

WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Mark Your Calendar ☒

Annual Neighborhood Picnic
Saturday, May 30, Noon to 3 p.m.
The Shelter House
in Westwood Park

COME TO THE PICNIC!

Our annual neighborhood picnic will be held at the shelter house at Westwood Park on Saturday, May 30, noon until 3 p.m. It will be a time to enjoy the weather, visit with old friends, and meet new neighbors. Lots of fun activities are planned for kids, including the traditional piñata. The Association will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips, cold drinks and dishware. Please bring your own specialty side dish or dessert to share with your neighbors.



We are honored that Kansas City's own Eco Elvis will provide our entertainment this year. If you have not caught his act yet, you **MUST** see him! Check out his website at www.Ecoelvis.com and come prepared for an exciting show!

We will give away some great door prizes that have been donated by our loyal and generous business members. This year only WPNA members will be eligible for these gifts, so if you have not yet renewed for 2009, bring your checkbook! Better yet, mail in the form on page 8 of this newsletter along with your check, and come to the picnic as a paid-up member.

We're predicting beautiful weather, so plan on attending and joining in the fun. Bring a lawn chair, a side dish, and your friends! ■

Neighborhood Cleanup

The spring cleanup event will take place on Saturday, May 30, from 8 a.m. until the dumpsters fill up (usually by noon or so). There will be two dumpsters – one for yard waste (leaves and brush, grass clippings, etc.) and one for household trash. The dumpsters will be located near the northeast corner of Westwood Park on Wyoming Street. Neighborhood volunteers will be on hand to assist you in unloading your vehicles.

Yard waste may be bundled or in paper bags, but may not be in plastic bags or non-degradable containers. If you bundle tree branches, use natural fiber twine, like cotton, jute, or sisal, not plastic or wire. Please **DO NOT** mix household items with yard waste.

The City's rules require that anyone bringing materials to deposit into the dumpsters be a West Plaza resident, and we will be asking all participants to sign the registration sheet. The event is not for businesses or other commercial entities. We cannot accept large appliances, tires, batteries, auto parts, or hazardous materials. These items must be taken to the Environmental Campus at 4707 Deramus for disposal.

This bi-annual cleanup event is jointly sponsored by the WPNA and the City of Kansas City, who share the cost of the two dumpsters. Many thanks to the staff at the Department of Public Works and the City of Kansas City, who did not cut this valuable program out of the budget.

If you would like to help us staff the dumpsters (a GREAT opportunity for dumpster diving!), call Joe Montanari at 816-531-0750. ■

Safety in the Summer

In the spring and summer, people are out and about, both during the day and at night. With this increased exposure, it is important to know how to be safe on the streets. By being aware and taking a few precautions, you can stay safe wherever you go.

Be Vigilant. The most important thing you can do when you are out is to be aware of your surroundings. Criminals look for easy opportunities to assault an unsuspecting victim. A typical target is a person who is clearly unaware of who or what is going on around them. Pay attention to everything and everyone around you. A predator never wants to be seen before committing a crime, so if you walk intentionally with your head held high and survey everything, you will be a less likely target.

When you are out at night, stay in areas that are brightly lit. Darker streets and alleys offer the perfect cover for an assailant to hide and catch you by surprise. Walk with friends any time you can, because criminals are less likely to approach a group than an individual. If you are alone, keep a brisk pace, get to where you are going, and make your way inside. As you return to your vehicle, be prepared to get in right away. Lock the door and drive off quickly. You never know when a predator may be nearby watching to see if you linger and give them an opportunity to assault you.

Guard Your Money. Watch out for people watching you. Street criminals watch for potential victims, and one of the things they look for is someone who is obviously carrying a large amount of money or valuable personal items. Never flash cash on a city street. It's a good idea to keep your money well hidden and located in an area that is difficult to get to. A pickpocket may be able to pull your wallet out of a back or jacket pocket, but will be far less likely to attempt to reach into a front pocket. Some experts also recommend carrying a second wallet with just a small amount of money and invalid credit cards so you have something to turn over if you are ever mugged.

Women should carry their purses close to their bodies, but not with the shoulder strap placed around the neck. A purse snatcher

may be determined to take what you have, and a confrontation can turn violent as they wrench the purse from you. It's better to let a thief take your belongings than to risk being hurt. Carry as little cash as possible, and only one or two credit cards. If the purse is taken, your loss will not be too great.

A Street Encounter. Although it's always best to be polite, even to strangers, it is a good idea to be wary of anyone you don't know who approaches you. They may ask for directions, money, or anything else. Answer quickly, and continue on your way. If they persist, tell them that you are unable to help and mention that a police officer would be better suited to provide assistance. If you find yourself being followed, remain in a public area. Find a police station or security guard and explain your situation.

By staying aware of what's going on around you and following these suggestions, you can keep yourself safe and enjoy your summer. ■

Economic Survival Tips

by Brad McCormack

Working as a bankruptcy attorney, I unfortunately see the aftereffects of bad financial decisions that, at the time, seemed like good ones. With the economy as it is, there are a multitude of "experts" out there offering you help. Please, before you do anything, keep in mind some basics:

- **Read the fine print.** No interest for 18 months sounds great, but hold onto your wallet for that 19th month. If you get such a deal, remember, 18 months is not a nice goal, it's an absolute end date.
- **Not all debt relief is the same.** There is a debt relief advertisement about every 10 minutes on TV or the radio. Some are legitimate resources, and some are nothing more than a scam. If it sounds too good to be true – it is.
- **If you're in over your head, get help.** Whether it is an attorney or a friend, do not do this alone. You are not the only person going through this, and others can help. ■

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.

A Brief History of the West Plaza

by Joe Montanari

The greater part of Kansas City, Missouri, and its immediate suburbs from Brush Creek south was a planned development, conceived in the imagination of J. C. Nichols in the early 1900s. Unlike modern property developers, Nichols was not merely buying a 40-acre farm and building houses on it. An ardent believer in the "City Beautiful" movement, Nichols was determined to build a modern city where a cow town had been. Working closely with city planners and engineers, Nichols and his staff laid out streets and boulevards, and carefully planned every detail, including where the shops, schools, churches, parks, and homes would be. He set the standards high, and built a beautifully planned residential community, replete with art and architecture. Nichols gave a charm and grace to Kansas City that remains a great surprise to first-time visitors.

For the most part, our West Plaza neighborhood predates the Plaza and the Country Club District, as Nichols called it. Built along the steep hills and ridges that border the Plaza to the west, West Plaza developed as a working class neighborhood in the late 1800s and early 1900s. With Westport Road as its northern boundary, West Plaza was located on the western outskirts of the old Town of Westport, which had been founded in 1834 as an outfitting station for wagon trains headed west along the Santa Fe Trail. What we now call Westport Road is the original trail, which accounts for the fact that it meanders southwesterly from Main Street to State Line and does not follow a more logical east-west direction. The next time you are trying to negotiate the complicated intersection at Westport and Southwest Trafficway, don't blame the city engineers. Blame the pioneers and 49ers.

Unlike J. C. Nichols' Country Club district, West Plaza was not a planned development. Instead, it grew piecemeal, as the farmland was sold off a bit at a time. Thus, we have homes with an odd mixture of sizes and architectural styles. Among the oldest are a few larger homes that dot the neighborhood, built by wealthy Westport business people from the late 1880s until 1900 or so.

About the same time, a number of very small houses were built on tiny lots, very close together, as homes for blue collar workers. The end of World War I brought the prosperity of the "Roaring 20s" to West Plaza, along with neat rows of more modern bungalows. Before the war, there was no municipal gas line or water service, and so most of the smaller houses were built on brick piers with a crawl space beneath and no basement. Three-room structures, they consisted of a living room, a kitchen with a wood burning stove in the middle, and a bedroom. Because there was no water service, there was no bathroom. The stove served the dual purpose of heating the house and cooking. The wealthier homeowners had electricity to provide lights, but even for them, there were few electrical appliances to be had until the 1920s, when a "modern" home might have an electric fan, a toaster, and a radio.

Some of these older three-room houses still stand. Most of them have been altered quite a bit over the years, with upper stories added and room additions built to the rear. When the gas, water and sewer lines were extended into West Plaza, many of these small homes were raised up on hydraulic jacks, so a crew of laborers with pick and shovel could excavate a basement beneath and lay up a stone foundation in place of the brick piers. Now there was room for the new gas furnace and water heater and modern indoor plumbing!

A Brief History of the West Plaza will be continued in the next issue of the WPNA newsletter. ■

Thanks, Jan Marcason

At our general membership meeting on Tuesday, March 24, Councilwoman Jan Marcason discussed the city budget and PIAC funds available for neighborhood improvements. She gave generously and willingly of her time to graciously answer all questions posed by our membership. The city is experiencing an economic downturn, so many of the questions were direct, heartfelt, and not easily answered.

As the meeting disbanded, our president, Joe Montanari, was heard to remark enthusiastically that Ms. Marcason is a real treasure as our representative. ■

Want an Old – Really Old – Photo of Your House?

by Kevin Pinkowski

It's a little-known fact that the City of Kansas City, Missouri probably has historical photographs of your house that are readily available for purchase. The story goes something like this:

Around the middle of the last century, before the taxing authorities had fancy computers and Google Maps to keep track of our real estate property, they would take photographs of the real property as proof that it existed, and could, therefore, have taxes levied against it. As the years clicked by, this system became antiquated and obsolete. Someone in City Hall decided that, since this system of filing old black-and-white photographs was no longer in use and had been replaced by a more efficient system, the old tax record photographs could be tossed into the trash.

When avid Kansas City historian Jane Flynn caught wind of this, she quickly dug all of the photographs out of the trash and filed them in the drawers of the Kansas City Landmarks Commission. While Ms. Flynn has since passed, her legacy lives on in those photographs, available for your purchase.

The process is quite simple and affordable. If you are interested, you should contact the Kansas City Landmarks Commission at landmarkcommission@kcmo.org or 816-513-2902, and set up a time to go down to the office and meet with them at their office in City Hall, at 414 E. 12th Street, on the 26th floor. You will have to identify your block from a large map, and then, using a magnifying glass, search through photographs of all the houses on that block. For \$5, they will send a pdf file to your email. They accept cash or check.

Keep in mind that the houses are not identified by address, and that the streets and the house you are looking for might have changed since the mid-1940s. Houses built after the 1940s may not be in their records. The process may take a little longer than you expect, but it's worth it.

Happy house hunting! ■

Meet Your Neighbor: Brad and Annie McCormack

by Kevin Pinkowski

The neighbors you will be meeting this month are Brad and Annie McCormack, who live on the 4300 block of Fairmount. It just so happens that Brad is one of the newly minted members of the West Plaza Neighborhood Association Board – welcome, Brad!

Brad and Annie have lived in the West Plaza neighborhood since August of last year, but they're no strangers to midtown life. Prior to moving to Fairmount Street, they lived in a house behind Tomfooleries on the Plaza, and Annie actually grew up just down the road in Brookside. Brad emigrated from Wichita when he came to Kansas City for his undergraduate degree at Rockhurst. He went to St. Louis to get his law degree, and he currently works for The Sader Law Firm. Annie does an amazing job at Pryde's in Westport keeping it so friendly and welcoming.

Brad and Annie met at Kennedy's in Waldo before it burned down two years ago (but it's already risen from its ashes, and is alive and kicking again!). They married in March last year before moving to the West Plaza. They say they moved here because they really love the area, they love old houses, they love being in the middle of the city, and they love being in a neighborhood that really feels like a neighborhood. And to accentuate the "neighborhood" feeling and to get more involved, Brad recently joined the WPNA board.

When Brad and Annie aren't spending time with their many nieces, nephews, and extended family, you might see them out working in the garden getting ready for the growing season. Be sure to stop and say hi and welcome them to the neighborhood. ■

<http://www.lookstoogoodtobetrue.com>

The FBI has created this website to help educate citizens with information about current scams, types of frauds, victim stories, tips to avoid victimization, and a section on protecting teens and children from internet related offenses.

West Plaza Garden Update

by Ed O'Donnell, Gardener-in-Chief

One of the purposes of the newly created West Plaza garden at the junction of 46th Street, Jarboe, and Roanoke Parkway is to be a place for neighbors to meet. So far, however, due largely to the weather, I have been able to meet neighborhood volunteers there only twice since March 1.

Things are changing, and the garden is taking shape. The walkway has progressed from a pile of rocks to a pathway that's about 80 percent completed. On March 15, Dave Paarman, Joe Padilla, John Toms, Joe Montanari, and I constructed as much of the path as we could with the number of rocks we had. As soon as Joe brings up another load or two of fieldstone, that phase will be finished. The butterfly bush, fennel, and bloodroot have been planted. Annuals (and some perennials) have been started from seed, but most perennials will be purchased. If the weather allows, we will till the soil and remove roots, and planting will start about May 16. Remember the tulip tree that was planted last October? You should check it out. It will be blooming by the time you read this.

Joe Montanari and I returned to the garden on April 26 to complete all but the last five feet of the pathway. While we were taking a break, a young couple walked up to us and asked what we were doing. Joe said, "We're with the West Plaza Neighborhood Association, and this is going to be a garden." I quickly added, "A floral garden." The young man said that despite living in a nearby condominium, they had never heard of us (imagine that!). They had not received a newsletter because our volunteers don't have access to deliver to condos. He said that he had used the boulder as a bench while chatting on his cell phone. We were happy to tell them about the WPNA. Looks like the garden is already becoming "a place for neighbors to meet."

We have received generous donations to help cover the cost of creating the garden, but more funds are needed for this initial planting and development phase. Please send your donation to WPNA at PO Box 32826, Kansas City, MO 64171-7826. If you would like to spend a little time working with us in the garden this spring and summer, call me at 816-531-4692. ■

West Plaza Neighborhood Association Newsletter
Edited by Julie A. Tenenbaum
Address: 4401 Genessee, KC, MO 64111-4359
Phone: 816-931-2276 email: 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

2009 Events & Meetings

WPNA general membership meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of odd numbered months at Swinney Dual Language School, 1106 West 47th Street.

General Meetings: July 28 (new summer meeting), September 15, November 17
Spring Cleanup & Picnic: Saturday, May 30
WPNA Garage Sales: Saturday, July 11
Fall Cleanup: Saturday, October 10

Heads Up! The West Plaza Neighborhood Yard Sales will be held on Saturday, July 11. For more information, go to www.westplaza.org. ■

Weekly Recycling Service Continues

The City of Kansas City, Mo., Public Works Department has announced that KC Recycles will continue to provide weekly curbside recycling under a new agreement with Town and Country Disposal of Western Missouri, Inc.

Starting May 1, the KC Recycles curbside program will accept a wider range of materials, including cardboard egg cartons, clean pizza boxes, and shredded paper contained in a labeled paper bag. A list of accepted materials and instructions can be found online at www.KCMO.org/trash. ■

Glass Bottle Recycling

Boulevard Brewing Company has partnered with Owens Corning to create a glass recycling plant that will provide raw material for fiberglass insulation production. Boulevard wants to anchor a metro-wide glass recycling effort. Completion date for the plant is scheduled for summer 2009. ■

(Boozefish Ad)



Dr. Steven C. Mingos

& Associates, L.L.C.

General Dentistry
4746 Belleview Avenue
Kansas City, Missouri 64112

www.plazadentist.com

"Your Neighborhood Dentist"

New Patient Exam and Cleaning

Includes Digital X-rays

\$79.00

(regularly \$301.00)

Call and make an appointment today!

(816) 531-8740

Offer ends June 30, 2009

You Are Invited!

The 2009 Guardian Angels Festival will be held Sunday, June 7, from noon to 8 p.m. on the church grounds at 1310 Westport Road.

Activities include bingo (beginning at 2), entertainment under the big white tent (noon until 8), games (closing at 6), a raffle (\$1 buys a chance to win a flat screen 42" LCD HD TV, \$500 cash, \$250 cash, 25 Rainbow carwashes, a \$100 Sun Fresh gift certificate, or a Price Chopper gift certificate worth \$100), a silent auction, the White Elephant and the Cakewalk. Mexican food, grilled sausages and hot dogs, ice cream, cake, and cold drinks will be offered throughout the afternoon and evening.

This is an event for the entire family, and all are welcome. Come and join in the fun! ■

Precision Optics

THE CARE | THE WEAR

Jill Smith, OD

816-756-3577

4181 Broadway
Kansas City, MO 64111

www.precisionopticskc.com

- Comprehensive Eye Exams
- Most Vision Insurance Accepted
- Select Designer Eyewear 50-75% off through May & June!

Greetings from Swinney Dual Language Elementary Signature School!

Swinney is your neighborhood public school that is making a positive difference every day!

Our school is a dual language two-way immersion language school. Our students are educated in Spanish and English an equal amount of time. If a student starts at Swinney in the Pre-K program, the student will be bilingual and bi-literate by fifth grade. This language option is so special that we are the only school in the state of Missouri that offers this program.

This unique program allows students to freely converse and speak together as part of the learning process. Because the children are naturally curious and accepting, they talk to each other. If you put a room full of native English speakers in a room full of native Spanish speakers, there is bound to be some open communication. This is the strength of the dual language school philosophy. Children who are naturally curious about each other will listen and speak to each other in new ways as they learn each other's language and culture. It is wonderful to see that two and even more cultures are able to blend together for the purpose of children's education.

Swinney is proud to be part of the WPNA. We are hoping that more of the Kansas City community will reinvest in public schools, especially Swinney. We invite you to come and visit our school by calling 816-418-6275 and making an appointment. We have an open door policy and welcome you at any time.

Rie Clark, Principal
and WPNA Board Member

WPNA Business Members

<p>AMERICAN BUDDHIST CENTER 4400 Wyoming 816-210-3378</p> <p>BERGAMOT & IVY, INC. 1713 Westport Road 816-561-5599</p> <p>BOOZEFISH WINE BAR 1511 Westport Road 816-561-5995 www.boozefish.com</p> <p>CATHY'S CLIP & CURL SALON 4301 Wyoming St. 816-561-2331</p> <p>DANIE DUNN INTERIOR DESIGN 1801 Westport Road 816-561-7771</p> <p>DOGS' WORLD OF FUN 1220 W. 31st St. 816-931-5822 www.dogsworldoffun.com</p> <p>EDDIE DELAHUNT'S CAFÉ & 45th & Bell Streets 816-753-3322</p> <p>FINAL DRAFT SECRETARIAL SERVICE 4401 Genessee St. 816-931-2276 www.Finaldraftsecretarialservice.com</p>	<p>FRAN PEEK RYAN, PH.D. 4804 Terrace 816-444-1822</p> <p>KATE'S CANINE RESORT 2823 Main St. 816-753-4188</p> <p>KURT AARONS, DDS 4411 Belleview Ave. 816-531-2070</p> <p>LOTUS SKIN CARE STUDIO 4300 Bell St. Ste. 204 816-561-0555 Rachel@lotusskin.com</p> <p>MARSH'S SUN FRESH MARKET 4001 Mill St. 816-931-1639</p> <p>STEVEN C. MINGOS DDS & ASSOC 4746 Belleview Ave. 816-531-8740 www.drmingos.com</p> <p>MONTANARI FINE ART JEWELERS 4810 Belleview Ave. 816-531-0750 www.montanarijewelers.com</p> <p>ORGANIZE ME 816-529-6901</p> <p>PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT CO, LLC 4600 Madison 816-960-5255</p>	<p>PRECISION OPTICS 4181 Broadway 816-756-3577</p> <p>PRINT TEKK PRINTING & MAILING 4312 Terrace 816-931-4122</p> <p>SADER LAW FIRM 4739 Belleview Ave., Ste. 300 www.saderlawfirm.com</p> <p>SHANNON BASHAM Certified Personal Trainer & CPR Instructor 816-810-3623</p> <p>SUNSHINE FLOWERS 4509 Rainbow Blvd. 913-384-5034</p> <p>SWAYKIN DOULA SERVICES 913-486-0550 www.swaykindoula.com</p> <p>YOGA FIX STUDIO 2000 Shawnee Mission Parkway 913-384-3200 Hotyogakc.com</p> <p>YOUR NAME HERE BECOME A BUSINESS MEMBER OF THE WPNA & SUPPORT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!</p>
---	---	--

A \$25 business membership includes your name, address, and contact information in each WPNA newsletter.

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

Check One: New [] Renewal []

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

Check if you **DO NOT** want to receive phone reminders and messages from WPNA: []

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 []

[May-June 2009 Newsletter]