

2010 VNA Calendar

VNA Events

(Dates to be determined.)

Graffiti Cleanup Day
Spring Dumpster Day
Spring Neighborhood-Wide Garage Sale
Dance in the Park
Fall Dumpster Day
Fall Neighborhood-Wide Garage Sale
Halloween Fun Fest

VNA Meeting Schedule

Meetings are 2nd Thursday of the month.

January 14 June 10
February 11 July 8
March 11 September 9
April 8 October 14
May 13 November 11

(No meeting in August or December.)

Your Volunteer VNA Board Members

President Pam Gilford 931-3932 president@volkerna.org	North Area Reps Jim Peters, 561-1492 rep1-N@volkerna.org
Vice-President Michelle Rogers 531-0237 vice-president@volkerna.org	Diane Capps 753-0909 rep2-N@volkerna.org
Treasurer Steve Davis 753-6559 treasurer@volkerna.org	Southeast Area Reps Jeff Lewis 931-5632 rep1-SE@volkerna.org
Secretary Ruth Sanders treasurer@volkerna.org	Manuel Lopez 931-3932
Membership Rick Leidig 931-4293 membership@volkerna.org	Southwest Area Reps Andy Samur 931-5335 Dean Darnell 531-6548

VNA Housing Committee Meeting

VNA is looking for individuals who are interested in joining the Housing Committee. We would like to work with the KCMO Codes Administration Department to ensure that our homes are up to code.

The Housing Committee will meet at 6:30pm before the VNA general meetings. This month's meeting is on Thursday, February 11th at Immanuel Lutheran Church at Westport & Bell.

If you are interested in being on the Housing Committee, please contact Manuel Lopez at 931-3932.

Candidates for School Board Ask for Volker Votes

With elections scheduled in April for several open seats on the Kansas City, Mo. school board, two guests made presentations at the January VNA meeting. Volker resident Kyleen Carroll is seeking election to one of two at-large seats. She is a former middle school teacher in the Kansas City School District. Speaking on behalf of Crispin Rea was his campaign manager, Jessica Ayala. Rea, a former aide to mayor Mark Funkhouser, hoped to garner enough signatures on a petition to be placed on the ballot as an at-large candidate.

Upcoming School Board Election Forum

March 22 - Visitation Church, Tighe Hall 5141 Main - 6 pm. At-Large Candidates Public Forum - sponsored by Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO) and Visitation.



Printing provided by the
**Neighborhood and
Community Services
Department**

Become a member of VNA!

We would like to encourage residents to join the Volker Neighborhood Association and to become involved in the Volker community.

VNA Website

www.volkerkcmo.org

- Register on the main page of the website to receive reminder emails about meetings.
- Articles from the VNA Newsletter are also available on website.

VNA Facebook

Volker Neighborhood Association also has a Facebook page. Become a fan!



Our Next Meeting:

March 11

6:30 pm Social Time
7:00 pm Meeting

at

**Immanuel
Lutheran Church**
1700 Westport Rd at Bell

VNA meets on the **SECOND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH** at 7pm (except August and December).

The Start of Push-Back Against Crime

Emotions were strong in Prospero's Books at 39th and Bell Streets on Sunday evening, January 31st. A Volker Watch meeting organized by resident Kara Werner drew an audience of more than 40 neighbors who had come to talk about ways to deal with the recent upsurge of violent crime in the neighborhood. They came, too, from outside Volker, from close-in areas like Roanoke and West Plaza, where Kevin Beaver, fatally wounded in the December 18th, 2009 strong-arm robbery at Westport Road and Wyoming Street, lived.

Some were angry; others were apprehensive; others were just plain upset. All, however, were resolute and united on one point: Volkerites need to stand together against the criminals that seem poised to exploit the open friendliness that is one of Volker's best assets, where warm weather events like block parties and front porch visits project a nearly small town ambience.

Take Dave, who opened his door early one evening to be confronted by two young men, one of whom pointed a gun in the homeowner's face. "I'm still pretty mad," he said. "It's like being violated."

Several of Dave's neighbors shared their feelings as well. Trinity, there with her friend Janine, spoke of now being uneasy as she walks from her front door a short distance to her car. "I move fast," she said, "and keep my eyes open."

One man, the father of small children, expressed concerns for their safety. He had begun thinking, he said, about a possible move to the suburbs.

When talk shifted into ideas about mounting an effective response, individual narratives revealed the complexity of the problem. Take police presence. Jeff Lewis, southeast area representative with the Volker Neighborhood Association, observed that Central Patrol Division covers an area from the Missouri River on the north to the Plaza on the south, and from State Line

Road east to Prospect Avenue. Included in that territory are high-density entertainment venues like the Power & Light District and Westport, where gatherings of upwards of 100,000 people can surge between 7 PM and Midnight.

"That drains law enforcement resources that would otherwise be available for our neighborhood," said Lewis. Response time to 911 calls can consequently stretch into 20 minutes, a critical period in the case of a life-threatening event like armed robbery.

By meeting's end, there was general agreement that starting a neighborhood watch program was worthwhile, along with developing closer ties to our neighbors. In remarks at the January VNA meeting, Officer James Schriever, neighborhood police liaison from Central Patrol Division, stated his belief that neighbors looking out for each other and being aware of patterns in their surroundings can be a powerful deterrent to crime.

"There are a lot more of us than there are of [the police]," said Dan, a participant in the discussion. "If we call 911, and if they get more than one person calling, and we call whenever there's an incident, we'll get their attention. He went on to say that more people need to turn on porch lights "Volker tends to be dark."

As next steps, Kara Werner envisions a candlelight "take back the night" vigil, and organizing telephone trees so neighbors can spread alerts when a crime has been committed.

Although it may have taken misfortune to galvanize our neighborhood, the outcome can only be a better, safer and closer Volker community.

Below is information about the next Volker Watch meeting:

Sunday, February 21st
6:00pm-8:00pm
Prospero's Bookstore
1800 W. 39th Street

-Rick Leidig

Membership Application Volker Neighborhood Association			
Name			Please Check Membership Type
Address			Individual, \$15
City	State	Zip	Business, \$25
Phone			Senior Adult, \$10
E-mail			Household, \$10 per Volker member (minimum \$20)
I am interested in working on Volker projects			Total enclosed: \$
MAIL TO: Rick Leidig 645 W. 42 nd Street, Kansas City, MO 64111			Make check payable to: Volker Neighborhood Association
Support your neighborhood by joining today. Take part in shaping Volker's future.			

City budget is in development

From 4th District Councilwoman
Jan Marcason's January newsletter:

The Mayor has until February 11 to forward his budget recommendations to the City Council, having recently received the Acting City Manager's budget proposal. Public budget hearings will take place in all six city council districts over the next month.

You're invited to join me at the Fourth District budget hearing set for 10:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday, February 20. The meeting will be held in the Parish Hall at St. Paul Episcopal Church's, 40th and Main Street.

The city is required to approve a balanced budget. With income projections being down due to the economic downturn, the Acting City Manager was required to identify more than \$60 million in cuts in an already austere budget. Some highlights of his approach include:

- further reduction in City staff and benefits
- increase the charge for additional bags of trash
- reduce mowing of park land
- expand mowing of vacant properties in response to the increase in foreclosures in certain areas
- cut back on some capital improvement projects.

To subscribe to the councilwoman's e-newsletter, email; Jan Marcason jan@jan4kc.com.

Upcoming City Budget Hearing 4th District

Sunday, February 20th
10-noon
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
40th & Main

See Jan Marcason article above for more budget information.

Gangs in Kansas City: Evolution of a Criminal Culture

The following article is an excerpt of information provided by Master Patrol Officer James Schriever of the Central Patrol Division in response to questions and concerns voiced by neighbors at the January 2010 VNA meeting. It traces the development of local gangs from prototypes imported from Southern California and later Chicago in the late 1980s and touches on the relationship of graffiti to the presence and activities of gangs in the Kansas City area investigated by the Kansas City Police Department's Gang Squad.

A second article devoted solely to graffiti and how to combat this blight will appear next month. -ed.

In 1987, members of Los Angeles street gangs began arriving in many cities throughout the Midwest to establish drug distribution operations. Many local youths became involved in selling drugs and also adopted the gang culture. From these origins, local gangs began to spring up, many of which bear the names of original street gangs from Los Angeles. Around 1990, members of Chicago street gangs also appeared in the Kansas City area, frequently to avoid arrest or to set up drug operations.

There are believed to be approximately 3055 gang members or affiliates and over 442 different gangs in all areas of Kansas City, Missouri including the Northland. Many of these consist of only a few members and most of these have little or no actual connection or affiliation to gangs in other cities. Street gangs in the area have been arrested for all forms of crimes: murder, robbery, rape, assault, narcotics, firearms violations, auto theft, and numerous other crimes. Approximately 90% of their activity involves narcotics such as "crack" cocaine, methamphetamines, PCP and Ecstasy.

In October of 1993, the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department recognized the need for a full time unit devoted to identifying criminal gang activity and investigating it. The Gang Squad was developed and places particular emphasis on violent crimes, narcotics activity and firearms violations. The City of Kansas City, Missouri has gangs throughout the entire city. The allure of gang culture draws young people from all walks of life, socio-economic backgrounds, races and ethnic groups.

The vast majority of gang members in Kansas City, Missouri grow up together on the same block, live in the same area, or attend the same school. However, these gang sets sometimes manifest themselves into some loosely aligned gangs that have a significant impact in many area of the community. It is not uncommon for gang members in this area to change their gang affiliation and to claim affiliation with more than one gang set. Gang members reflect a constituency of those at the very bottom of the social ladder with little hope of legitimate advancement in society. Gangs in Kansas City, Missouri to date have had little to no connection or commonality with the national gangs since the late 1980's. This is not to say in the future there is a possibility of national gangs infiltrating the City of Kansas City Missouri again.

If you witness or suspect the presence of gangs and gang activity in your neighborhood, Call the Gang Squad at 482-8235 (Leave message) or call the TIPS Hotline 474-TIPS (8477).

Crime, Although Down, Took No Holiday In Midtown

In the aftermath of media coverage of robbery-homicide victim Kevin Beaver plus a spate of residential burglaries during December 2009, Master Patrol Officer James Schriever from Central Patrol Division (CPD) had an attentive audience at the January 14 VNA meeting. The meeting took place in the administrative/conference annex of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Bell Street at Westport Road.

Compared with 2008, Schriever said that crime overall in his division during 2009 was down. That included property crimes. But the officer's next words gave notice that reduction in overall crime rates does not mean that we all can relax. One reason is that Central Patrol, whose boundaries run from the Missouri River south to Brush Creek and from the State Line east to Prospect Avenue, contains several entertainment and restaurant districts that attract large numbers of people. "Within the Power & Light District, Westport and the [Country Club] Plaza, the population can quadruple between 7:00 PM and Midnight," Schriever said. This population overload in turn can seriously impact response time. Schriever cited 820 service calls to one address on Armour Boulevard in one evening as an example.

A type of crime that always increases during holidays is automobile break-ins, when shoppers leave parcels, some of them appealingly gift wrapped, present an attractive target for thieves. But in addition to merchandise, there is another motive criminals have begun pursuing—'phishing' for data that can lead to even more rewards. Global Position System (GPS) devices play a key role in these activities (see related sidebar).

Responding to questions about the amount of graffiti visible in midtown and possible connections with gangs, Schriever noted that muggings in south Volker are an indication that gangs are moving away from the drug trade to robbery because robbery is more profitable. Take photos of graffiti and e-mail them to James.Schriever@kcpd.org for analysis of possible gang connections. He also underlined the importance of eliminating signs of neglect and apathy that encourage criminals to move into an area. In this respect police officers can be important allies, as they were when as a result of their efforts cleaning up graffiti and removing 70,000 pounds of debris in the West Bottoms, stealing declined 40% and auto theft 80%. Other participants in the clean-up were Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOt) personnel and "volunteers" working off community service sentences.

Groups like Volker and other neighborhood associations in midtown Kansas City are a valuable resource in community policing, according to Schriever. "The greatness of the neighborhood associations—West Plaza, Volker and others—is the closeness that comes from people watching out for each other," he said.

-Rick Leidig

Personal Safety Class

Master Patrol Officer James Schriever from the Kansas City Police Department is doing a personal safety class at The Scottish Rite Temple at 1330 E. Linwood on Tuesday, February 23rd from 6pm to 8pm. It is free and all are invited to attend. More information below from an email from Officer Schriever:

The class will consist of a 1.5 hour Power Point presentation covering personal safety at home and in public, discussion and prevention of Drug Facilitated Sexual Assaults, discussion on types of weapons to include hands on, pepper sprays, stun guns and lethal weapons. The program will also include a demonstration (by Officer Schriever and a volunteer) of hands on escape moves then followed by a question and answer session. Printed crime prevention brochures will also be available.

GPS: Guard, Protect, Secure

"I wouldn't be without it." A real estate broker -friend was speaking about the Global Positioning System (GPS) in her Lincoln Town Car.

My friend is one of millions who have embraced this technological aid to navigating anything from in-town destinations to cross-country treks.

Unfortunately, criminals also see the value of these devices. Which is why they are among the most-likely items to be stolen from vehicles.

Think it's safely out of sight in the glove box or center console? W-r-o-o-n-g! Even if there's not a visual clue like an attachment point on your windshield, a thief might decide it's worth his while to look in those out of sight places. And once he has your GPS, the way lies open for more trouble.

The popular units can provide a quick and easy source of money in a street transaction. But, says Master Patrol Officer James Schriever of Kansas City Police Department's Central Patrol Division, "That thief can use your GPS to take him to your home, street by street, turn by turn. Your home can then be burglarized – sometimes before you even return home."

The conclusion? Take your GPS unit with you wherever you go!

-Rick Leidig