose of the neighborhood as defined in our by-laws.

Reminder! The next LNA meeting will be October 21, 2010, 7:00 PM at the VFW at 3302 Leavenworth St (in the meeting hall on the lower level). Enter on the south side main entrance facing Leavenworth OR on the north side to avoid using stairs **Mark it down!**

Letter From the President....

The cool fall air is a reminder that the lawn mowers will give way to the snow shovels. Also, it is a reminder that elections are near. And what is more important than our own association elections? I suppose you can look at all the campaign signs that our dotting the landscape and decide. Surprisingly, there are not that many. Good? Bad? Of course it depends on whether a candidate has any competition or not. Good? Bad? Depends on the candidate. Go out and vote.

And come to our next meeting on October 21. There is a LOT to talk about that affects our neighborhood and it is healthy to get everyone's opinion. The agenda is usually full and I will attempt to keep more on topic, but that doesn't preclude the invigorating post-meeting discussions.

You may note that this particular issue of the EXCHANGE has multiple by-lines of the same individual. For the record I do not want to make this look like the Jim Thompson newsletter. Sure, I enjoy writing and have found some time to commit. But I know there are lots of you who can also write. Show me. Topics are as wide as you want them to be. And the technology of today makes it sooooo much easier.

Speaking of volunteerism..... You receive this newsletter because you belong to a special group of neighbors and business associates. The LNA has seen tremendous growth in the past few years with the investment of Urban Village, Midtown Crossing and of course the many improvements done by the individual homeowner or businessman. There is a lot more than we need to do to sustain a comfortable level of living and it takes volunteers in our non-profit group to make it happen. Please find an hour or two each month and help out. Thank you.

Jim Thompson

Want to receive The Exchange by e-mail?

Simply send an email message to zippijd@aol.com and request that you'd like to start receiving the electronic version of the LNA newsletter. Each month, you will be sent a full color pdf version of the newsletter ahead of the print mailing.

Stairway Project Update

By Jim Thompson

On a beautiful fall morning John Costanzo, Carol Haas and Bill Kline converged at the base of the stairway at "Snake Hill" to expand the retaining wall. As of this writing, the top caps need to be cut and glued on and a good load of dirt behind the east side would help. But the expansion has given the area a better view.

This project was the result of a Mayor's grant on beautifying the area. As one would expect, there are some other improvements in this area that can enhance the presence of this stairwell. Additional trimming and removal of trees would be first, with additional ground cover planted to help with erosion.

Originally this was a joint project with Field Club Homeowner's League. The LNA has taken a lead role on this project and continues to provide manpower to tackle these improvements.

Dewey Avenue Beautification Effort

By Jim Thompson

You may recall that on September 2 a group of volunteers from Mutual of Omaha descended upon the intersection of 33rd and Dewey to trim the ugly, overgrown weeds and trees along the fence of Dewey Park. The job proved too big for one day. Four volunteers showed up, again, and on October 2 continued to tear down trees and rip out weeds. The names that we remember are Kevin Balvin, Dave Tytkowski, and Tim Heuertz. My apologies for not writing down the name of the fourth.

The city has since picked up the many piles of compostable material that we placed in the street. And we did some chainsaw magic on the inside of the fence to glean back the vegetation. Those small trees will compost where they are.

Our thanks to the generous energy the guys from Mutual displayed for the benefit of our neighborhood. Thank you to Carol Haas for taking the lead on this and getting her hands dirty and to John Costanzo and Anne Meysenburg who gave their time as well.

Information for Contributors

To contribute to *the Exchange*, please contact
Jim Thompson, zippijd@aol.com.
 Deadline for the November issue is
November 4, 2010.
 Content submitted may be edited as needed.

Snow Removal Plan

By Jim Thompson

The city has announced plans to deal with snow removal this winter. I hope it works. Because of the age of our neighborhood, it will not be easy to adapt to no parking on an even sided street, or getting every car off the street in case of a huge snow event. But we have to give it a try.

Obviously it will take cooperation and patience during these events. The dividends will be paid the entire winter season as streets become safely passable.

To prepare for implementation of the plan there we be an upcoming sweep of the streets that will target dead and unlicensed vehicles. Of course these should not be on the streets anyway, but now is the time to move them out. If you need to report one, call the Mayor's Hotline at 444-5555

Board Elections Coming

The terms of Anne Meysenburg and Zack Johnson expire in November and our by-laws require an election to fill these two year slots. [Neither Anne nor Zack have indicated one way or another their upcoming candidacy for continuation on the Board as of this writing]. From the by-laws: "each adult (18 years or older, 2 maximum per family or business) who has paid dues and lives, owns property, or owns/operates a business within the boundaries of the Association shall be eligible to vote on Association matters." This, of course, includes the eligibility requirements of serving on the Board.

If there is anyone out there wishing to be a candidate please come forward and the November issue of the EXCHANGE will list the ballot. Thank you.

Midwest "Nice"

By Jim Thompson

I'm at Larson Cement Products arranging the purchase of the retaining wall block for the stairway enhancement project. It's too late for them to deliver on that day and staff is not available for a Saturday delivery. I'm thinking multiple trips in my Ford F150 is the only way out and what the heck, I can always use the exercise of lifting 50 pound blocks.

Bill Hickey is behind me, waiting his turn to be served. He cannot help to overhear this dilemma, and unabashedly says, "I'll deliver it, I'm going that way anyway."

Cool. Mr. Hickey has a much bigger truck and is owner of A Garden Paradise Landscaping. And no, he did not offer this in hopes of getting this free publicity. He didn't know we have a newsletter. He didn't know I could give him a write-up. He did it because he is a darn nice guy.

Originally from Chicago, he has settled in the Omaha/Council Bluffs area because he likes it. It took a simple act on a nice fall day to convince me that in addition to the claim on his card "Changing the Vision of Landscaping", his attitude incorporates our own masthead, "Celebrating Together As Friends and Neighbors".

If you need any work done such as water features, retaining walls, horticultural maintenance, etc., check out www.agardenparadiselandscaping.com or give Bill Hickey a call at 712-322-0927 or 402-651-0741. His email address: bill@agardenparadiselandscaping.com and he does residential and commercial.

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Dog Park Update

By John Williams

A small group of us met with Melinda Pearson, Omaha Director of Parks, Recreation and Public Property and staff on September 24th. We began by discussing a few of the criteria the Parks and Recreation would look for in order to have a successful dog park:

- Minimum space required of 100' x 100' for a single dog park.
- Minimum space required of 100' x 200' for a split dog park.
- Off-street parking required near dog park.
- Due to runoff issues, dog park cannot be close to bodies of water.
- Dog park should not be directly adjacent to a neighborhood.
- Air-lock entrance into park.
- Fencing around existing trees so they are not destroyed by urine.

A 100' x 100' space is roughly ¼ acre. This is a relatively small space compared to the Hefflinger Park dimensions. The all dog area is about 5 acres and the small dog area is 2.5 acres. The 100' x 100' foot area was used as a point of reference on a map the Parks and Recreation Department provided for the meeting. The space helped us gain perspective of space within Hanscom Park and fencing costs. Our intention is to make the park larger than 100' x 100' and to have a separate small dog area.

Melinda described some of the roles and responsibilities that are shared between the City of Omaha and Omaha Dog Park Advocates at Hefflinger Park.

City of Omaha: fence maintenance (once established), trash collection, mulch/rock entrance area into dog park, water lines (once established), mowing.

continued on Page 7

Is Henri Matisse Loose In The Neighborhood? Or..... Who Is George Seurat??

By Jim Thompson

Over the last few years we have seen a wonderful increase in the amount of public art displayed in our neighborhood. The mural on the handball court at Dewey Park is likely the most prominent piece. However it competes nicely with the wall on Family Dollar at 35th and Leavenworth. Add to these is the mural on the north side of Inflight Productions and the new piece on the soon to be open Sidedoor Lounge at 35th & Leavenworth.

Can one conclude that the spirit of Kent Bellows is walking around the neighborhood, subtly injecting an influence into our space? Nice thought.

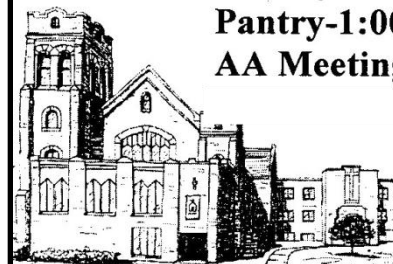
In addition to these outside projects, one must take in the treasures that are displayed within the walls of our business neighbors. I have always been fascinated by the large photographs of "the old days" hanging inside Security National Bank on 35th & Farnam. And the display of scenes, photos and military memorabilia at VFW Post 247 at 33rd & Leavenworth adds a special tone to the patriotism we hold dear. Given these examples, who would think that Bud Olson's Bar can now be added to the inventory?

The mural is almost complete and you will be amazed. Paula Naikelis is almost completed with her commission. Stop in, check it out. The pool room will never be the same with such an impression that surrounds the space.

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AA Meetings-7:00 pm Mon.



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for Christ*

Community Awareness Update from the OMAHA POLICE

September 20, 2010

There has been an increase of auto thefts in the southeast precinct.

Here are some tips to help prevent your vehicle from being stolen:

- Always LOCK your vehicle and take the keys with you
- NEVER leave the windows rolled down
- NEVER leave valuables in plain sight
- DO NOT hide a second key in the vehicle
- Activate any anti- theft device available
- Never leave the vehicle running unattended
- Park your vehicle in the garage (if possible) or in a well lit area - Don't forget to LOCK it!
- Keep your garage door opener with you and don't leave it in plain view
- DO NOT leave your vehicle title in the vehicle - This makes it easy for a thief to resell it
- If you buy a vehicle from a private party, make sure you can locate them after sale
- Check the VIN# to see if it has been tampered with and make sure it matches the title
- Check your plates frequently to make sure no one has replaced them with stolen plates
- Do not pick up hitchhikers
- Report any suspicious activity or persons to 911

Practice overall security Contact the Crime Prevention Specialist in your precinct to start a Neighborhood Watch Group and receive additional crime prevention tips

Please contact 911 if you see any suspicious behavior in your neighborhood.

If you have additional information regarding these crimes, or other crimes contact Crime Stoppers at 444-STOP, submit a web tip to www.OmahaCrimeStoppers.com or text "OPD" to 274637 (CRIMES)



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General Membership Meeting

October 21, 2010

DRAFT Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Introductions
3. Guest Speaker - Melinda Pearson
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Secretary's Report
6. Committee Reports:
 - A. Parks - Jim T
 - B. Jackson School - Carol H.
 - C. Social - John C.
 - D. Membership - Zack J.
 - E. MNA - Anne M. / Zack J.
 - F. SONA - Carol H.
7. Old Business
 - A. Retaining Wall Project
 - B. Homeless Veterans Project
8. New Business
 - A. Jerry Reimers - Urban Village Project
 - B. Christmas Cheer
 - C. Shari's Walking Cane/Gentleman's Club
9. Announcements

•Purchase •Refinance •Debt Consolidation



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NEWS RELEASE

The sanctuary at First Central Congregational Church, United Church of Christ is now open Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for prayer and meditation. Located at 421 South 36th Street, on the corner of 36th and Harney, First Central invites you to take a break from the stresses of the day for a period of quiet contemplation.

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Dog Park continued from Page 4

Omaha Dog Park Advocates: all signage at entrance and within park, plastic bags for dog waste clean-up, jugs to hold plastic bags, cost to run water lines and water fountain, cost to fence perimeter of park.

After reviewing the criteria and roles/responsibilities, it was discussed that the north-central section of Hanscom Park may be the best space for a dog park. The Parks and Recreations Department staff indicated potential funding, available as early as Spring 2011, could be available in the budget to increase off-street parking by adding additional 90 degree parking along the road directly east of the greenhouse. The parking lots directly north and south of the greenhouse could also act as appropriate off-street parking to accommodate dog park visitors. Additionally, an abandoned asphalt path runs through the area. As part of a potential long-term plan, the old path could be improved and appropriated for use by dog park visitors who are walking to/from the street into the park. The space was large with established trees. The space is far enough inside the park and sits below street level to not distract neighboring homes.

The greatest cost associated with the creation of a dog park is fencing. The Parks and Recreation Department staff stated we should expect a 6' fence for a 100' x 100' area with an air-lock entrance would cost between \$6k - \$8k. One of the advantages the Hefflinger Dog Park had was the existing fencing from the ball fields.

Our meeting concluded with a discussion regarding a few sources for funding. With multiple neighborhood associations represented by the Midtown Dog Park group, we recognized that each neighborhood may be able to apply for similar grants. A few suggestions for grant applications included: Mayor's grant, Mutual of Omaha, Kiewit Foundation, Keller Williams, Parks Foundation .

Overall, our meeting was very informative and productive. The Parks and Recreation Department was enthusiastic about the potential location. We have a better understanding of some of the challenges that were overcome during the creation of the Hefflinger Dog Park. We also have a better understanding of the roles / responsibilities of The City and The Community.

Our next step will be to meet with leadership from Omaha Dog Park Advocates to determine if we join their group to build and maintain our dog park or if we need to create our own group through our neighborhood associations. Once we have made that decision, we can begin planning the design of the dog park with the Parks and Recreation Department, start grant writing, and initiate fundraising.

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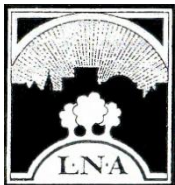
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Who We Are

A neighborhood association advocating growth and pride for families and business in the heart of the city -- working to provide a safe, attractive, and welcoming environment in which to live, work, and play. The LNA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

Our Board Members

President: Jim Thompson Phone: 342-4371
 Email: zippijd@aol.com
 Vice-President: Anne Meysenburg Phone: 707-3979
 Email: anne@kentbellows.org
 Secretary: John Costanzo Phone: 344-3867
 Email: costanzoj@cox.net
 Treasurer: Zach Johnson
 Email: znj@mac.com
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 Email: abesway101@aol.com

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LNA boundaries: East - 29th St., North - Dodge St.,
 South - Pacific St., West - 36th St.