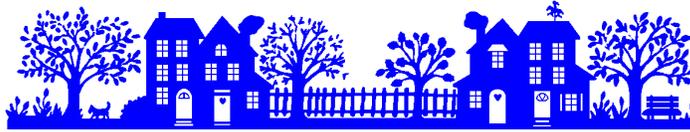


WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, January 18, 2011, 7-8 p.m.
Immanuel Lutheran Church
1700 Westport Road

Please note the new location of the upcoming General Meeting. Master Patrol Officer Jim Schriever, KCPD Liaison to the West Plaza, will be our guest speaker at this meeting, and Mr. John Crawford, candidate for City Council, will also address our members.



In addition, elections for the 2011 West Plaza Neighborhood Association Officers and Board of Directors will be held. Nominations will remain open until the evening of

the election. Current nominees are as follows:

President: Joe Montanari (incumbent)
Secretary: Open
Treasurer: Marlene Toms (incumbent)
Membership: Annie McCormack (incumbent)
At Large:
Rachel Frances
Brad McCormack (incumbent)
Stephanie Murrell
Matt Nugent (incumbent)
Julie Tenenbaum (incumbent)
John Toms (incumbent)

Those who were members in 2010 as well as new members in 2011 are eligible to vote. Each household or business membership is allowed one vote for each of the nine board positions. Please come and cast your vote for the future leadership of the WPNA.

A drawing for a \$25 gift card will conclude the meeting. ■

2011 WPNA Calendar

General Membership Meetings (7-8 p.m.)
New Location: Immanuel Lutheran Church
1700 Westport Road (*use the North-most door on the West side of the church*)

WPNA general membership meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the third Tuesday of odd numbered months.

January 18	September 20
March 15	November 15
July 19	January 17, 2012

Volunteer Thank You Event:

Saturday, February 5

Spring Cleanup & Picnic:

Saturday, May 14 (Westwood Park)

Neighborhood Yard Sales:

Saturday, June 4

Free for All:

Saturday, June 11 (location TBA)

Dance in the Park: Saturday, September 10, 6:30 p.m. (Roanoke Park)

Fall Cleanup: Saturday, October 8 (Westwood Park)

Why are KC Elections Held in April?

Everybody knows that elections come in November, so why are signs popping up now all over town about City Council and Mayor? And why are none of the candidates Republican or Democrat? You can trace this system back to one man: "Boss" Tom Pendergast. In the early part of the 20th century, Kansas City had a City Council made up of two Houses (just like Congress) and a large number of Councilmen. The Council was run by a powerful Mayor, elected by the City. Boss Tom was the major political boss of Kansas City in the 1930s and 1940s. His "Rabbits" dominated the political landscape and were linked to the most rampant government corruption in

(Continued on page 6)

Three Indicators of a Stroke

You may have been the recipient of an email making the rounds about three signs of a stroke that, if recognized, can facilitate getting the victim to a hospital as quickly as possible. The American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, verifies that the “three signs” are true.

In an article published in February 2003, the ASA says that this 60-second, 3-question test used by professionals can help determine whether someone may be experiencing a stroke. It has been found that the test can also be used by non-medically trained people to identify three stroke symptoms.

The three questions given to the suspected stroke sufferers are:

- Can you raise your arms and keep them up?
- Can you smile?
- Can you repeat a simple sentence?

Any sign of weakness in the face, slurred speech, or weakness or numbness in the limbs should be evaluated by medical professionals immediately. If stroke victims are given proper help within three hours of the stroke, their ability to recover is greatly increased.

FYI, this information was verified by the website Truthorfiction.com, a service that you can use to check out those questionable emails that float into your cyberspace ever so often. Snopes.com is another resource that can be used for the same purpose. Before you forward an email to “all the people in your address book,” be sure you’re not sending out misinformation by checking it out at one of these sites. ■

Warning Signs of Fraud

- Sounds too good to be true
- Pressures you to act “right away”
- Guarantees success
- Promises unusually high returns
- Requires an upfront investment - even for a “free” prize
- Buyers want to overpay you for an item and have you send them the difference
- Doesn’t have the look of a real business

Safety Tips from Jim Schriever, KCPD

During this holiday season, remember that criminals are “shopping” as well. Their “shopping” involves looking into vehicles to see if items of value are left in plain view or covered up. They also “shop” curbside recycling bins, looking for those who have received new electronic items and other items of value. This curbside “shopping” take the guesswork out of breaking in, as by leaving the packaging in plain sight, you have just told the world about that new electronic device inside the house. Utilize neighborhood recycling centers to drop off packaging for electronics or other items of value.

With the growing popularity of purchasing gifts online, criminals are also “shopping” from porches and doorsteps. If you are ordering gifts, ask for a tracking number from the shipping company so the package can be tracked. On its arrival date, bring it inside as soon as possible, or make arrangements to have a trusted friend, neighbor, or family member pick up the package for you. ■



It’s a New Year!

Re-New Your Membership!

If you have not already responded to our requests to renew your membership in the WPNA, please take a moment to do so now.

The activities we sponsor are managed and staffed by volunteers, but there are also costs involved in every event, activity, and service: creating and distributing the newsletter, providing two cleanups each year, putting on the neighborhood-wide picnic, maintaining the garden, and on and on.

The membership form is on page 6. Please fill it out and send it in with a check to the address shown on the form.

We appreciate your support! ■

The Steptoe Neighborhood

By Joe Montanari

In grade school, Sister Henrietta described Kansas City as a "Midwestern city," as she smacked the midsection of her map with a pointer for emphasis. It was obvious to me in 1957 that Kansas City was indeed the "heart of America," geographically speaking. But it wasn't always. In the years leading up to the Civil War only a hundred years earlier, State Line was the western border of the U.S. Except for a Union-controlled state government in Jefferson City and some pro-Union sentiment in St. Louis, the rest of Missouri was rural and agricultural, and its citizens favored the Confederacy, slavery included. Westport was no exception. Politically and culturally, Westport marked the northwest corner of the South.

U.S. census records of 1820 show 10,200 slaves living in Missouri, of a total population of 66,500. Because Missouri farms were comparatively small, one-family operations, and not the large plantation farms of the "cotton belt," Missouri farmers employed fewer slaves than did the farmers of the deep South. A typical farm might include one or two "field hands" and a domestic servant or two. Several leading Kansas City and Westport citizens were slave owners, including Westport founder John Calvin McCoy and wealthy farmer and banker John Wornall.

Occasionally, slaves were auctioned at Albert Gallatin Boone's store at the corner of Westport Road and Pennsylvania, now known as Kelly's Westport Inn. Wornall's stately Georgian-style brick mansion still stands at 6115 Wornall Road, serving as headquarters of the Jackson County Historical Society. At the corner of 40th and Baltimore stands a handsome brick home built by Westport hotel-keeper Col. John Harris in 1855, now home to the Westport Historical Society. Wornall's home, Boone's store, and John Harris' home were each built of handmade bricks, made on site by slave labor.

Despite Westport's pro-slavery leanings, two unusual events occurred just before the Civil War. First, wealthy surveyor and land speculator John C. McCoy established a method for slaves to buy their way to freedom by working. Then, in 1857, Westport postmaster and newspaper publisher Henry Clay Pate paid \$3,900 to buy a pasture just south of Westport to provide land for the

freedmen to own. Surveyor McCoy recorded the property as "Pate's Addition to the Town of Westport," with boundaries of Broadway on the east and Summit on the west and three east-west streets: Pate, Clay, and Steptoe (now 43rd Terrace). The area later included the Penn School at 4237 Pennsylvania, established for the education of Black children; St. Luke African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church at 43rd and Archibald (built in 1879); and the St. James Baptist Church at 43rd and Washington.

After the Civil War, Kansas City expanded to the south, annexing Westport and Steptoe in 1898. By that time, Steptoe had become something unique to Kansas City, a tiny segregated "town within a town," occupied by railroad porters, cooks, plumbers, gardeners, maids, and chauffeurs, living in rows of neat clapboard bungalows. In the midst of a very segregated city, Steptoe residents took pride in owning their own homes in what they described as "the best colored neighborhood in the city." Until the Great Depression of 1929, Steptoe flourished.

Construction of the Southwest Trafficway in the 1950s carved off a piece of the Steptoe neighborhood. After landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s outlawed discrimination in housing and education, many residents dispersed. The expansion of St. Luke's Hospital and the Westport business district gradually eroded more of the old neighborhood. Now, even the blue ceramic letters spelling out "Steptoe," once embedded in the sidewalks along 43rd Terrace, are gone.

The evil institution of human bondage that once made the Steptoe Neighborhood necessary is gone as well. More than 620,000 soldiers died in the four-year struggle to end slavery, some 3,000 of them in the Battle of Westport. Curiously though, long before that bloody Civil War began, there were a few enlightened citizens right here in Westport who knew in their hearts that slavery was wrong and made an effort to make things right. The result of that effort was a little neighborhood called Steptoe.

Many thanks to historians JoeLouis Mattox and David W. Jackson, whose diligent research made this vignette possible. ■

New Discount Prescription Card Offers Savings for KCMO Residents



According to an announcement by the City of Kansas City, MO, effective Tuesday, December 14, the city began participating in the Coast2Coast Rx discount prescription card program. This card offers significant health-care savings to Kansas City's

residents, regardless of age, income, or health status, and without cost to taxpayers or the City. Used in many other municipalities, the program has saved cardholders an average of 45 percent on prescription drugs in 2010.

"With healthcare costs on the rise, prescription drug discounts will help ease some of the financial burdens Kansas City families are facing at a time when they need it the most," said Councilman John Sharp.

The card is distributed free of charge at most pharmacies and online at www.coast2coastrx.com. It can be used at all pharmacy chains and at most independent pharmacies. There is no enrollment form, membership fee, usage limits, or card expiration date. Family members living outside of Kansas City and pets can also benefit from the program.

"There are no eligibility requirements, so the Rx card is expected to have a sizeable affect on uninsured residents, residents facing high insurance deductibles, and insured residents in need of prescriptions not covered by their current plans," said Councilwoman Beth Gottstein.

In addition to saving residents money, the City will receive a \$0.75 royalty on each filled prescription, which comes out of the pharmacy dispensing fee. The City will use the added revenue to help subsidize the City employee healthcare system. Participating pharmacies will absorb the money lost to help propel additional business.

For more information, visit www.coast2coastrx.com or contact Martin Dettelbach at 919-465-0097. ■

If only you could sense how important you are to the lives of those you meet; how important you can be to people you may never even dream of. There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person.
- Mr. Rogers

When Obtaining Services Online, Buyer Beware

by Jim Schriever, Master Patrol Officer, KCPD

A Northland man stopped by one of our stations recently to report he'd been scammed by someone he'd hired from Craigslist. The man said he was looking for someone to do some work on his house and found someone on the online classified site. He met with the man, who asked for \$250 in payment up front for the work. The victim paid him, but the man never came back to do the work, and he won't return the victim's phone calls.

The internet has opened up a whole new world to scammers everywhere. To keep from getting scammed when hiring someone for a service, it's best to use some tried and true methods. Ask them for references of past jobs they've done. If they're reputable and really want your business, they'll gladly give them to you. Also, you can check with the Secretary of State to see if they're registered as a business and not some fly-by-night scam artist at [business search web site](http://businesssearchweb.site).

Many legitimate contractors will ask for money up front to buy supplies and/or secure a deposit. Asking for the entire sum of the job up front is unusual, but not necessarily a sign of scamming.

The rub with these cases is that they're considered a civil matter. To prosecute such a case criminally, we must prove the intent to deprive or deceive without any doubt. In a case like the aforementioned one, even if the two parties had agreed on a date in writing when the work was to be done, and it wasn't done by that date, a prosecutor could consider it a civil matter.

The bottom line: save yourself time, money, and hassle, and do your homework in advance before hiring anyone you find online or anywhere else. ■

Another Tip from Jim

During this cold weather, it's tempting to start the car and leave it warming up at the curb while you go back into the house to make final preparations for your day. Even if you lock the car, it's ready and waiting for a quick thief to break in and drive it away. Unless you have a remote starter, which will warm the engine but not engage the transmission, stay with your car as it warms up. ■

Thank You, Neighbor Joe

by Matt Nugent

Anyone driving on Roanoke Parkway in the last few weeks may have noticed that something new has sprouted out of the West Plaza garden: a monument. WPNA President Joe Montanari spent several weekends this fall building the monument from stones that are slightly larger than those he generally works with at his jewelry store.

The idea for the monument evolved over the last two years. As the garden took shape, it became apparent that something was needed to signify that the garden was a neighborhood effort. People sometimes pass through our area without realizing they are in West Plaza, and Joe thought it was important to make the connection between our newly created garden and the neighborhood that surrounds it. That's when he got busy.

Or, to hear Joe tell it, that's when the *neighborhood* got busy. Over the next year, while Joe made numerous weekend trips to a friend's property near Osceola, MO, to gather the Ozark red sandstone, friends and neighbors helped him with the schematic drawings, legalities, and insurance technicalities. When the time came to cast the

"West Plaza" sign for the front of the monument, a neighbor provided the reinforcing mesh and reddish coloring that allows the concrete to blend so well with the sandstone. And when the weather cooled enough this Fall to begin the physical work on the monument, neighbors helped him clear away the evergreen bushes, dig the hole, and pour the concrete footing.

Neighbors helped mix the mortar (some of which was donated by a local business), set the stone, and place the plaque. All of this is true, but to hear Joe tell the story of how the monument was built, you might conclude that he wasn't involved in the project at all.

And even when Joe does admit to having been the driving force behind the construction of the monument (and the builder), he'll also tell you that it's really the first time he's done any masonry and - in his words - "It's apparent I have no training whatsoever." Neither statement is true.

So the next time you see our good neighbor Joe, look past his modesty and thank him for building a handsome monument that will highlight the beauty of the West Plaza neighborhood for generations to come. ■

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Elections? (Continued from page 1)

America. Both the Rabbits and their rival “Goats” were factions of the Democratic Party, so the primary election, not the general, determined Boss Tom’s control.

The City decided to change the system of local government to reduce Boss Tom’s influence. The Council was reformed to 10 Councilmen from 5 Districts (we now have 6 Districts, thanks to a growing city). The Mayor became the 11th vote on the Council, and the day-to-day operations of the City were vested in the new City Manager, who was hired by the Council. Finally, all city elections were declared “non-partisan,” so there was no primary between the Republican and Democrat factions.

The reforms did not immediately work (Boss Tom was quoted as saying, “I only have to pay off 6 people now – they’ve reduced my overhead”). Not only that, but after the manager system went into effect, Pendergast put his own man in, and he became the most powerful man in the city. That lasted for close to 15 years.

Eventually the law caught up with Pendergast, and his power came crashing down. However, the reforms remain in place, and our type of city government today is a result of one man, possibly the most infamous resident in the history of Kansas City, MO. ■

Don’t Wear It Anymore?

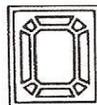
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Please fill out the information below and return along with your check to:
West Plaza Neighborhood Association ■ P.O. Box 32826 ■ Kansas City, MO 64171-7826
www.westplaza.org ■ Facebook: West Plaza Neighborhood Association

Check One: New Renewal

Household (\$12) Senior (\$7) Business (\$25) + Donation _____ = TOTAL _____

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Address _____

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*e-mail _____

Business Member Contact Name: _____

I would like to help the neighborhood with:

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Crime Prevention Meeting Refreshments

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[January-February 2011]



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Realtor...and Your West Plaza Neighbor

The Reece & Nichols MyNeighborhood report provides valuable market information about homes in your area. This report can be valuable to sellers by allowing you to keep a close watch on the competitive market in your neighborhood. Buyers can learn about the market trends in areas where they wish to purchase a new home.

For your own copy of MyNeighborhood, visit

<http://veronicajaster.reeceandnichols.com/pages/request-myneighborhood-report-163834>

Printing of this newsletter for the 1,100 residences in our neighborhood is generously provided by Print Tekk, a West Plaza neighborhood business and member of the WPNA.

TIPS HOTLINE: 816-474-TIPS

The Greater Kansas City Crime Stoppers Hotline is a vital resource to help reduce crime in our community. If you have information about the Kevin Beaver murder that took place on December 18, 2009 at 44th and Wyoming, please call the TIPS Hotline at 816-474-TIPS (8477). Callers can remain anonymous and are eligible to receive a cash reward if the information given leads to an arrest or grand jury indictment of the felony offender.



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Edited by Julie A. Tenenbaum
Address: 4401 Genessee, Kansas City, MO 64111
Phone: 816-931-2276 email: jatkc@aol.com

Submit suggestions for newsletter articles 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):

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2011 WPNA Business Members

Please support the businesses that support your neighborhood. (* New member this month)

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