

WEST PLAZA

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



Mark Your Calendar

Upcoming General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, July 16, 2013, 7-8 p.m.

New! Social Half-Hour begins at 6:30

Immanuel Lutheran Church

1700 Westport Road

Guest Speaker: Bob Housh, Executive Director, Metropolitan Energy Center

Are you interested in saving energy and money this summer as you cool your home? Bob Housh, Executive Director of Metropolitan Energy Center, will speak to us about this and other topics at our meeting. MEC is a nonprofit organization formed in 1980 to create resource efficiency, environmental health, and economic vitality in the Kansas City region. You can find out more about MEC at <http://kcc.ks.gov/energy/>

In response to the neighborhood survey published in the last issue of the newsletter, 92% of you expressed interest in having more scheduled social events. The WPNA board has listened to you: We will be kicking off the first of many social events where you will have the opportunity to meet your neighbors. Please join us for complimentary food and beverages at 6:30 on the 16th.

If you have not joined the WPNA or have not yet renewed your membership for 2013, you may do so at the meeting. Don't forget to bring your checkbook!

A raffle for a door prize (all current members are eligible) will end the meeting. ■

CityWise

KC is home to the largest maker of boxed chocolates in the world. Based here since 1932, Russell Stover Candies still hand dips more than 25 million pieces of chocolate each year.

From the Membership Committee

Greg Madden and April Porter

Thank you to everyone who participated in our survey in the last issue of the newsletter. Your input is valuable to us; it will tell us which areas to focus on and how to provide the services and programs you want.

Thirteen surveys were returned out of 1,000 distributed in the April newsletter. The majority of people returning the surveys were 21-40 years old. The majority welcome the idea of more social events in the neighborhood. We've received many ideas that we will begin to implement, beginning with our meeting in July. We are adding a 30-minute social time before each of our general meetings. The social "hour" will begin at 6:30, with the meeting following at 7 p.m.

Reviewing the few surveys that were returned, we recognized how important your feedback is to our continued improvement and success. But we need to hear from more of our neighbors about what they want from the WPNA. If you have not already completed the survey, please take a few minutes today to fill it out (see page 9) and return it to us by mail or at the next meeting.

As a thank you, if you provide your name and contact information on your survey, you will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a complimentary Private Pool-Side Large Cabana Room and Four Water Resort Passes to CoCo Key Water Resort or a pillow from the Sleep Number Store. Each prize is valued at \$100.

If you have not yet submitted your survey, you still have time. The winners of the two gifts will be announced at the general meeting on Tuesday, July 16.

On behalf of all of the WPNA board members, we thank you for your participation. ■

Five Weekend Projects to Improve Your Home's Value

by Harold Scott

I recently read an article about increasing home value that focused on weekend projects to spruce up your home. It seemed like an easy way to plan home improvements, so here are some ideas:

1. The de-clutter weekend

De-cluttering should be the first job a homeowner takes on if they are thinking of selling or want to increase the value of their home. De-cluttering gives the illusion of space. One way to do this project is to get a friend, colleague, or casual acquaintance (who won't mind offending you) to walk through your house and give it to you straight. What is distracting? What needs to go?

2. Make over your cabinets weekend

The kitchen is the most important room in the house to get right, and cabinets are often one of the biggest problems. You don't need to get your cabinets refaced or replaced to make them look presentable. If they're scratched or look dated, just spring for a couple of cans of paint and put a new finish on them. Consider replacing cabinet pulls and knobs.

3. Patch and paint weekend

A fresh coat of paint is one of the easiest and cheapest things you can do to freshen your home and add zip to it. Choose a room, and dive in!

4. Spiff up your home's curb appeal weekend

Spend a weekend cleaning or replacing your mailbox, putting up new street numbers that match the style of your house, cleaning your storm doors and windows, and touching up chipped paint on your front door.

Take a good look at your landscaping, and trim back any shrubs around the front that are unruly. Get rid of lawn ornaments, leaves, and other debris from the yard, as well as those tools propped against the fence.

5. Fix your lighting weekend

You don't have to go crazy here, just replace anything damaged, dated, or distracting. These are easy fixes and can be done inexpensively.

Warm weather is perfect for renewing your home's appearance, and that's beneficial to you and the neighborhood. Choosing some weekend projects can focus your efforts and keep you organized. ■

Neighbor to Neighbor

by April Porter

In the past few weeks, members of the WPNA Membership Committee have been walking the neighborhood and speaking with our neighbors about their concerns. From these conversations, we have uncovered many issues; the most common topic was neighbors feeling disrespected by one another. People had some ideas about how to be a good neighbor.

Keep it down!

This is probably the number-one neighborly complaint, regardless of where you live. West Plaza neighbors suggested how to be considerate if you like to have late evenings in your yard:

- Let the neighbors know you will be having a party, but that you will turn the volume down after 10 p.m.
- If your guests can't stay quiet after 10 p.m., move the party indoors where it won't disturb your neighbors.
- Consider your neighbors when the party is over but the trash is left behind; be the first one up in the morning to clean up the cans or other trash on the street before the neighbors wake up.

Be mindful when parking on the street.

The second most common complaint we heard was about parking. If you have many guests over on a Friday night, suggest that your guests park in front of a vacant house, park in a parking lot and walk to your house, or carpool. You can also let your neighbors know that you will be having a party, and maybe even invite them, giving you a chance to get to know each other. Last winter's heavy snow brought out a particularly intense issue—parking in someone else's shoveled spot. It should go without saying: If you did not do the work to clear the spot...do NOT park in it!

If you have an issue, talk to the person.

If you have a problem with a neighbor, dealing with it in person is always best. While leaving a note or sending an email is tempting—it's easier than dealing with a neighbor face to face—it can also send the wrong message. The recipient can't hear your voice or read your body language in a note, so the tone of your message can easily be misinterpreted. ■

Source: Your West Plaza neighbors

Forks & Rakes by Stephanie Murrell

Basic Homemade Ice Cream:

No Ice Cream Maker Needed!

Ingredients

- 1 14-oz can Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. vanilla
- 2 cups whipping cream

Instructions

1. In a large bowl, combine the sweetened condensed milk with the half and half, salt, and vanilla. Stir until well blended.
2. In another bowl, whip the whipping cream until soft peaks form.
3. Fold the whipped cream into the sweetened condensed milk.
4. Place in a 9 x 5 loaf pan or other similar container. At this point, you can also add in mix-ins. You can do it in layers or swirl it in.
5. Cover and freeze 6 hours or until firm. ■



Fun Times at the Spring Cleanup!

Joe Montanari (president), Harold Scott (board member), and Greg Madden (membership director) play around in the debris. More than 80 neighbors took advantage of the cleanup by bringing their yard waste and “unwants” to the dumpsters. Greg was lucky enough to snag a perfectly good fountain from our Sidewalk Collectibles.

Tips for a Healthy Lawn

- Raise the height of your mower by one notch. It will help your grass withstand dry weather.
- A sharp mower blade is one of the best tools for turf grass health and water savings. A ragged cut makes grass use more water. Zoysia grass lawns in particular look better when the blade is sharpened each year.
- Water newly planted sod deeply and regularly so the roots will explore the soil beneath.
- Observe Bermuda grass lawns for the beach-ball-sized dead areas that might signify spring dead spot. Nothing can be done now; new grass will eventually fill the spot, but remember to spray with myclobutanil in September.
- Early June begins the best season to plant centipede grass, Bermuda grass, and zoysia grass from seed.
- Mushrooms in the lawn are unsightly but harmless. They usually signify that a tree root is decomposing beneath the soil. Mushrooms are simply fungus “flowers.” Nothing can be done to prevent them.
- Use a 1:1 mixture of topsoil and sand to fill the seams in newly laid sod and to level ruts and depressions in your lawn.
- Mix bermuda grass, centipede grass, or zoysia grass seed with dry sand before planting. A 1:10 mixture of seed:sand will help you scatter the seed more evenly.
- Fertilize bermuda grass lawns every six weeks with any brand of turf fertilizer. Do not fertilize fescue lawns until September.
- Fertilize zoysia grass lawns twice each summer. Any turf grass fertilizer will work.
- Use a “broad-leaf weed killer” to spot spray violets, wild strawberry, mimosa weed and prostrate spurge in your lawn.
- Water your lawn only once per week but make it a deep, thorough soaking: one inch of water, measured with a couple of tuna cans.

Source: <http://www.walterreeves.com/lawn-care/june-lawn-tips/> ■

Looking Back: The Greening of Kansas City

by Joe Montanari

It is said that Kansas City has more fountains than Rome and more boulevards than Paris. True or not, there can be no dispute that the miles of tree-lined boulevards, parks, and fountains lend a certain refinement and charm to our town that is lacking in many others. Abundant green space provides welcome relief from the crowded congestion of urban life. But it wasn't always like this. Already a sprawling metropolis by 1890, Kansas City had grown sporadically, in a piecemeal fashion. Its population was growing by leaps and bounds, fueled by the lumber and meat-packing industries, shipping, warehousing, and agribusiness. New neighborhoods like West Plaza were springing up to meet the demand for housing.

As the more desirable lots were bought up and developed into blocks of handsome new homes, less desirable property was left over, perhaps due to its unusual topography or a peculiar geographic feature that made it difficult to build upon. This cheaper property was often occupied by transients who slapped up tarpaper shacks. Builders were concerned that the fine residential neighborhoods would soon slide into decay if they bordered on slums. The solution was to create parks and boulevards from the rough terrain, emphasizing the natural beauty of these rugged geographic features. This desire to preserve property values was the genesis of the Kansas City, MO Parks Department.

George Kessler, a young landscape architect from Germany, arrived in Kansas City in 1878. An early adherent to the City Beautiful movement that was sweeping the country in the late 1800s, Kessler had grand ideas for beautifying and gentrifying this frontier cow-town. Backed by the powerful editorial voice of William Rockhill Nelson and the *Kansas City Star*, Kessler and Robert Gillham, another early proponent of urban beautification, set about designing a system of parks and boulevards that remains unmatched by any other city in the country.

One of the first public parks to be built was along Cliff Drive, followed by Gillham Park and Roanoke Park. It is said that more than 300 shacks were bought up and demolished to create Penn Valley Park, whose rugged cliffs overlook downtown and

provide an ideal setting for the iconic *Scout* statue. Our own Westwood Park was once a trash-strewn wooded creek bed. The creek is still there, but you don't see it, because it is buried in a large culvert running underground diagonally from the northwest corner of the park to the southeast corner, from which it continues to flow under Westwood Road, finally emptying into Brush Creek. Before the park was created in the late 1940s, the creek valley was much deeper and covered with trees and thick brush. Parks Department landscapers filled in the deep valley, providing level fields for baseball and other sports.

Today Westwood Park is a real treasure. The new walkways, lighting system, playground equipment, and refurbished shelter house add to its appeal. Just a few weeks ago, the old oil drum trash receptacles were replaced with handsome new wrought-iron ones. And take a look at the rose garden on the 47th and State Line corner, where the roses are in full bloom.

Your West Plaza Neighborhood Association has worked hard to bring forth many of these improvements, and it would be great to take all the credit—but we can't. Our good neighbors to the south, the Westwood Park Homes Association, led by Aryn Roth and Ann Nixon, have taken the lead, working hand-in-glove with the Parks Department to improve Westwood Park. The next time you see Aryn and her dog Luna in the park, stop and say "thank you." And take a moment to remember George Kessler and Robert Gillham, whose spirit lives on in Our Town's beautiful parks, boulevards, and fountains.

Sources: Missouri, the Center State by Walter B. Stevens; *Kansas City and How It Grew*, by James R. Shortridge, and Wikipedia ■

In Memoriam

Kate Kern, West Plaza resident and WPNA volunteer, passed away in early June. For many years, Kate was the person who helped us by calling volunteers to determine their availability to hand deliver the newsletter throughout the neighborhood. She was a long-time member of the West Plaza Neighborhood Association who gave generously of her time, and she will be greatly missed.

Safety on the Road

A recent stalking incident in Leawood, KS points out the importance of being aware of your environment, both day and night, wherever you are. Following are tips for staying safe while traveling.

- Drive on busy, well-lighted streets.
- Keep your car in good running order.
- Never pick up hitchhikers.
- Keep your car in gear while waiting at traffic signals and stop signs. If you are threatened, honk the horn and drive away.
- Plan your route in advance. Never allow your gas gauge to fall below the quarter tank level. Have enough gas and money to get you there and back.
- Drive with all car doors locked and keep the windows rolled up whenever possible.
- Keep your wallet, purse, and other valuables out of sight while driving, not on the seat next to you. Place items in the glove compartment, under a front seat, or in the trunk.
- Put items in your trunk before arriving at your destination. Too often people do this after they park, thereby telling a criminal exactly where the valuables are; they can then break in after you leave the area on foot.
- Do not store items in your car overnight.
- Keep spare money in your car for a taxi, bus fare, or phone calls in case of a breakdown.
- If you see another motorist in trouble, do not stop. As you drive by, signal that you are going to get help. Find a pay telephone or use your cell phone to call for assistance.
- If you travel a regular route to and from work, familiarize yourself with businesses on the route that stay open late in case you need emergency assistance.
- Be alert to your surroundings at all times while driving and when you are getting in and out of your car.
- Do not let yourself be distracted while driving. Do not text or make calls on your cell phone.
- Drive in the lane closest to the center of the roadway when traveling in areas you think are unsafe. Leave enough space between your car

and the car in front of you to enable you to go around the car quickly if necessary.

- Always turn off the ignition, remove the key, and lock your car doors, no matter how soon you plan on returning.
- Do not park next to vans, trucks with camper shells, or other vehicles whose size and structure can provide concealment for a potential assailant. Exercise caution when using underground or enclosed parking garages. Walk in the center aisle, rather than close to parked cars.
- Keep your car keys and house keys on separate key rings.
- Have your key in hand before you get to your car.
- If you are carrying packages, keep one hand free, even if it means making an extra trip. ■

Picnic Thanks

Many thanks to our business and household members who donated door prizes and food for the annual picnic:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Eye Care Optical | Mike Kelly's Westsider |
| Hair Style | Print Tekk |
| Jessica at Evolve Salon | Rainbow Thrift |
| John Penland | Sunshine Flowers |
| Johnny Jo's Pizza | Westlake Hardware |
| Marsh's Sun Fresh Market | |

Thanks also to Adam Braunschweig, who provided the great music.



Scott Burnett, Jackson County Legislator, and WPNA president Joe Montanari discuss weighty matters at the Annual Picnic on May 19.

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“Bad Houses”

by Dennis Walter

If you have a problem with a neglected or abandoned house near you or elsewhere in West Plaza, you can report the problem to the City via phone at the 3-1-1 call center or the Kansas City, Missouri website. Go to KCMO.org, then select the Neighborhoods and Housing Services under Departments, then Housing Preservation, and finally, Report a Problem (3-1-1 Call Center). Fill out the form to submit your complaint.

While you're on the website, you may want to explore a little. Some of the violations mentioned are dangerous buildings, which include neglected properties and structures that are open to entry, and nuisance violations such as high weeds and illegally dumped trash.

On the Common Violations page, there is also a interactive “Worst House in KCMO” where you can learn about common code violations and the steps that can be taken to correct them. ■

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to happen, It's not. — Dr. Seuss

**NOTICE! WPNA Membership runs on the calendar year, from January 1 through December 31.
If you have not renewed for 2013, 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 (\$12) Senior (\$7) Business (\$25) + Donation _____ = TOTAL _____

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

Membership Feral Cat Program

[July-August 2013]

2013 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:

July 16, September 17, November 19

Dance in the Park: Saturday, September 7

Fall Cleanup: TBA

Feral Cat Issues?

Contact Sharon Martin

816-931-1194

Feral_WPNA@kc.rr.com

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



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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:

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

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2013 WPNA Business Members

* New Member this Month

Please support the businesses that support your neighborhood.

A \$25 Business Membership includes your name and contact information in each WPNA newsletter, which is sent as a pdf to a 300-name email list and hand-delivered six times per year to 1,100 homes in the West Plaza neighborhood.

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