

WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Mark Your Calendar ☒

Upcoming General Meeting
Tuesday, March 16, 7-8 p.m.
Swinney Dual Language
Elementary School
1106 West 47th Street

- ✓ **Guest Speaker: Michael J. Oliver**
- ✓ **Renew your membership for 2010**
- ✓ **Drawing for \$25 Gift Card**

After a two-month delay, Michael J. Oliver, MFA, Recreational Director at the Westport Roanoke Community Center, will be our guest speaker in March. Michael graciously allowed himself to be bumped from the schedule in January to allow a timely safety presentation by the KCPD.

Our local community center on the red brick road at 3601 Roanoke has recently undergone renovation and modernization. Michael will tell us about the many activities and offerings to be found at the WRCC.

We will also hear from one (or possibly more) candidates for the School Board election coming up on April 6.

Please attend, and if you have not yet renewed your membership for 2010, bring your checkbook so you can take care of that! ■

WANTED

Volunteers interested in participating in a neighborhood safety program.
Email wpnakc@gmail.com or call Julie Tenenbaum at 816-931-2276.

Vigil Held to Honor Kevin Beaver

Sunday afternoon, January 24, a vigil was held in memory of our neighbor, Kevin Beaver, at St. Garabed's Church at 44th and Wyoming. Neighbors, friends and family filled the church to capacity, as Kevin's brother Sean presented a eulogy and Alvin Brooks spoke eloquently about the tragedy of violence in our society. The speakers' remarks were followed by a candlelight remembrance. Immediately following the service, coffee and refreshments were served in the church basement, affording everyone an opportunity to exchange greetings and condolences. In all, it was a solemn and dignified service, altogether befitting the circumstances.

Many thanks to Stephanie Murrell and Julie Tenenbaum for coordinating the vigil, and to other neighbors and friends who assisted.

If you would like to help the family with funeral and hospital expenses, please send contributions to Susan Beaver, 4421 Bell Street, Kansas City, MO 64111. ■

TIPS HOTLINE

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.

Swinney Closing? You Can Help Determine the Outcome

Editor's Note: As the newsletter goes to press, Swinney, our vibrant neighborhood school and the only dual language elementary school in Missouri, is slated for closure next year. A hearing will be held on Friday, February 19, at the Foreign Language Academy, 3450 Warwick, from 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. which could change this decision. It is vital that neighbors come to the meeting to voice opposition to Swinney's closure.

This article, written by Rie Clark, Principal of Swinney and member of the WPNA Board of Directors, before the closure was announced, exhibits just a few of the valuable services that Swinney provides to our community.

We are waiting to hear whether we will be part of the 20-30 schools in the Kansas City Missouri School District that will be closing next year. At Swinney, we pledge to keep our promise to do our best each day for our students despite the uncertain times.

We are excited to be hosting twenty members of the Kansas City Missouri Police Department for the next ten weeks who are receiving training in Spanish Language and Culture. The officers will be engaged in a total immersion Spanish language class taught by a certified instructor. At other times, as part of the coursework, the officers will spend time interacting with our students, whether playing dodge ball in the gym, eating lunch, sitting in the music class and singing, or conversing in Spanish.

The goal of the program is to prepare officers to communicate with their clientele in Spanish and to be aware of cultural and community norms. We are so happy to be hosting this program, as it provides an opportunity to break down negative stereotypes that some children and families hold about law enforcement. We are always happy to have community involvement in our school, as it benefits everyone.

Swinney is hosting an English class for our non-English-speaking parents on Wednesday and Friday mornings. If you want to learn Spanish, please join us from 8-9 every Monday morning in the library. Soon we will be offering basic computer skills and ballroom dancing classes to our community. Look for details in the near future.

Please remain active and knowledgeable about the upcoming school board elections, decisions on school closings, and school-related issues. We need to reinvest in our schools and hold school district authorities accountable for doing what is best for children. It is not just our duty, it is our obligation and our moral responsibility to our future. ■

Meet Your Neighbor – The Clarks

by Kevin Pinkowski

This month, you'll be meeting the Clark family on the 4700 block of Terrace: Sara, Tom, Steven (2 ½), Lyla (10 months), and Kira (7 – the dog).

Sara has lived in the West Plaza for more than 6 years. Originally from Minnesota, she is a transportation engineer with TranSystems, where she has been employed for 9 years. Her undergraduate degree is in Civil Engineering from Purdue; she went on to get her masters degree from the University of Texas in Austin. Sara moved into an apartment downtown when she first came to Kansas City and eventually found her way over to the West Plaza to buy a house. She has joined the ranks of the esteemed volunteers who call themselves "Former Board Members" (and yes, Sara, we still miss you).

Tom is originally from Arkansas and came to Kansas City by way of William Jewell College, where he earned his degree in Biology. It's that degree that led him to his career as an environmental scientist at TranSystems, where he met Sara (*it's okay, the boss knows*). Tom has since moved on to become a substitute teacher for academic and life coaching with the Kauffman Scholars, a college preparation and access program that provides the guidance and support necessary to place urban youth on the path to college graduation.

When Sara and Tom met at work, they convinced themselves they were merely "friends" until a trip to Peru for a friend's wedding, when Tom got lost after having too much fun one evening. To sum it up, when they returned from that trip, they were no longer "friends," and their fate had been sealed.

Several years later, Tom joined Sara on Terrace, and they have two beautiful children. In their spare time, Tom likes to brew (and presumably drink) his own beer. Sara likes to relax with yoga. They go to the zoo with the kids 2-3 times per month (even in the winter), cook, and tend to their rather sizable front yard garden.

They enjoy living in the West Plaza because of the proximity to dining and shopping opportunities, because of the unique feel it has, unlike any other neighborhood, and especially because of the wonderful asset that we all share – Westwood Park.

I always ask interviewees how people will recognize them in the neighborhood. It makes me very happy to say that several of the recent answers have involved strollers. The Clarks' stroller will likely be pointed in the direction of Cupcake à la Mode, with their Sheltie, Kira, in tow. ■

Prevent Identity Theft

According to estimates by the Federal Trade Commission, as many as 10 million Americans have their identity stolen each year. In a matter of only minutes, your personal information – your name, social security number, credit card numbers or other financial account information – can be stolen and used to commit fraud and other crimes. Not only can identity theft cost you a lot of time and money, but it can destroy your credit and ruin your good name, which can take years to undo.

Identity thieves may steal this information in any number of ways:

- They steal wallets and purses.
- They rummage through trash looking for bills, pre-approved credit card offers, or other paperwork that contains account numbers or other identifying information.
- They divert your bills to another location by completing a change of address form.
- Dishonest store employees steal credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card while you are making a purchase.
- Pretending to be financial institutions or other reputable companies, they send e-mail spam or pop-up messages to your computer to try to get you to reveal your personal information.

Once your identity has been stolen, thieves can do almost anything in your name: open credit cards and other accounts to make large purchases, rent an apartment, file for bankruptcy, or forge checks.

To see how devious a con can be, watch one in progress at <http://www.wimp.com/goodsamaritan/>.

While nothing can guarantee that you won't become a victim of identity theft, you can take some precautions to protect your privacy and reduce your risk.

ID Theft Prevention Tips

- Invest in a cross-cut shredder and shred any documents, mail, or bills that you no longer need that contain personal information.
- Limit the amount of personal information you carry with you. Carry only those cards and documents that are necessary.
- Do not carry your social security card with you. Memorize your number.

- Photocopy your passport and both sides of cards you carry in your wallet (e.g., credit cards, driver's license, insurance cards). Keep these copies in a safe place in your home along with a list of phone numbers to call for each in case they are lost or stolen. Report lost or stolen cards as soon as you realize they are missing.
- Write "Require Photo ID" on the back of your credit cards instead of signing them.
- Don't write your phone number on a check. If requested to provide a number, use your cell phone number.
- Mail all bills or checks from the post office or a U.S. mailbox.
- Don't use obvious passwords like your mother's maiden name, your birth date, or last four digits of your social security number.
- Don't give out personal information on the phone unless you are absolutely sure you know who you are dealing with. If you did not place the call, you don't know who you're talking to (watch the video mentioned above).
- Before entering personal information on a website, make sure it is secure. A secure website will begin with the letters "https."
- Use firewalls and up-to-date antivirus software and anti-spyware to protect your computer.
- You are entitled to a free credit report each year from the three consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax (800-525-6285); Experian (888-397-3742); and TransUnion (800-680-7289). You can also receive them online by visiting AnnualCreditReport.com.
- Review your financial accounts and billing statements on a regular basis. Question any unfamiliar charges quickly.
- Consider signing up with a company whose mission is to keep your identity safe.

If you suspect you may be a victim of identity theft, place a 90-day "fraud alert" on your credit reports (this is done without charge by the three companies previously mentioned) and review your reports carefully. Close any accounts that have been tampered with or established fraudulently, and file a report with law enforcement officials to help you with creditors who may want proof of the crime. You should also report the theft to the [Federal Trade Commission](http://www.ftc.gov).

Identity theft is on the rise, but by playing it smart, you can prevent it from happening to you. ■

A Brief History of Westport's Allen Library (Part Two)

by Joe Montanari

Continued from the January-February 2010 issue

For the next 95 years, the Allen Library served the Westport area admirably, becoming one of the busiest branches in the system. By the mid 1990s, however, the old building was looking tired and rundown from years of neglect. At that time, Mr. Dan Bradbury, the director of the Kansas City Public Library system, proposed that the venerable old building be retired and a new library built near the site of the Metropolitan Junior College. The new building, he reasoned, could better serve community needs with better parking, ADA accessibility, modern heating and cooling, and modern restroom facilities. It could also replace the dilapidated Hispanic language library on Southwest Boulevard. Though a noble idea, Mr. Bradbury's plans set off a firestorm of opposition throughout the community. No one had stopped to think how attached Westporters were to their library.

Concerned citizens started packing the library board meetings, asking pointed questions. How would the children from the West Side get across Southwest Trafficway safely to the new library, some asked. How would the Westport patrons, many of whom were elderly and walked to the library, manage to get to the new building on foot? What would happen to the historic building? Would it be sold or torn down? How did the fine old building get to be in such a deplorable condition in the first place? One astute citizen recalled that the old library had been built by and for the citizens of Westport with their own money, and it seemed wrong to move it out of Westport.

The move was on to save the library. Pryde's Old Westport, located across the street from the library, became the headquarters, and owners John Perucca and daughter Louise Perucca Myers provided the leadership and the coffee. Little children contributed their quarters, dimes, nickels, and pennies to the "Save the Library Fund." Demonstrators threatened to chain themselves to the library doors. Before long, it was evident to most that, while both the Westport Library and the Hispanic Language Library needed some serious improvements, closing them down and moving them to a new building on

Southwest Trafficway was not in everyone's best interests.

To his great credit and honor, Mr. Bradbury realized that perhaps there was another way to resolve the problem. One observant Westporter noticed that the library property had a 40-foot deep "back yard" behind the building. Why not build an addition to the old building to house the modern heating and cooling system, an elevator, modern bathrooms, and all the necessary ADA facilities? After all, the old building was essentially sound, built with massive foundations and enormous supporting piers. None of the masonry had shifted an iota in 100 years.

Lovingly restored and thoroughly modernized, the library was reopened and rededicated in 1995. The Allen Library is 110 years old and remains one of the busiest branches in the library system. ■

Irish Eyes are Smiling in KC

by Brad McCormack

As the snow melts and the calendar turns to March, Kansas City starts to look a little greener, both in nature and in people's attitudes. Your name doesn't have to start with "Mc" or "O" to appreciate and participate in all the Irish culture that will soon be flourishing in Kansas City. The events kick off on the Saturday before St. Patrick's Day – March 13, known as Snake Saturday – so-called in honor of St. Patrick, who drove the snakes out of Ireland.

There is a Westport 4 Mile Run at 10:00 a.m. that is open to anyone who registers (register at www.sportkc.org). Then there is a Family-Friendly Brookside Parade starting at 1:00 p.m. just south of the West Plaza. Though not as big as the event on the 17th, it's geared for kids of all ages and includes floats from all over (including the infamous "waggle walk" of the K.C. Basset Hound Club, appropriately pulling up the rear).

On March 17, Kansas City will once again host one of the largest St. Patrick's Day parades in the country. It will wind through the heart of Westport, starting at 33rd and Broadway and ending at 43rd and Broadway. The parade starts at 11:00 a.m. and all are welcome. Afterwards you can head to Mike Kelly's Westsider to listen to WPNA Resident Leprechaun Eddie Delahunt and sing along to some classic Irish music. ■

Annie's Irish Kitchen

by Annie McCormack

The luck of the Irish is with you when you try these recipes from Annie's Irish Kitchen. Brats make a tasty base for this simple evening meal. Add the easy soda bread and a pint of Guinness, and you'll taste the gold at the end of the rainbow.

Irish Stew

1 lb. diced ham
1 pkg. brats, each link cut into quarters
4 cups water
2 large yellow onions, peeled and thinly sliced
3 potatoes, peeled and thickly sliced
4 tablespoons of chopped freshly parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Place meat and water in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil, and add the remaining ingredients. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer gently for about an hour or until potatoes are done but not mushy. Liquid should be somewhat reduced. At 45 minutes, check the pot and if broth is still covering the contents, remove the lid and continue cooking for 15 minutes.

Irish Soda Bread

4 cups all-purpose flour
4 tablespoons white sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon baking power
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup margarine, softened
1 cup buttermilk
1 egg
¼ cup butter, melted
¼ cup buttermilk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease a large baking sheet. In a large bowl, mix flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and margarine. Stir in 1 cup of buttermilk and egg. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead slightly. Form dough into a round and place on baking sheet. In a small bowl, combine melted butter with ¼ cup buttermilk; brush loaf with this mixture. Use a sharp knife to cut an "X" onto the top of the loaf. Bake for 45-60 minutes and continue to brush the loaf with the butter mixture while it bakes. ■

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.

2010 WPNA Calendar

General Membership Meetings (7-8 p.m.)

Tuesday, March 16
Tuesday, July 20
Tuesday, September 21
Tuesday, November 16

Annual Picnic & Spring Cleanup

Saturday, May 15

*Neighborhood Yard Sales

Saturday, June 5

**Free-for-All

Saturday, June 12

Dance in the Park: TBA

Fall Cleanup: TBA

* Will be held on the same day as Westwood Park's sales.

****NEW EVENT!** Bring all your yard sale leftovers to Swinney School. The event is open to all, and everything is free to all who attend!



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Keeping in Touch with the WPNA

by Matt Nugent

Over the last year, the West Plaza Neighborhood Association has worked to find new ways of communicating with our members and neighbors. We've become more internet savvy, and while our newsletter will always be the backbone of our communications, we now have several new and exciting ways that you can connect with us and stay current with neighborhood news, activities, and events.

Our West Plaza website (www.westplaza.org) is the neighborhood's public "face" on the internet. Here you can find an electronic version of the latest newsletter, as well as an archive of past newsletters. The site also allows us to post news and neighborhood-related events that happen between issues of the bi-monthly newsletter. We are working on a West Plaza history page, complete with photos and Joe Montanari's excellent series of local history articles. If you have old photos of the neighborhood that you'd like to share, please let us know.

West Plaza email: If you are a member of the WPNA and going green is your thing, you'll be interested in having our newsletter emailed to you. We are very protective of our email list and use it only to broadcast important neighborhood news, so don't worry about us filling up your inbox. As the dozens of West Plaza residents on our list already know, it is a great way to receive reminders about our bi-monthly meetings and to stay current with Master Patrol Officer James Schriever's crime alerts. If you want to add your name to the list, email us at wpnack@gmail.com.

Facebook: Our West Plaza Facebook page is an informal place for residents to post or comment about news, crime watch updates, or whatever you feel like talking about. Surrounding neighborhoods have created terrific online communities with their Facebook pages, and we would like to duplicate their success. We also have links to local businesses that support the WPNA, as well as a calendar of upcoming events. To find us on Facebook, go to www.facebook.com/pages/West-Plaza-Neighborhood-Association/212s285316523, or click on the link at the top of our website. ■

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West Plaza Neighborhood Association Newsletter
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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):

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

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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

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Name _____ Address _____ Zip _____ Phone _____ *e-mail _____ Business Member Contact Name: _____	I would like to help the neighborhood with: Picnic [<input type="checkbox"/>] Property Maintenance/Zoning [<input type="checkbox"/>] Yard Sale [<input type="checkbox"/>] Neighborhood Clean-up [<input type="checkbox"/>] Crime Prevention [<input type="checkbox"/>] Meeting Refreshments [<input type="checkbox"/>] Newsletter Distribution [<input type="checkbox"/>] Gardening [<input type="checkbox"/>] <p style="text-align: right;">[March-April 2010 Newsletter]</p>
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*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.

WPNA Business Members

A \$25 Business Membership includes your name and contact information in each WPNA newsletter. *New member this month.

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