

Time to Join VNA!

Do your New Year's resolutions include becoming a member of Volker Neighborhood Association?

Being a member of VNA is a great way to meet others, share concerns, and find ways to have a positive impact on the neighborhood.

The most frequent reason we hear not to join is: "I don't have time to go to the meetings." However, you can become a member without attending all the meetings, and still participate in neighborhood issues that concern you.

The newsletter and website both give information about main agenda item and guest speaker for the upcoming meeting. If you see a topic of interest to you, you can attend or contact a board member to see how you can get involved.

Even if the newsletters don't make it out before the meeting, the information is always online. And the general meetings have been on the second Thursdays of the month for decades. Board meetings are the fourth Thursdays of the month, and are open, as required by law. Folks with particular issues are welcome to get on the agenda.

So why should you join?

- Meet people in the Volker neighborhood and share your concerns and ideas.
- If many people take on small tasks, a lot can get done to improve our neighborhood.
- Larger participation gives us a stronger voice in city government.
- We need your membership fee to keep VNA alive and strong. The money from your membership helps fund the newsletter, website, and events such as dumpster days and Dance in the Park.

2010 VNA Calendar

VNA Events

(Dates to be determined.)

- Spring Dumpster Day
- Spring Neighborhood-Wide Garage Sale
- Dance in the Park
- Fall Dumpster Day
- Fall Neighborhood-Wide Garage Sale
- Halloween FunFest

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.)*

VNA Board

President
Pam Gilford,
931-3932
president@volkerna.org

Vice-President
Michelle Rogers
531-0237
vice-president@volkerna.org

Treasurer
Steve Davis
753-6559
treasurer@volkerna.org

Secretary
Ruth Sanders
treasurer@volkerna.org

Membership
Rick Leidig
931-4293

Area Reps

North
Jim Peters,
561-1492
rep1-N@volkerna.org

Diane Capps
753-0909
rep2-N@volkerna.org

Southeast
Jeff Lewis
931-5632
rep1-SE@volkerna.org

Manuel Lopez
931-3932

Southwest
Andy Samur
931-5335

Dean Darnell
531-6548



VNA meets on the 2nd THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH EXCEPT AUGUST AND DECEMBER.

White Christmas Gives Cold Comfort to Pedestrians

Pedestrians throughout midtown Kansas found the going tough in the aftermath of the winter storm that swept across the Plains States December 24-25. While city crews began plowing major thoroughfares as the storm subsided, the heavy, drifting snow was compounded by additional curbside accumulations thrown up by plows, making walking dicey. As the accumulated "wintry mix" was packed down and turned to ice by traffic, conditions became especially hazardous. Volkerites venturing out to destinations in Westport floundered in knee-deep drifts along uncleared sidewalks.

In past years, we could count on a relatively quick warm-up to melt some obstacles. Not this year, as temperatures remain in the teens and single digits.

The city's 311 hotline reported being overwhelmed by calls. Fourth District Councilwoman Jan Marcason also received calls and e-mails. She said she would relay concerns to the Public Works Department January 4th. She also encouraged contacts to her office about specific blockages, writing "Often we can get someone out to remedy the situation."

-Rick Leidig

Happy New Year, Volkerites and Friends!

I hope that most of you have had a good holiday season, and are weathering this cold the weather well. Sadly, the holiday season as usual has been accompanied by an increase in crime, and this year some of them have been against persons, not just property.

Our condolences and concern goes out to those who have been victims of violent crime over this season, particularly the family of Kevin Beaver. Kevin, chef at McCoy's in Westport, was killed during an early morning armed robbery while walking to work. I get the impression that everyone in food service in Midtown either knew Kevin or had friends who did. It was a senseless crime and leaves us all fearful and sorrowful.

More details are available on the West Plaza Neighborhood Association site, westplaza.org. A memorial fund has been set up at: Susan Beaver Fund, 12120 State Line, Box 336, Leawood, KS 66209.

No one deserves such a fate. In our little corner of Midtown KC, we luckily go a long time between incidents of random crime or violence. A letter written to the

Our Next Meeting:

January 14th

6:30 pm Social Time
7:00 pm Meeting
at

Immanuel Lutheran Church
1700 Westport Rd at Bell

Guest Speaker

Central Patrol Division police will talk about crime and safety.

Kansas City Star (by someone who had relocated to Johnson County) demanded tougher law enforcement, the usual knee-jerk reaction.

I feel that our best response is to renew our commitment to watch out for each other and to pay attention to what goes on around us in the neighborhood. Neighbors did give aid to Kevin, and that is as it should be.

Learn to recognize who lives on your street and be generally (not nosily) aware of their comings and goings. The measure of privacy we lose is to my mind a more than fair trade for more safety and a heightened sense of community.

-Pam Gilford

Volunteers Needed for Housing Committee

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! VNA is looking for a few individuals who are interested in joining the Housing Committee. We need to work with the Codes Administration Department of the City of Kansas City and see what needs to be done in order that our homes meet the codes.

If you are one of those who have a half-hour to spare once a month, please contact Manuel Lopez at 931-3932.

VNA membership can be obtained all year. .
Newsletter articles also can be found on
www.volkerkcmo.org
and Volker has a new Facebook page
Meeting 2nd Thursday monthly for 25 years!

Production of this publication was made possible through support from the KCMO Neighborhood Development Dept. (Community Development Block Grant)

Membership Application Volker Neighborhood Association				
Name				Please Check Membership Type
Address				Individual, \$15
City	State	Zip		Business, \$25
Phone				Junior Adult, \$10
E-mail				Household, \$10 per month member (minimum \$20)
I am interested in working on Volker projects				Total enclosed \$
MAILED TO: Rick Leidig 845 W. 42 nd Street, Kansas City MO 64111				Makes Check payable to: Volker Neighborhood Association
Support your neighborhood by joining today. Take part in shaping Volker's future.				

School of the Angels Returns to Roots in Volker

In the protective shadow of Guardian Angels Church on Mercier Street stands a 1950s-era tan brick building that once housed the parish school, its students educated by religious sisters who lived in the convent just to the north. In the 1990s, after the consolidation with the parochial school at Redemptorist parish on Broadway at Linwood Boulevard, the now-vacant structure became the secular Plaza Academy.

Now in its rebirth as Our Lady of the Angels School under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph, it typifies the changes that over time have replaced the traditional model of Catholic private, parish-centered education. The nuns are gone, although they still maintain a small community in the convent residence. Today, they have been replaced by lay teachers.

Consolidation of formerly distinct parish schools means that now the School of Our Lady of the Angels serves students from seven midtown Kansas City, Missouri parishes plus 20 families on the Kansas side of the metroplex. There are non-Catholic students as well, from families who want their children to experience the academic emphasis, moral values and safe environment the school provides. The curriculum might be described as basic, but contemporary technology is not left out; four “smart” classrooms are equipped with computers, digital projectors and screens.

Principal Mary Delac, now in her third year, reflects the youthful professionalism of her faculty. In classroom after classroom, there is order and attentiveness to learning. Students wearing uniforms of navy or white shirts or blouses, khaki or navy slacks (girls have the option of plaid or navy skirts) are respectful and take the momentary intrusion of a visitor in polite stride.

There are currently 178 pupils in kindergarten through eighth grade. Although most start in the fall, transfer students can be admitted throughout the school year depending on available spaces.

There are plans to make the school even better. A prime area for improvement is safety on the playgrounds. “Some drivers use the recreation area between church and school to cut through from Terrace to Mercier streets,” says Ms. Delac. “We hope to install gates to block off that access.” School zone warning signs are another safety upgrade that would reduce potential hazards from vehicular traffic.

Improvements take money of course, money that tuition is not enough to cover. So fund raising, while not a formal element in the curriculum, engages pupils and their families in events such as the annual Eagle Walk, which took place this year on October 30th. Donors pledge money to students who walk a specified distance on a course in Loose Park.

Volunteerism also plays an essential part in maintaining the operation. Parents are recruited for services such as routine building maintenance, tutoring in computer skills and serving as mentors. Volunteers working with students undergo a background investigation and complete a three-hour training course produced by the Diocese of Kansas City –St. Joseph.

Through attention to details such as the welfare of its students, The School of the Angels has been successful since it opened three years ago. Information about quality education in the urban core is eagerly sought by anxious parents, and as Mary Delac observes, “Word of mouth is our best referral.”

-Rick Leidig

Westport Roanoke Community Center Fitness Center

Westport Roanoke Community Center (WRCC) has a fitness center that we have been hearing great things about! If you have a new year resolution to become more active, you may want to check it out. More information by calling WRCC at 784-5200.

Hours of Operation:

- Monday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Tuesday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Fitness Pass Fees:

- Adult—\$3 daily, \$20 monthly, or \$200 yearly
- Senior—\$2 daily, \$15 monthly, or \$200 yearly

New Banners

VNA board members Jim Peters and Pam Gilford attended the December meeting of the 39th Street West Community Improvement District (CID), our partners for the new banners. The banners will have the 39th Street logo on one side and VNA on the other. We signed a Memorandum of Agreement to seal our cooperative project, and gave them the list of banner locations and condition that Rick Leidig had prepared last fall. The only graphic relic of the original banner was not a vector file. Max Ross of 39th Street CID is taking the computer file we found and modifying it so VNA can keep our original design. The new banners should go up in the spring!

Lighting Plans for 39th Street

The 39th Street West Community Improvement District (CID) is pleased to announce the commencement of a project that has been planned for several years. Beginning in the first quarter of 2010 the installation of 33 pedestrian lighting fixtures will be installed on both sides of 39th Street between State Line Road and Terrace Street. This project represents the first phase of a pedestrian lighting plan that will ultimately extend from State Line Road to Southwest Trafficway. The lighting project is consistent with the recommendations of a master plan created for the district shortly after its formation. The project is funded by the 39th Street West Community Improvement District and the City of Kansas City, Missouri. Electricity and maintenance costs will be paid for solely by the 39th Street West Community Improvement District. The project is expected to be completed no later than the second quarter of 2010.

VNA Happy Hours

We would like to start having monthly happy hours as a fun and informal way to meet people in the neighborhood. Here is the information for the January happy hour:

**Fric & Frac, 1700 W. 39th Street
Wednesday, January 20th, 5:30 PM— ?**

It should be fun, so please stop by if you can!

*If you have questions about
real estate taxes, personal property taxes,
or any issue related to Jackson County
government, call*

Scott Burnett

Your Jackson County Legislator

881-3076

scott@sbgcommunications.com

2010 Plans and Projects

Our monthly general meetings on the second Thursday and board meetings on the fourth Thursday will continue as they have for so long. Immanuel Lutheran Church on Westport Road has continued to offer us meeting space, at least until the new Westport-Roanoke facility gets sorted out. Board meetings are public – anyone can just show up. If you have a particular topic of concern, it’s best to notify someone on the board and get on the agenda. We’ll continue to try and have interesting speakers at the general meetings.

Dumpster day will happen again, probably in June, and probably the week after the neighborhood yard sale. If spring ever shows up, and after having a real winter this year, one’s faith wobbles a bit, there are several outdoor activities we can do in and for our neighborhood. Graffiti and tagging have slowed down in this cold weather, but there will be more to clean up in spring. We may be able to get the city’s help with graffiti. We can have a clean-up of the park, which has not been done in a few years. Kite Singleton has suggested a clean-up of invasive plants such as Japanese honeysuckle in the park, which I personally would be interested in as a member of Missouri Native Plant Society and we might get help from other organizations such as KC Wildlands. The community gardens will be in their second year and we’ll continue to develop them.

Back to our housing stock, there has been considerable interest in reconvening the Housing Committee to deal with codes issues which arise and to help homeowners connect with available resources to maintain their homes. Manuel Lopez (see his notice) is starting up the committee again, along with Dean Darnell. They can’t do it alone. Folks who have emailed me about various properties are invited to join the group. Join it long enough to work on the property of your concern. If many people participate at that level, the work could be divided up.

The city has told inquirers that VNA can issue parking permits. I’ll be following up on that. My understanding from the former president is that it’s a bit more complicated than that.

Last, but by no means least, we will continue to forge relationships with other organizations. We are already working with CCO through Immanuel Lutheran Church, which efforts got the Westport Road crosswalk installed. Last month, Jim Peters and I attended a board meeting of the 39th Street CID, signed an agreement with them for the new banners, and made plans for further collaboration. Also, we’ve been in touch with West Plaza Association and Westport Go! and will work with them in areas of overlapping interest.

-Pam Gilford