



# The Witherbee Buzz

Newsletter

Fall 2006

*The Witherbee Neighborhood Association includes the area bounded by 33rd to 56th and Randolph to "O" Streets*

## Roger Larson to Speak Nov. 2nd

By Larry Frisch

Lincoln broadcasting legend Roger Larson will speak at the 7 P.M. Witherbee Annual Meeting November 2nd at Tabitha, 47th & J. For over 53 years, Mr. Larson has been one of the Capitol City's most influential and respected voices. We are very fortunate that he will share all those years of business acumen and community service to speak on his vision of "Lincoln of the Future", and what we will bring, (or not bring), to that future. As a member of the Lincoln/Lancaster Planning Commission, he has insight and voice in what that future will be.



Roger Larson

Mr. Larson began his broadcasting career when he was hired by KFOR's Dick Chapin, another broadcasting icon, in 1953. He soon rose to the position of general manager of KFOR, which under his care grew to become the flagship station for Stuart Stations, a nationally recognized group of 14 radio stations in the Midwest. Current radio listeners will know Mr. Larson from his perspectives on "That's the way I see it" weekly commentaries on KLIN. (Aired Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:25 a.m. and 5.25 p.m.)

A tireless worker, Mr. Larson has served on about 40 Boards including; Bryan Hospital, Lincoln Advertising Club, Downtown Lincoln Association, Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, Lancaster County Red Cross, Lincoln Jaycees, Lincoln Fellowship of Churches, Leadership Lincoln, Star City Holiday Parade, Lincoln Children's Muse-

um, Lincoln Food Bank, Governmane Research Institute, Nebraska Broadcasters Assn., and many others.

His community service has been acknowledged by many awards over the years, highlighted by: Membership in Nebraska Broadcasters Hall of Fame, (where he joins

**Continued on page 8**

## WNA's Third Annual Meeting Coming Thursday

Roger Larson, celebrated broadcaster and civic leader, will join us as featured speaker at our third annual meeting. While this meeting includes the nomination and election of directors and officers, it is also one of the neighborhood's biggest social events.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Free Pizza and drinks will be provided and this is an excellent opportunity to celebrate the activities and accomplishments of the past year, as well as to meet with friends from throughout the neighborhood.

The meeting will be held Thursday, Nov. 2nd 7:00 p.m. in Tabitha's Life Quest Center, at 48th & J. Use the parking lot at 48th and J and enter the door under the big blue sign. A neighbor will direct you to the room. Attendees are invited to bring snacks or desserts to help round out the party atmosphere.

## Topics, Speakers set for December and January

The December 7<sup>th</sup> presentation will be a look at the city's most pressing issues by state Senator Chris Beutler. Why invite a state senator to talk about city issues? Sen. Beutler represents District 28, our district, and he and his family live in the Witherbee Neighborhood. Further, he is a candidate for the election of Lincoln's next mayor. As a senator who has served since 1978, Beutler has been involved in all the issues that impact residents of Lincoln and our neighborhood - taxes, health care, K-12 school funding, university tuition, job creation, environment - and the

**Continued on page 8**

### Special Contents:

President's Message .....	pg 2
Super Saver Coupon .....	3
Holiday Lighting .....	3
Runza Coupon .....	5
Down Zoning Update .....	5
Braeda Coupon .....	7

## About the Witherbee Neighborhood Association

### Boundaries:

33rd to 56th & 'O'  
to Randolph Streets

### Web Site:

www.WitherbeeNA.org  
Meetings: 7:00 p.m. first Thursday  
of each month at Tabitha Lifequest  
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# President's Message

Autumn is here in full swing, and not far behind comes the chill and peaceful snowy days of winter. A time for reflection...

Over the past year we (Witherbee neighbors) have enjoyed working on projects together and strengthening friendships. Almost a year ago we held our second Holiday Lighting Contest and found many homes with great decorations for the season. The neighborhood cleanup in the spring was a big success again this year and adding a successful plant sale made it even better. The neighborhood wide garage sales in June brought a lot of people into the area. I think it is a great tool to bring potential new homeowners into our area. Our quarterly newsletter is still the best neighborhood newsletter in town thanks to our advertisers and all volunteers that put it together and distribute it. Thank you to Tabitha for providing meeting space for our informative monthly meetings.

Working with the City and developers to enhance our neighborhood also has been part of the activities over the last year. From working with the Trautman's on their property at 37<sup>th</sup> & O, the widening of O street and 48<sup>th</sup> street to negotiating changes for the park and the adjacent property at 46<sup>th</sup> & O street as well as our big downzoning project have been proactive activities. That is what I think neighbors need to be, proactive and involved to make a difference.

It has been an extremely fulfilling year and I am thrilled with the direction we are headed. We are managing to preserve and protect the character of our area. I want to thank each and every one of you for pulling together and devoting your time and skills this past year (and prior years). A combined effort with the "team force" we have become reflects on your dedication and positive outlook as a group.

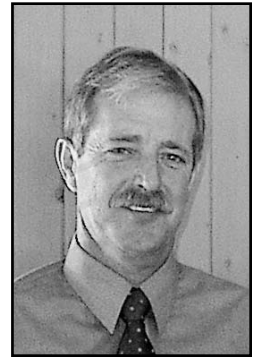
Thank all of you for allowing me to be an integral part of the exiting and ever growing neighborhood association. It has been a great experience for my family and myself. We have made new friendships, and have created a better place to live.....

Look at our successes the past year... Amazing things happen when a little Unity takes place...!!!

Consider coming to a meeting or taking part in an activity. We would love to have you. Don't forget to use the coupons in this newsletter. If you need more just go on line to our website and follow the links to more coupons.

I am looking forward to someone new taking the reigns for the Witherbee Neighborhood as I will be stepping down as president at the end of this month. It has been a pleasure serving you. Thank you.

Friedhelm Freytag,  
President



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## Third Annual Holiday Lighting Contest

As the sun sets a bit earlier every day and all outdoor plants are sleeping, you'll have time to pull out the holiday lights, replace the burned out bulbs and create a display that will catch all your neighbors' eyes. And on the weekend of December 16<sup>th</sup>, you might win a prize if you or a neighbor nominates your home to participate in our third holiday lighting contest. We'll award prizes to the most creative homeowners, including a special yard sign for the first place winner.

Nominees must be within the boundaries of our neighborhood which is between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 56<sup>th</sup> Streets and O to Randolph. The judges will tour our neighborhood to look for an effective use of lights and decorations, creativity and an overall coalesced appearance.

Nominate any neighbor's home or your own by calling Karen Vogeley at 435-6022 or email [karena\\_ne@yahoo.com](mailto:karena_ne@yahoo.com). Please leave your name, the address of the nominee and a phone number in case we need to contact you.

All registered locations will be posted on our website, [www.witherbeena.org](http://www.witherbeena.org). Pictures of winners and nominees will also be posted as a slide show. Join us for a fun contest during the holiday season!

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## Midtown—our shopping area

Where is "Midtown"? We like to think of "Midtown" as the area of 48<sup>th</sup> & O Street stretching eight to ten blocks in each direction. We hope the name catches on and many businesses start using it in their ads and describing where they are as Westgate Bank has started to do. It sure sounds better than just 48<sup>th</sup> & O and describes a larger area just as some other parts of Lincoln have their names. We deserve one too.

With the widening of O & 48<sup>th</sup> streets and the redevelopment on the south side of O a lot of new energy is coming to the area. Schafers is relocating, and new businesses have been built at 48<sup>th</sup> & R and 48<sup>th</sup> and Vine. The old Chinese restaurant at 55<sup>th</sup> & O was torn down and a new strip mall is under construction.

The city sent a new RFP (request for proposal) to developers and it includes the area from O to R Street east of 48<sup>th</sup>. They have torn down the Chinese restaurant on the north side of "O" and I understand the buildings to the west are on the list for demolition too. Many neighbors are excited to have a new HyVee close by real soon. The grand opening of the new businesses on the south side of 48<sup>th</sup> & O is only days away. We welcome all the new stores that are bringing employment opportunities to the neighborhood and reenergizing this part of Lincoln. We need to thank the Mayor for making it a priority to re-energize this area.

THANK YOU!

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# SUPERSAVER

## 48th & O St.

Fall 2006

[www.WitherbeeNA.org](http://www.WitherbeeNA.org)

Page 3





Weston and Shelby

## We Help Match Shelby

Last month, Little Brother Shelby was featured in the Witherbee Neighborhood Association's newsletter. Shelby is a young man who lives in the Witherbee neighborhood and was on the "Ready to be Matched" list at Heartland Big Brothers-Big Sisters. Big Brothers-Big Sisters was looking for a positive adult role model who would enjoy being active with Shelby and share his love of sports.

We are proud to announce that Shelby was recently matched with Big Brother Weston! Thank you Witherbee Neighborhood!

If you are interested in being matched with a child through Heartland Big Brothers-Big Sisters, please check on-line at [www.hbbbs.org](http://www.hbbbs.org) or call 464-2227.

Copies of the three coupons included in this newsletter can be found at [WitherbeeNA.org](http://WitherbeeNA.org). We urge you to visit the site.

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## Yard of the Month Awards

By Josh Sovereign

I would like to recognize the July winner, Greg Kallenbach who resides on S. 42nd Street. Greg is a man who enjoys the outdoors and his lawn's ideal green color during the heat of the summer is a good example. Greg has built a retaining wall in the front yard to better protect his grass to go with the wall he built in the back just a few years ago. Previous winners have been recognized for their creative landscaping. Greg is being recognized for his yard improvement and his consistent efforts to keep his yard well detailed. Greg said that when he moved into the neighborhood his yard wasn't too much to brag about. The yard hadn't received the attention it needed and the large shade trees didn't make it a quick turnaround.

Dale and Victoria Springer who reside at 3468 Woods Ave. are our August winners. As I visited the Springer's home you would have thought it was May considering the yard being full of color and the grass staying green. It is difficult to keep up against the element of July and August but the Springer's succeeded. Both were very modest in accepting the award which made the award a pleasure to present. The yard is creatively landscaped in the front and back, to the point that few neighbors would be willing to challenge their efforts. The backyard draws hummingbirds to Victoria's welcoming retreat. The pride Victoria and Dale take in their home and yard reminds us of yet another reason it is great to be a Witherbee resident.

The management team at Midtown @ 50th & O

## Meet Your New Neighbors



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# Victory!!! Long Sought Zoning Change Approved!

By Mike Fitzgerald

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association submitted a request to the City on July 7 seeking to have properties between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> rezoned from R4 to R2. The City Council approved the request Oct. 9 on a 7 – 0 vote. While true, there is a lot more to this victory.

The pursuit of the zoning change originated three years ago shortly after WNA was formed. WNA members and leaders recognized then that the area was vulnerable to developers and investors who like to buy properties and either rent them without regard for disruptive tenant behavior or build duplexes that do not fit or enhance the character of the neighborhood. The change will provide residents of the area the protection R2 zoning provides residents in the 48<sup>th</sup> to 56<sup>th</sup> Street area of the neighborhood.

WNA's first attempt at rezoning was successful in August 2003. It included properties between 37<sup>th</sup> and 42<sup>nd</sup>, and Randolph and J Streets. At that time rezoning the larger 33<sup>rd</sup> to 48<sup>th</sup> Street area became a goal of the association. Other projects and programs were addressed and initiated during 2004 and early 2005, then the push for this final rezoning began in the fall 2005 newsletter (September). In it the WNA president noted that seeking a zoning change would be a key project in 2006. A zoning improvement subcommittee was formed to spearhead the effort. The winter newsletter (January) highlighted the topic again with a front page article inviting residents to the February WNA meeting to hear featured speakers to discuss the zoning change: Marvin Krout, Planning Department Director, Jon Carlson, Planning Commission Chair, and Jonathan Cook, City Council member. The outreach efforts continued in the Spring newsletter (April) with an article alerting residents to a forthcoming letter from WNA, which would provide further information about the zoning change effort.

WNA submitted its rezoning application on July 7 and mailed a 4-page letter July 8 to all property owners outlining the project and inviting them to a public meeting July 22 at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. At that meeting residents were able to learn more about the project and ask questions of Planning Department staff and WNA's City Council representatives.

The summer newsletter (July) provided another front page article in an effort to keep residents informed about the process. The Planning Department sent an additional letter on August 10 to all property owners. In another effort to follow Planning Commission Down Zoning Committee guidelines, WNA requested its hearing be delayed until Sept. 13 so that the depart-

ment letter to property owners could be mailed 30 days in advance rather than the traditional 10 days. WNA also requested that one of its representatives be listed in the letter to provide property owners another opportunity to reach the association with questions.

This 10-month schedule of outreach illustrates how WNA worked to provide residents and property owners with opportunities to learn about the request. Evidence of support for the zoning change request was demonstrated with more than 400 petitions received from residents and gathered by board members and volunteers that included Corey Clark, Gordon Heuertz, Justin Johnson, Mike and Mary Kay Kreikemeier, Lisa McNeel, Gracie Morris and Connie Sanders. Residents and property owners overwhelmingly supported the request with a nearly unanimous response of those who were contacted. Many residents contributed funds to help cover the application fee, printing, and postage costs associated with the project. Others wrote letters to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

The Planning Commission held a public hearing Sept. 13 and then voted 6 – 3 to recommend approval of the request to the City Council.

This rezoning effort of the neighborhood association is squarely in line with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Comprehensive Plan that says single-family ownership is the foundation on which successful communities are built. It also states that neighborhoods are one of Lincoln's greatest strengths and their conservation is fundamental to the plan.

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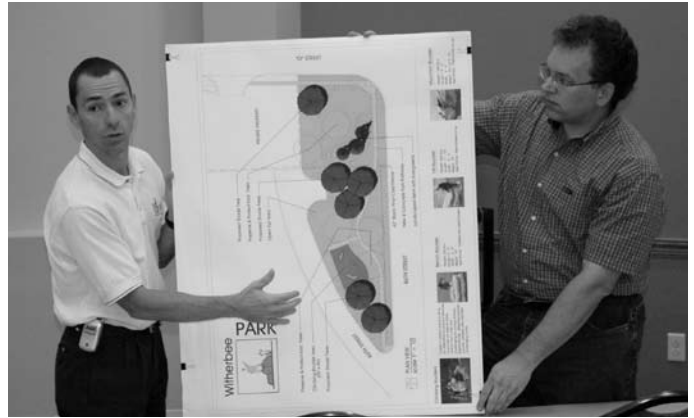
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# Witherbee Park at 46th and O Under Study

During August neighbors met at the 46th and O park to hear a design proposal for park improvements. Also at that meeting the property owner of the old gas station/car lot/XXX bookstore at 45<sup>th</sup> and O presented a proposal to tear down the existing building and replace it with one that would attract a more desirable commercial tenant. The park improvements proposed include: Trees and landscaping near O street to replace those lost to street widening, repaving of 46<sup>th</sup> street with a turn-around, a sidewalk from O street south along the east side of the park, a mini playground, replacement landscaping for the sickly crab apple trees at the south end of the park. The park improvement proposal was generally well received. The neighbors learned the commercial re-development at 45<sup>th</sup> and O would not be financially feasible without slight expansion of the commercial property into the current park. Neighbors requested more information and drawings of the proposed building to be presented. The Witherbee Neighborhood Association offered time during the regularly scheduled September meeting for that presentation.

Re-development of Witherbee Park and the commercial lot at 45<sup>th</sup> and O continued at the Witherbee NA meeting. Guests heard were: Lynn Johnson, Director, Lincoln Parks & Rec; JJ Yost, Lincoln Parks & Rec planner, Wynn Hjernstad, City of Lincoln Urban Development department, and Mr. Paul Galter, attorney for Mr. Stuart Marx, the property owner at 45<sup>th</sup> and O. The Parks Department proposal for the park was approved, with the addition of a seating bench near the mini playground. A similar playground was recently built in the Fallbrook neighborhood, and has been well liked. The O Street widening project will pay for the landscaping at the northern end of the park as well as the sidewalk and re-paving 46<sup>th</sup> Street. The mini-playground does not have funding now, and will have to wait to be funded by Parks Department money in future budgets, or perhaps private fundraising. WNA involvement there is likely.

At the September meeting Mr Galter presented the commercial re-development proposal. He explained that the current property could be left as is, but probably would never attract the kind of neighborhood friendly tenant we desire. To make the property more desirable would require replacement of the existing building. Expansion of the building would be



Lincoln Parks & Rec planner JJ Yost (left) presents a design proposal for Witherbee Park at 46<sup>th</sup> and O Streets while Rick Bagby helps hold the map.

possible if it could extend a bit into the current park. He stated that the new building's parking area and property setback would be the part extending into what is now park. Without expansion of the property, Mr. Marx would not be willing to invest in remodeling the building and it will remain as is.

With a vote, those present approved continuing working with Mr. Marx and the City's Department of Urban Development to see if a building design can be found that would preserve the character of the park as much as possible, while allowing redevelopment of the 45<sup>th</sup> and O property. A committee will draft a list of design requests and tenant restrictions, drawing from the work of the 48 and O project. The city's Urban development department will conduct those negotiations with Mr. Marx. Final approval/disapproval from Witherbee Neighborhood Association depends on the outcome of those further negotiations.




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# Witherbee History

By Ed Zimmer

## What's In a Name

Erasmus Witherbee was born in Hazel Green, Wisconsin in 1843. His father was a lead miner and his grandfather was Scottish "a sea-faring man" who died in New Orleans from yellow fever.

At age 19 Witherbee enlisted in the 25<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry and served to the end of the Civil War, attaining the rank of quartermaster sergeant. He participated in the Vicksburg campaign and in Sherman's March to the Sea, and by the end of the war had served in every Southern state except Texas and Florida.

After the war Witherbee returned home to Wisconsin, but made a trip to Lancaster County, Nebraska to claim a veteran's grant of a 160 acre farm. In 1872 he received the deed to the quarter section which stood between 40<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Streets, O and Randolph.

Wisconsin remained Witherbee's home throughout his life. His principal business was the ownership and operation of lead mines. He married Mary Richards in 1876 and they had three daughters—Blanche, Exie, and Pearle. The older sisters both became teachers. Pearle apparently married, because it was Pearle Bates (and other heirs) who platted a portion of Erasmus' Lincoln land as Witherbee Gardens in 1925 and put their family name on Witherbee Boulevard. Erasmus Witherbee died in 1903 and Mary Witherbee died in 1904. There is no indication that either ever resided on their property in the neighborhood that now bears their name.

## Questions and Answers and Questions...

In the last newsletter, I described Arnott Ricketts' big brick mansion at 33<sup>rd</sup> and L Streets (known as Parkview) as the oldest house in the Witherbee Neighborhood, built a few years after attorney Ricketts secured a three-acre houselot from the Frost family in 1885. I received a friendly email from a resident providing information about her house at 3614 J, which has been in her family well over half a century and by tradition has been described as the oldest in the area.

That tradition has not been proven but has considerable credibility. Upon further research, I found that a large houselot on which 3614 J now stands was purchased from the Frosts in 1889 (for \$300). William W. Hill, a janitor at the County Courthouse, apparently built the beginnings of this house in the same timeframe as the construction of the Ricketts house—circa 1890. But the J Street house is considerably "older-fashion" in appearance, employing the Italianate-cottage style rather than the more modern Queen Anne style of Ricketts House.



**EDWARD F.  
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# A Neighborhoods Hero

By Mike Fitzgerald

Cathy Beecham's testimony at the Oct. 2 City Council meeting was inspiring – in what she said, as well as in her commitment to be there and to complete her task.

Cathy is the daughter-in-law of WNA Board member Steve Schwab's and is serving as Vice President of the Near South Neighborhood. That neighborhood is fortunate to have her, as are we all because she speaks in support of neighborhoods. She demonstrated that supporting neighborhood causes is just a matter of getting informed and committing to speaking your mind.

That afternoon, she pushed her 14-month old daughter Jenna in a stroller to the podium, which faces a courtroom-like semi-circle arrangement of city council members. She had come to voice her concerns about the proposed agreement between the City of Lincoln and Developmental Services of Nebraska. The proposed agreement would increase the number of disabled residents allowed in group care homes and eliminate the space requirement between such homes. These provisions carried potential to decrease the level of care for the disabled and create an institutional care atmosphere within neighborhoods.

Cathy began by first apologizing for testifying with her daughter, explaining that her baby sitter cancelled at the last minute. Most people do not take the time to testify; and if their babysitter cancels, they surely would not participate. Not Cathy; she had important points to make and nothing was going to deter her. Little Jenna was well behaved but began to whine when her milk bottle fell beyond her reach. Cathy was so engaged in outlining her concerns that she could not see the cause of Jenna's frustration, but she reached into her pocket and without taking her eyes off her notes handed Jenna some cheerios. The cereal kept Jenna occupied for a few minutes while Cathy continued with her comments. But when Jenna began to whine again, Cathy reached out with left leg and rocked the stroller. There she was – testifying and comforting her child at the same time. When the rocking wasn't enough to keep Jenna content, she quickly unbuckled young Jenna from the stroller and proceeded to complete her testimony while holding Jenna on her hip.

As only a mother can, she simultaneously tended to the needs of her young daughter and eloquently presented testimony to the entire City Council. She was awesome. As my sisters would say, "Cathy, you go girl!"

Since that day I have learned that the Lincoln Neighborhood Alliance gives a Neighborhood Hero Award each year and I hope she is the recipient. Her demonstration of commitment and poise in the art of mothering and advocating for Lincoln's neighborhoods, disabled citizens and caregivers was inspiring. I wanted to stand up and cheer her. I wish all of Lincoln could have been there to see what too few witnessed on Oct. 2nd.

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# Roger Larson to Speak. . .

Continued from Page 1

such notables as Johnny Carson, and Dick Cavett); Roger T. Larson Citizenship Award (named after him); Burnham Yates Citizenship Award, and many others. His 2006 awards include Volunteer Partners Advocacy Award, Broadcast Pioneer Award from UNL School and Journalism and Nebraska Broadcasters Assn., and in October he was awarded the Community Pillar Award from Leadership Lincoln.

Some of his current activities include: Chairman of TeamMates Foundation, Chairman of Food Bank Foundation, Member of Mayor's Task Force on Event Centers, Member of Mayor's Task Force on Infrastructure Financing, Member of City-County Planning Commission, Member of Bryan/LHG Hospital Board, Chairman of the Foundation for Public Schools Board of Trustees.

His military career included service in Guam as the honored Wing Bombardier Navigator in the 20th Air Force flying in B-29s, where he attained the rank of Captain.

As a former resident of the Witherbee Neighborhood, Mr. Larson will thoroughly enjoy meeting and talking with current residents about their concerns and interests.

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# Graffiti in the Parks

As some of you may have heard and seen, vandals have sprayed graffiti in Woods Park and others parks around town. We are very appalled by this and the WNA is taking tax-deductible donation for rewards to catch the vandals and help with funding cleanups in parks. So far over \$500.00 have been contributed. Please send your contribution to our Treasurer.

# Topics, Speakers set for Dec. and Jan.

Continued from Page 1

list goes on. Come hear what he sees as Lincoln's top challenges and opportunities.

For the January 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, we have scheduled a tax expert to discuss law changes everyone should know about when filing their 2006 tax returns. Jon Grenemeier, owner of Balanced Bookkeeping & Tax Service, will provide an update on tax laws, answer questions and talk about how taxes and investment planning are related.

Remember, WNA meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Tabitha Life Quest Center (48<sup>th</sup> & J). In addition to the featured presentations, the meetings provide updates on WNA projects and events, as well as being a great place to meet friends, new and old.




**Marcia Murray ~ Realtor®**  
*"A Lifetime of Caring"*

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Lincolnshire  
 7141 "A" Street  
 Lincoln, NE 68510

# You are invited to be a member of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, St.: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

WNA is a Non Profit Association. Contributions of \$35.00 or more will receive a **tax deductible receipt**.

**Mail to:**  
 Ann Richards, 5030 L Street, Lincoln, NE 68510

### Membership Categories:

___ Single .....	\$10.00
___ Family .....	\$15.00
___ Senior Family.....	\$10.00
___ Additional Household Member.....	\$ 5.00
___ Sponsor .....	\$35.00
___ Benefactor .....	\$50.00 & up
___ Business .....	\$40.00

Benefits of membership: (besides being in the loop of things)  
 Single – one vote; Family – two votes, one per person; Senior Family – same as Family; Additional Household Member -one vote; Sponsor – up to three votes, one per person; Benefactor – same as sponsor and listed in newsletter once  
 Business – one vote as per bylaws, reduced ad costs, one free listing in newsletter, and an ad on our web site.