

# WEST PLAZA

## NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



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### Mark Your Calendar ☒

#### Upcoming General Meeting

Tuesday, November 17, 7-8 p.m.

Swinney Dual Language Elementary School  
1106 West 47th Street

- ✓ Guest Speaker: TBA
- ✓ Nominations for 2010 Officers & Board
- ✓ Renew your membership for 2010
- ✓ Drawing for \$25 Gift Card

At this important meeting, we will be taking nominations for the 2010 officers and board members of the WPNA. If you would like to become more involved in the workings of your neighborhood, consider joining the board. What does the board do? Read the following article.

As of this printing, our speaker has yet to be determined. Please check the website, [westplaza.org](http://westplaza.org), for updates.

Bring your checkbook to the meeting to renew your membership for the coming year. And bring your good luck charm for the door prize drawing!

### Top 10 Reasons for Being (or Becoming) a Member of the West Plaza Neighborhood Association: What the WPNA does for West Plaza

by Kevin Pinkowski

It's time to renew your membership in the West Plaza Neighborhood Association for 2010. To remind you why you might want to maintain your membership – or become a member if you are not one already – we put together a Top Ten list for you.

❶ **WPNA Clean-Up.** Twice a year, two dumpsters are placed along Wyoming next to Westwood Park for the exclusive use of West Plaza residents. One is for yard waste, and one for large, bulky items, neither of which is easily disposed of in KCMO. Judging by the overwhelming participation, residents really value this service. The WPNA, in cooperation with the city, pays for the receptacles and provides volunteers to staff these “dumpster events.”

❷ **General Meetings.** Six times a year, the WPNA hosts a general meeting, held at Swinney School. We have guest speakers about pertinent topics, city officials and police staff, door prizes, and updates on topics that are important to residents. The WPNA board members plan, publicize, coordinate, and lead the meetings.

❸ **Bi-monthly Newsletters.** Every other month, the WPNA board members provide a newsletter to inform neighbors of activities, disseminate safety information, and in general, keep neighbors connected to neighbors. It takes no small effort to plan and write the articles, edit and format the newsletter, email an electronic version to members, have it printed (free of charge thanks to Print Tekk, our neighborhood printer), and distribute copies to the entire West Plaza. It takes a significant amount of time and coordination on the part of board members and a group of great volunteers who bring each issue straight to your door.

❹ **Important Municipal Topics.** The WPNA board keeps an ear to the ground, paying attention to what's going on in our city. If we hear about events, initiatives, or programs that affect our neighborhood, we do our best to inform you, the residents, in order to maintain the quality of our neighborhood.

(Continued on p. 2)

⑥ **West Plaza Garden.** The piece of land bounded by 46th Street, Jarboe, and Roanoke is an amenity born completely from volunteer time and community donations. In one short year, it was transformed from a barren scrap of ground covered with leaves, trash, and scrub brush, to a beautiful garden, overflowing with wildflowers and butterflies. It's presently resting for the winter, but next spring, go check it out - it's fantastic!

⑥ **Banners & Signs.** You may have noticed that we have bright blue banners on utility poles along 43rd Street, 45th Street, and 47th Street, and blue and white wooden West Plaza signs around the perimeter of our neighborhood. The WPNA initiated the effort to create and install these visual reminders that welcome visitors and let them know we take pride in our neighborhood.

⑦ **West Plaza Website.** Thanks to Matt Nugent, our webmaster, we now have a web presence ([westplaza.org](http://westplaza.org)) through which we can stay in touch with each other and make ourselves known to others.

⑧ **Annual Neighborhood Picnic.** Every spring, on the day of the neighborhood clean-up, the WPNA hosts a picnic in the Westwood Park pavilion. There's food, a pinata, games, prizes, music, and entertainment. The WPNA solicits donations, plans, organizes, and coordinates this event to promote neighborly relations and association membership.

⑨ **Garage Sale Ads.** Every year, we advertise a Saturday during the summer when anyone interested in hosting a garage sale can take advantage of WPNA-funded ads in the newspaper and on the web.

⑩ **PIAC Requests.** The WPNA submits requests to the Public Improvements Advisory Council to fund neighborhood improvements each year. We are currently taking project suggestions (go to [www.kcmo.org](http://www.kcmo.org) for more information). As an organization, we take the time to organize, compose, and submit the requests for you.

★ And finally, as Wilford Brimley used to say, "It's just the right thing to do!" For the amazingly low annual price of \$12 for households and \$25 for businesses, you can support the organization that supports your neighborhood! ■

Complete and mail the application form on page 6 with a check to join or to renew your membership.

## Safety during the Holidays

The holidays are a time when thieves are frequently on the prowl. Here are some tips to help keep your home, your car, your possessions, and your family safe.

### Keeping Your Home Safe

- We all want our homes to reflect the joy of the season, but avoid displaying gifts where they can be seen from a window or doorway.
- Arrange to have packages delivered to a neighbor if you're not home to receive them. Packages left on porches or doorsteps are "easy picking" for thieves. It also draws unwanted attention to your home.
- Use simple outside decorations. Elaborate or large pieces are often stolen right off the lawn.
- Be sure not to obscure the view from your windows. Keep a clear view of your property.
- Always lock your home's doors and windows, even if you're only gone for a few minutes.
- Compact or dispose of packaging discreetly. Often criminals will spot something you've discarded and can target you for their next burglary or theft.
- When leaving town, have a trusted friend or neighbor take care of your home. Never cancel general deliveries such as mail, newspapers, and other services when leaving town or going on vacation.

### Staying Safe While Shopping

- Always lock your car and close the windows, even if you're only gone a few moments. When possible, lock all merchandise or packages in the trunk of your car. Do this before departing, not at your destination. Someone may be watching and waiting for you to leave your car.
- Shop with at least one partner. Have your car or house key in your hand as you approach the door. If attacked, use those keys as weapons.
- Stay alert to your surroundings and the people around you. Look inside your car and around it as you approach.
- Carry your purse under your arm and your wallet in an inside pocket. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. ■

## **Garden Report: Getting Ready for Winter**

by Ed O'Donnell, Gardener-in-Chief

As the growing season draws to a close (it will be well over by the time you read this), I'm looking back on the West Plaza garden's first summer. My main goal for this first season was to make the garden look good quickly with annuals, and later to plant the perennials that will keep it low maintenance and beautiful in years to come.

Well, I succeeded with the quick beauty, I believe. The vegetation was lush. And huge. By late August you may have noticed that the cosmos were between 5 and 7 feet tall, and they blocked the view of the other garden inhabitants. Since the sunflowers were even taller, at least you could see them; it was the rest of the garden that was hidden. Neighbors who explored the path were either captivated by the walls of green and orange or intimidated by the feeling of enclosure.

On September 30, Sharon Pendleton and I removed about 75 percent of the cosmos and most of the sunflowers, leaving the remainder as food for the birds – the seed heads were not quite empty. We generated 12 bags of debris that KCMO Parks and Recreation promptly removed (thank you very much!). The following Saturday, Sharon, her son Dave, and I returned to remove the rest of the cosmos and planted blackberry lily, fall glade onion, Indian Physic, and a few other perennials. We also added more mulch in the bare spots. Earlier in the week Sharon had planted prairie dropseed, a perennial native grass, along Roanoke and Jarboe.

One of the annuals that will be returning next year will be parsley. Though this wasn't such a great year for butterflies, I did see one caterpillar munching on some parsley (which was the reason it was planted), along with a sphinx moth and various butterflies on the butterfly bushes and zinnias. Both the goldfinches and the squirrels enjoyed the sunflowers' seeds. One sight I will never forget: when Sharon and I were removing the cosmos and two praying mantises hopped onto her back. I figured they were "begging mantises," since they were no doubt begging us to stop destroying their hunting grounds. Though they were upset, I feel the area

is clearly more beneficial to both nature and the West Plaza than it was at this time last year.

Joe Montanari has agreed to take on the design/build task of the proposed monument and sign at the north end of the garden. The plan and paperwork for the coming year has been submitted, approved, and filed. You can see the design on our website, [westplaza.org](http://westplaza.org).

We will have another garden clean-up day in November or early December; watch the website or contact me (816-531-4692) if you would like to be part of the crew. ■

## **Good Neighbor Awards**

by Craig Cotton

On October 10, the City of Kansas City held its third annual Good Neighbor Awards ceremony. These awards recognize city residents who have provided a substantial service to the community in different neighborhoods. We may be too late for this year's city awards, but I want to nominate Joe Montanari and Ed O' Donnell for our own West Plaza Good Neighbor awards for their hard work on the West Plaza Garden at 46th and Roanoke Parkway.

Months ago, I saw Joe pulling up to the triangular-shaped island in his vintage pickup with a load of rocks brought from a friend's farm for the walkway that he designed and built. It was just the first of many trips he made over numerous weekends. Sometimes I helped unload; sometimes others did. Joe was always there, leading the way, setting the example. Each stone was arranged artistically (Joe is a jewelry designer). If a stone did not belong, it was discarded. Before you knew it, we had a pathway across the island and a large stone where someone could rest while waiting for the bus.

Ed O'Donnell used his skill as a draftsman to create the layout for the pathway and plantings. Working with a modest budget, he and Sharon Pendleton produced a garden of dramatic proportions in an initial season. Some people provided water. Joe Padilla planted a tree and many bulbs and flowers. But on most Saturdays and some Sundays it was Ed, somewhere on our island, hands on the ground, feet in the mud, turning a plan into a reality.

Thank you, Ed and Joe! ■

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## The Battle of Westport, Part 2

by Joe Montanari

*Continued from the September-October issue*

...The Union generals were puzzled. How could they take the ridge?

That is when an old German farmer named George Thoman showed up at the hotel and asked to speak to General Curtis. It seems that the Confederates had stopped by his farm, located near the present day Forest Hill Cemetery, and had taken all his horses. At first, Thoman accepted the loss of his horses with resignation. But among the horses was a pregnant mare. Thoman asked the Confederate soldiers not to take the mare, as she was ready to deliver her foal, but they ignored him and took the horse anyway.

This riled Thoman enough that he walked all the way to Westport and advised the Union command that there was a small ravine that led from Brush Creek up to the high ground. Union infantry troops could sneak up through the ravine single-file, unseen by the Confederates and protected by the rocky outcroppings on both sides. Today, the ravine is known as High Drive, and it joins Ward Parkway with Sunset Drive, just west of the Fairmont Hotel. The Union generals took Thoman's advice and marched an entire infantry brigade up the narrow declivity. When they reached the top and poked their heads out through the trees, they found that they were right on top of a Confederate artillery battery.

The Union soldiers sprang out from the trees and captured a Confederate field gun, which was already primed and loaded. Turning the gun to the east, they used it to take out another Confederate artillery battery. This opened up a huge gap in the Confederate line, and the Union troops poured onto the field. Thoroughly routed, the Confederates retreated south, not daring to stop until they reached Mahaffie Farm, near Olathe, where they paused for the night, and then continued on all the way to safety in Arkansas. The Confederate army never returned to Missouri. This decisive Union victory at Westport ensured that Price would never be able to recruit more Confederate volunteers in Missouri, thus ending the war west of the Mississippi once and for all.

(Continued on p. 6)

## FOCUS Progress Report

by Matt Nugent

In the fall of 1999, West Plaza residents met with members of the City Planning and Development Department as part of the city's FOCUS Kansas City program, whose goal was to solicit feedback and ideas from community members and get them involved in improving their neighborhoods. Much has changed in the ten years since the FOCUS meeting, making it a good time to see what has been accomplished and what remains to be done.

West Plaza residents were not shy about sharing their concerns and suggestions for the neighborhood. At the time, Westwood Park was the focus of a lot of their attention. Complaints included the condition of the playground equipment, the amount of litter, and the need for dog owners to do a better job picking up after their dogs. Since 1999, most of these problems have been addressed, both by the city and by the WPNA. We received new playground equipment several years ago, and construction is underway for improved pathways and a new shelter building on the State Line side of the park. And, thanks to additional trash cans and cooperation on the part of dog owners, the park is now one of the best unofficial "dog parks" in the city.

Traffic in the neighborhood was a hot topic at the FOCUS meeting. Cars speeding near Swinney and Purple Dragon schools were at the top of the list of problem areas, along with traffic coming from Roanoke and Westport Roads onto side streets. Several traffic-calming measures were suggested, including flashing yellow lights at each school, 4-way stop signs on 47th Street, and speed bumps on side streets. The stop signs have been added, and discussions with the city about the lights and speed bumps continue.

Many problems have been solved. Curbs and gutters have been repaired, rental properties have been better maintained, and empty or abandoned buildings have been rehabilitated or torn down. All of this was done while holding onto the assets that residents identified at the FOCUS meeting: attractive homes, friendly neighbors, and a diverse and walkable neighborhood.

(Continued on p. 6)

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2009 West Plaza Neighborhood Association Financial Information		
EXPENDITURES	ACTUAL 2008	ACTUAL 2009
<b>Association Operations</b>		
Post office box rental	56.00	58.00
Annual report to Secretary of State	20.00	10.00
General insurance	306.00	306.00
	<b>\$ 382.00</b>	<b>\$ 374.00</b>
<b>General Membership Meetings</b>		
Beverages	8.40	
Door prizes	101.06	50.00
	<b>\$ 109.46</b>	<b>\$ 50.00</b>
<b>Clean Sweep</b>		
KCMO dumpsters	200.00	220.00
Drinks	4.20	
	<b>\$ 204.20</b>	<b>\$ 220.00</b>
<b>Picnic</b>		
Food from Marsh's	46.96	37.99
Music		100.00
Paper Products		55.64
Porta potty		75.00
Door prize		25.00
Piñata	52.58	47.00
	<b>\$ 101.56</b>	<b>\$ 340.63</b>
<b>Yard Sale</b>		
Fliers		11.89
Kansas City Star ad		27.25
		<b>39.14</b>
<b>Recognition</b>		
Volunteer brunch	184.08	86.67
Recognition awards	90.00	48.33
	<b>\$ 274.08</b>	<b>\$ 135.00</b>
<b>Office Expenses</b>		
Phone calling minutes	50.00	
File box	14.99	
Miscellaneous	16.78	
	<b>\$ 81.77</b>	
<b>Newsletters</b>		
Postage	398.39	254.52
Copies		12.00
Labels	11.00	
	<b>\$ 409.39</b>	<b>\$ 276.52</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Expenses</b>		
Sponsor Dance in the Park	100.00	100.00
Other postage	11.89	28.68
Donations	100.00	
West Plaza Garden	559.18	145.05
copies		6.33
Park Patrol July 4		280.00
Reimbursement		50.00
	<b>\$ 771.07</b>	<b>\$ 610.06</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 2,333.53</b>	<b>\$ 2,045.35</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Membership dues	2,125.00	1,939.00
Donations	1,142.00	44.00
Newsletter ads	35.00	440.00
Garden fund	690.00	588.00
Westwood Park Patrol 7-4-09		140.00
Block Party Donation		65.00
Investment interest	49.34	10.96
	<b>\$ 4,041.34</b>	<b>\$ 3,206.96</b>
<b>NET INCOME OR (LOSS)</b>	<b>\$ 1,707.81</b>	<b>\$ 1,161.61</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
	Dec. 18, 2008	Dec. 18, 2008
Checking Account	2,288.30	3,438.95
Money Market	7,191.09	7,202.05
	<b>\$ 9,479.39</b>	<b>\$ 10,641.00</b>

## The United States Census and You

by Brad McCormack

"[An] Enumeration shall be made within three Years after the first Meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent Term of ten Years, in such Manner as they shall by Law direct."

From these words of the Constitution comes one of the biggest financial undertakings of the Federal Government – the United States Census. Every 10 years the government begins the enormous task of counting every man, woman, and child in the United States. This count will not only determine congressional districts, possibly adding or subtracting a Congressman from Missouri, but will also provide information that will determine how much a city receives from the government in funding and subsidies.

Soon you will receive paperwork in your mail asking for information regarding you and your family. There is one easy way to ensure that you are counted – FILL IT OUT. This not only saves the government time and money, but it will save you from having a friendly census worker knock on your door. Without your input, the West Plaza neighborhood of Kansas City may miss out on financial backing from our local, state and federal governments. Please do your part to make sure we're counted accurately. ■



For safety tips and up-to-date information on current scams and criminal activity in Kansas City, join the email list of Master Patrol Officer James Schriever: [James.Schriever@kcpd.org](mailto:James.Schriever@kcpd.org).

## The Battle of Westport, Part 2

(Continued from p. 4)

The Battle of Westport was significant in other ways. Union reinforcements arriving from Fort Leavenworth marched from the post road to Westport Road, and then south on State Line to the front along Brush Creek.

Among the units arriving from Fort Leavenworth was the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was made up of fugitive slaves from Missouri and Arkansas. The First Kansas was already a seasoned unit by October of 1864, having distinguished themselves in several previous battles. The Battle of Westport was the first time they were commanded by black commanding officers, Lieutenant Patrick Minor and Captain William Matthews. It was the first time in the history of the United States military that any combat unit was commanded by a black officer. By all accounts, the First Kansas fought with distinction again that day.

More than 30,000 soldiers fought in the Battle of Westport, and more than 3,000 died that fateful weekend,

### West Plaza Neighborhood Association 2009 Officers & Board Members

<b>President</b>	Joe Montanari	<a href="mailto:montanarijewelers@swbell.net">montanarijewelers@swbell.net</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Kevin Pinkowski	<a href="mailto:kpinkowski@yahoo.com">kpinkowski@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Marlene Toms	<a href="mailto:marlenetoms@att.net">marlenetoms@att.net</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Ed O'Donnell	<a href="mailto:a2delno@zeronet.com">a2delno@zeronet.com</a>

#### Board Members at Large:

Rie Clark	<a href="mailto:cclark1@kcmsd.net">cclark1@kcmsd.net</a>
Craig Cotton	<a href="mailto:craigclothes@kc.rr.com">craigclothes@kc.rr.com</a>
Brad McCormack	<a href="mailto:b_mccormack320@yahoo.com">b_mccormack320@yahoo.com</a>
Julie Tenenbaum, Newsletter Editor	<a href="mailto:jatkc@aol.com">jatkc@aol.com</a>
John Toms	<a href="mailto:johntoms@att.net">johntoms@att.net</a>

## FOCUS Progress Report

(Continued from p. 4)

In the years since the report came out, the FOCUS program seems to have slipped off the City's radar screen. Fortunately, the West Plaza Neighborhood Association continues to tackle these and other problems in the neighborhood. If you'd like to help, just stop by our next meeting! ■

roughly 1,500 on each side. Many are buried in Union Cemetery, near 27th and Main Street, and others at Forest Hill Cemetery.

Sources: "Retracing the Civil War Battle of Westport" by Karon Tripp; "The Battle of Westport, Oct. 21-23, 1864," by Fred L. Lee; *Jackson County Pioneers*, by Pearl Wilcox; and Wikipedia. ■

## Join Your Neighbors in the WPNA!

Please fill out the information below and return along with your check to:

West Plaza Neighborhood Association ▪ P.O. Box 32826 ▪ Kansas City, MO 64171-7826 ▪ [www.westplaza.org](http://www.westplaza.org)

Check One: New [  ] Renewal [  ]

Check One: Household (\$12) [  ] Senior (\$7) [  ] Business (\$25) [  ]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Business Member Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help the neighborhood with:

Picnic [  ] Property Maintenance/Zoning [  ]

Yard Sale [  ] Neighborhood Clean-up [  ]

Crime Prevention [  ] Meeting Refreshments [  ]

Newsletter Distribution [  ] Gardening [  ]

[November-December 2009 Newsletter]

\*Bi-monthly newsletters are sent via email. Also, emails are sent periodically to announce neighborhood meetings, events, and safety alerts. We will not share your email address with any other individual or entity.

## Don't Wear It Anymore?

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### **Fran Peek Ryan, Ph.D.** Licensed Psychologist (Missouri)

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Kansas City, MO 64112 Fax (816) 931-9706  
Email: [drfranryan@yahoo.com](mailto:drfranryan@yahoo.com) Cell (816) 304-5085

- In-home sessions (Missouri only)
- Workplace sessions (Missouri only)
- Telephone sessions

Newsletter layout is provided compliments of Final Draft Secretarial Service. Printing is provided by Print Tekk Printing and Mailing. Both are West Plaza neighborhood businesses and members of the WPNA.

# DESIGNER

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Edited by Julie A. Tenenbaum  
Address: 4401 Genessee, KC, MO 64111  
Phone: 816-931-2276 email: [jatkc@aol.com](mailto:jatkc@aol.com)

Submit suggestions for newsletter articles or association activities to Julie at her email address. You must include your name and your contact information for your suggestion to be considered. Articles may be edited for length, accuracy, and grammar. The submitter's name will be used only if permission is granted.

Advertising rates (display ad other than listing in business membership):

Business card size	\$25 per issue
Quarter page	\$35 per issue
Half page	\$50 per issue
Full page	\$100 per issue

Please support the businesses that support your neighborhood!

## WPNA Business Members

A \$25 Business Membership includes your name and contact information in each WPNA newsletter.

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\* New Member this month

For up-to-date information about neighborhood activities  
or to contact us, visit our website: [www.westplaza.org](http://www.westplaza.org)