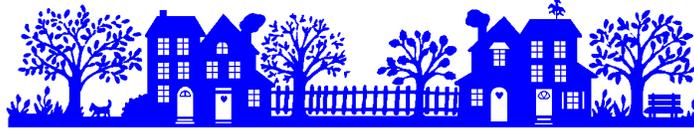


WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 7-8 p.m.
Social Half-Hour begins at 6:30
Immanuel Lutheran Church
1700 Westport Road
Topic: PorchFestKC
Annual Election of Officers & Directors

We will hold our annual election of officers and board members at this meeting. Eight members of the current board (Joe Montanari, President; Julie Tenenbaum, Vice President; Marlene Toms, Treasurer; Greg Madden, Membership; Stephanie Murrell, Secretary; Steve Tate, John Toms, and Dennis Walter) will be on the ballot for 2016; members Margie Richcreek and John Culp have also been nominated to serve in the coming year. All 2015 and 2016 members are eligible to vote.

There has been much discussion on Facebook about the Board's decision to discontinue support of PorchFestKC, which we have held for the past two years. Please read the adjacent article written by our president, Joe Montanari, and come to the meeting to talk with board members about your questions and concerns.

If you have not joined the WPNA or have not yet renewed your membership for 2016, you may do so at the meeting. Household memberships are \$15; business memberships are \$25. WPNA bumper stickers, t-shirts, and tote bags will also be available at the meeting.

We will close with a raffle prize from one of our business members. All 2016 members are eligible to enter. ■

“Often when you think you're
at the end of something,
you're at the beginning
of something else.”
— Mister Rogers

Looking Back: PorchFestKC

by Joe Montanari

The West Plaza Neighborhood Association was incorporated in 1974 and has been serving the neighborhood for 41 years. During that time, West Plaza has grown from a sleepy, nondescript area populated primarily by elderly retirees and dotted with run-down rental properties, into a vibrant, successful community with a wide range of age groups. Today, most of the housing stock is in good repair, with new home construction and re-habbing going on all the time. Real estate values are on a strong upward turn. These things did not happen by chance; they did not happen in a vacuum. These things happened because a small group of dedicated citizens worked tirelessly for many years to bring this neighborhood to life.

As a neighborhood association (rather than a homeowners' association, for which mandatory membership is written into the deed of each house), WPNA relies on the voluntary participation of its members. Our dues are minimal: \$15 a year per household and \$25 per business. We now boast 260 dues-paying members. The dues paid by these loyal members bring in a little more than \$4,000 a year. From this princely sum, West Plaza's board members and other volunteers provide two annual cleanup events, a picnic, five general meetings, an annual yard sale, six issues of the neighborhood newsletter hand-delivered to your door, and two community gardens, as well as maintaining two Facebook pages, an email list, and a website. WPNA also serves as a liaison between the neighborhood and City Hall, dealing with issues such as zoning and liquor licensing that materially affect quality of life in the neighborhood. For the past two years, we have also sponsored PorchFestKC. It is fair to say that West Plaza residents receive a lot of benefits for the \$1.25 a month the 200 households and 60 businesses contribute. Meanwhile, there are 1,000

(continued on p. 3)

FORKS & RAKES by Stephanie Murrell

Chicken and Gnocchi Soup



If you like chicken noodle soup, imagine it with little pillows of soft potato gnocchi instead of the noodles. This is not low-cal, and it will consume your every waking thought.

Ingredients

3 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
4 cups chicken stock
2 cups half-and-half (for best results, 1 1/2 cups half-and-half and 1/2 cup heavy cream)

For a lower fat/calorie version, you can use 2 cups of milk and thicken with a tablespoon of cornstarch at the end.

1 stalk celery, diced
1 garlic clove, chopped
1/2 carrot, shredded
1/2 onion, diced
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh thyme (fresh is by far the best!)
salt and pepper to taste
16 ounces potato gnocchi

Directions

Sauté the onion, celery, garlic, and carrot in oil over medium heat until onion is translucent.

Add chicken, chicken stock, salt and pepper, and fresh thyme. Heat to boiling, then add gnocchi and gently boil for 5 minutes, then turn down to a simmer for 10 minutes and add half and half. *If you add the cream while it is boiling, it will separate from the broth, which is less appealing.*

Add spinach and cook for another 1-2 minutes until spinach is wilted.

Ladle into bowls, then sprinkle with more fresh thyme.

Serve, and let your eyes roll to the back of your head! ■

CityWise

Kansas City is home to Temple Slug, the world's oldest waterbed store. It wasn't the first one on the planet when it opened back in 1970, but evidently any earlier waterbed retailers have long since gone down the drain.

Feral Cat Winter Shelters

As you may already know, West Plaza is home to several colonies of feral cats. Many kind-hearted residents are willing to provide food and water for them throughout the year, and especially during the harshest of months. WPNA has sponsored a TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program for the last several years, a humane method of reducing--over time--the number of cats in the colonies. While the current population will live out their lives, they do not reproduce, and eventually the number of cats will dwindle.

As the weather is turning cold, the WPNA has received numerous inquiries for feral cat shelter information. As a feral cat adopted mother of two, I can attest to the necessity and success of having a cat shelter in my back yard for the last several years. I started out reluctantly, but now look forward to the meows that greet me every day as I replenish their food and water at their shelter.

There are many blueprints available online to build all styles of cat shelters, so if you are handy with tools, here are two links to get you started:

<http://www.neighborhoodcats.org/>
[HOW TO FERAL CAT WINTER SHELTER](#)

<http://www.aspcapro.org/resource/spayneuter-feral-cats/winter-shelter-bins-community-cats-faq>

If you prefer to outsource the job, West Plaza resident Alissa Myers has generously offered to be the carpenter. If you purchase the materials, she is willing to make a shelter for you. Her plan uses a plastic storage tub for the outer shell, foam board, straw, a reflective blanket for insulation, and an "entry tunnel" made with a plastic flower pot. She can give you specifics on what to purchase.

If you would like Alissa's guidance on building a shelter or want her to build one for you, she can be reached at 816-699-3122 or sunday-mae@gmail.com.

Thank you Alissa, and thanks to all of you who spare a little extra to help our neighborhood fur balls! ■

PorchFestKC (continued from p. 1)

households and several businesses in the neighborhood that receive the same benefits but contribute nothing.

The Association is structured as a representative democracy, with officers and board members elected annually at the general meeting in January. Any dues-paying member is entitled (and encouraged) to serve on the board. We welcome input from all West Plaza neighbors, especially from dues-paying members, but ultimately it is the board's responsibility to make decisions.

The decision to discontinue sponsorship of PFKC was not made lightly, but after a lot of soul-searching, discussion, and debate by all board members. All agreed that PFKC was a remarkable event that brought a lot of positive energy and joy to West Plaza. In 2015, it cost roughly \$10,000 to put on PFKC, about half of which was raised by Kathryn Golden, the organizer, in the form of corporate sponsorships. West Plaza Neighborhood Association made a direct contribution of \$500 from the treasury. Five thousand dollars was provided by the Kansas City Neighborhood Tourism Development Fund. It was not "free" money. Board members spent countless volunteer hours preparing the funding application and negotiating it through City Hall, and then after the event, writing reports to account for income and expenditures in order to receive reimbursement. Julie, Kathryn, and Marlene prepared the documents, trading numerous emails and telephone calls to shepherd the application through the lengthy bureaucratic process. Because organizations throughout the city compete for a limited amount of NTFD funds, at no time was there any guarantee that PFKC would be funded at all. If the City funds were not forthcoming, WPNA was potentially liable to make up a \$5,000 shortfall. We took the risk, and we won.

In order to sponsor PFKC again in 2016, we knew we would have to go back to City Hall, only this time, we would be seeking \$10,000, because PFKC was growing exponentially, and we would need more of everything. Again, there would be no guarantee that NTFD would provide funding, and at this point, Kathryn also wanted to shift other fundraising responsibilities to our board members so she could focus on other facets of the event. We were in the position of having more work than board members could handle, and receiving little response to our repeated requests

for help, which we asked for in the newsletter, by email, by Facebook, on the WPNA and PFKC websites, and by personal appeals at general meetings.

Then the issue of liability arose. We had spent \$325 to insure WPNA against liabilities that might be incurred during the event, and PFKC spent another \$850 to insure Kathryn. Due to two minor incidents that occurred during the event, we investigated further. We were advised by our attorney that our coverage for personal liability as board members was woefully inadequate, and we could potentially be sued for up to \$10 million apiece, should anyone suffer a serious injury during PFKC. No one on the board was willing to incur that kind of personal liability, and the cost of appropriate insurance for all the board members was simply prohibitive. We were between a rock and a hard place.

While it may seem improbable that a serious mishap would occur, the probability increases with the introduction of alcohol. From the beginning, we stressed that PFKC was an alcohol-free event. During PFKC 2014, some neighbors enjoyed beer with their friends in their own front yards, and neither WPNA nor Kathryn and her management team had any problem with that. During PFKC 2015, however, groups of visitors were seen wheeling large coolers into the neighborhood and carrying open containers on the street. While we were fortunate that the crowd was well-behaved and no one got out of control, it became apparent that we would have to address the difficult issue of alcohol at any future event.

Given all these factors, the board chose to let go of PorchFestKC. Our neighborhood was very fortunate to have been the first in Kansas City to host this truly joyful event. For two years it brought a lot of positive energy and attention to West Plaza. We all owe Kathryn a great debt of gratitude for offering it to us first. We also owe thanks to the WPNA board for taking a substantial risk on an unknown quantity the first year, and for taking a \$5,000 gamble the second. Finally, we owe thanks to the PFKC hosts and musicians who extended themselves to create a delightful experience for all. I think everyone on the board wishes PorchFestKC could go on indefinitely, but all good things eventually come to an end. We did our best. It is likely that PorchFestKC will continue in another lucky neighborhood, and we wish them well. ■

New Year 's Resolutions for Pets and Their People

At the start of a new year, our thoughts often turn to diet and exercise, making up for holiday indulgences. Here are some ideas and tips to enhance the health and add some fun to your pets' lives as well as your own.

1) Exercise. Pets suffer from overeating and lack of exercise. Regular exercise has obvious health benefits, and it also is a great time to bond with our pets. A simple daily walk helps a dog learn proper manners, provides good quality time, and does wonders for the human counterpart, too! Keeping pets at the proper body weight reduces their risk of heart and joint problems, diabetes, and a host of other health conditions.

2) Health Check Up. A regular visit to your veterinarian is the best way to stay ahead of potential problems. Annual examinations of teeth, heart/lungs, and body condition overall will be less costly than waiting for a problem to develop and will keep your pet from suffering needlessly from complications of preventable problems.

3) Good Nutrition. Like humans, pets who eat poor quality food just don't have the health reserves that those with a good balanced diet enjoy. Poor skin, hair coat, muscle tone, and obesity problems can be a result of a poor diet. Also, a diet rich in table scraps is not a healthy one and can lead to problems such as obesity and pancreatitis.

4) Good Grooming. No one wants to be around a stinky pet. Regular grooming—bathing, toe nail clips, brushing teeth and hair coat, parasite control—not only make the pet more pleasing to be around, it is much healthier for the pet!

5) Safety. Take a moment to assess the safety factors around your house. Are the toxic chemicals used in your house and yard necessary? Where are they stored? Can your pet access these items? If toxins such as rodent poisons are used, can your pet access the rodents? Think too about enclosures for pets—is the fencing secure? Can your pet get caught or hooked on the fence or a tree and be stuck out in the weather when you're away?

6) Information. Being informed is the best way to keep track of your pet 's health and well-being. Keep a medical log of your pet's vet visits, medi-

cations, and special needs. Knowing what is normal and not normal for your particular pet will assist your vet to figure out what is wrong in the case of illness.

7) Love and Attention. This is probably obvious, but too many pets are left outside in all kinds of weather, with very little human contact. Inside pets may be largely ignored for lack of time and busy human schedules. Take the time to focus on your pets and nourish that human-animal bond!

8) Volunteer. There are thousands of animals in need of help each day. Financial donations and donations of supplies or your time to a local shelter or rescue group are always appreciated, and real live animals will be helped by your generosity. ■

Source: Janet Tobiassen Crosby, DVM, (vetmedicine.about.com)

Greg's Calendar

by Greg Madden

Dollar Tour: Augmented Reality iPad Tour

Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30 p.m.

The Money Museum, 1 Memorial Drive
816-881-2683

This iPad interactive tour transforms gallery photos and objects into videos that reveal the lost stories of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

In the Mood: Songs of the Great Band Leaders

Jan 22-Feb 21. Tue-Sat, 7:30 p.m.; Sun, 3 p.m.

Quality Hill Playhouse, 303 W 10th Street
816-421-1700

Swing and Big Band music from the 1930s. Featuring four vocalists with piano, bass and drums.

2016 Royals FanFest

Jan 29-30. Fri, 2-9 p.m.; Sat, 11-7 p.m.

Bartle Hall, 301 W 13th Street

www.royals.com/fanfest

Celebrate baseball in a big league way with autograph sessions featuring current and former Royals, interactive games for all ages, main stage programs, and more.

2016 KC Brew Fest

Feb 27, 2016, Sat, 12 to 4 p.m.

Union Station, 30 W Pershing Road

More than 40 craft and international breweries, 100 beers, music, and food. ■

It's Time to Renew Your Membership

The new year is here. That means it's time to renew your commitment to your neighborhood by supporting the organization whose only reason for existence is the betterment of West Plaza.

Please use the form on page 7 to renew your membership now. For the small amount of \$15 (household) or \$25 (business) per calendar year, you can help the WPNA in its mission to keep the neighborhood a vibrant, safe, and friendly place to live. All of our programs and services work toward communication among neighbors, safety in the neighborhood, and beauty in our surroundings.

Homeowners, renters, and businesses are all welcome to join. ■

Caregiver Self-Care

by Martha Childers, LPC

Do you or someone you know care for a disabled person, patient, or loved one? Caregiving can result in caregiver stress because often caregivers forget about self-care. Here are some tips for the one providing care:

- learn better ways to provide care
- ask for help and accept help
- get help from the community
- join a caregiver support group
- get organized
- make time for yourself
- take care of your body—eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep
- get regular check-ups from your doctor.

[The Shepherd's Center Care Connection](#), your place of worship, and friends and family are excellent resources. Counseling can provide a safe place to find relief. Talking about your situation can provide ideas and support to make your life better. Remember, if you like to help others, others may like to help you.

For more tips on living, visit: <http://www.childerscounselingservice.com/> ■

Unless someone like you
cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to happen,
it's not.

— Dr. Seuss

Volunteers Needed!

The WPNA needs a few people who are willing to deliver newsletters every other month.

If you are interested in helping with deliveries, call Harold Scott 913-980-6413 or Dennis Walter 816-588-8304

Thank you!



MORE Volunteers Needed!

Love animals? Especially cats? Have just a little bit of spare time? You could help Sharon Martin care for the furry ones in need in West Plaza. Call her at 913-302-2115 to find out how.

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Lunch: Tues-Fri 11AM-2PM
Closed Sunday

Five New Year's Resolutions that Could Change Your Life

Every year roughly one in three Americans make New Year's Resolutions. I have not made them for years because I either decide I should never have made them or I forget I made them! If you are someone who makes resolutions, you might want to consider adding these five to your list:

Smile more. Social psychologists say the simple act of smiling can make you happier and healthier. Smiling activates the release of dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin neurotransmitters that help reduce stress and elicit positive emotions. Smiling works for another obvious reason – it is contagious, literally!

Maintain a health and fitness regimen. Regular physical exercise reduces stress, fights disease, and improves mood, energy, and sleep.

Schedule personal time. Many of us are used to scheduling in the context of work (e.g., meetings, project deadlines). There is growing evidence that the most productive people are not the busiest, but rather those who prioritize their free time – for personal interests, for family, and for activities completely unrelated to their jobs. The best way to improve performance and focus is to take time to refresh yourself.

Don't commit to things you can't do. Can't make it to dinner with your friend next week but prefer to say "maybe" so you can delay the disappointment? Just say you can't. Not overextending yourself will save you time and consternation down the road.

Use a calendar. A great way to stay on top of your resolutions is to schedule relentlessly. Managing your to-do list on a calendar will help you miss fewer deadlines, keep you organized, and ensure that you are prioritizing your most important tasks. Be sure to schedule your non-work items too, such as seeing family and friends.

Success with resolutions isn't about setting goals but maintaining them. If you fall off the wagon, jump back on. Many people fall into the trap of believing that if they stumble, they should give up. The truth is, you don't have to wait for next year or for some magic moment. Instead, realize that slipping up is part of the process and hop right back on that Resolution Wagon! ■

Source: Shane Robinson, Contributor to *Forbes*

Running in the Dark

by John Toms

As winter is here now, it is usually dark when you leave for work and dark when you get home. But you may still need to take the dog for a walk or go for a walk or a run. Taking a few precautions to minimize your risk can make your experience safer and more enjoyable.

Always wear bright or reflective clothing and shoes with arch and ankle supports. Choose a route you're used to and make sure the streets are well lit, and since we have some pretty bad sidewalks in our area, choose the streets with better, even sidewalks. Pick a level surface, if possible; however, if you're used to them, hills are a good way to challenge the body. Always be aware of your surroundings. Be aware of traffic (motorists, bicyclists, scooters, other walkers, people, and animals) around you. Carry your phone and other safety items with you. Try to enlist a friend or neighbor to walk with you for extra security, if possible.

Join our Facebook Watch page, be safe, and have a great winter in West Plaza. ■

Have You Connected with the West Plaza Watch Facebook Page?

The West Plaza Watch Facebook page administered by the WPNA now has more than 1,000 members. It's a great tool to keep us all connected with each other, and it's all about safety. To join, go to Facebook -> West Plaza Watch, and click on Join. A private message will be sent to your inbox (in some cases, it goes to your "other" inbox). After you respond to the message, you will be admitted. ■

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NOTICE! WPNA Membership runs on the calendar year, from January 1 through December 31. If you have not renewed for 2016, please do it now.

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 • Facebook: West Plaza Neighborhood Association-Discussion Group

Check One: New Renewal
 Household (\$15) Business (\$25) + Donation _____ = TOTAL _____
 Donations over and above membership dues are tax deductible.

Name _____
 Address _____
 Zip _____ Phone _____
 e-mail _____
 Business Member Contact Name:

I would like to help the neighborhood with:

Neighborhood Clean-up

Neighborhood Watch Floral Garden

Meeting Refreshments Membership

Newsletter Distribution Feral Cat Program

Community Garden Picnic Yard Sales

Other _____

[January-February 2016]

2016 WPNA Calendar

General Membership Meetings (7-8 p.m.)
30-minute social "hour" begins at 6:30

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 on
the third Tuesday of odd-numbered months:

January 19 September 20
March 22 November 15
July 19

Watch this space for more 2016 event dates.

Feral Cat Issues?

Contact Sharon Martin
913-302-2115
Feral.WPNA@gmail.com



To help WPNA sponsor this program, send your
donation to P.O. Box 32826, KCMO 64171-7826



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Printing of the 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.

West Plaza Neighborhood Association Newsletter
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.

Display advertising rates for members:

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

Display advertising rates for non-members: Add \$20.



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