

## Hawthorne Elementary Future To Be Determined Soon

By Larry Frisch

Ed Zimmer, LPS School Board member, speaking at a meeting at Southwest High, said that a decision about the future of Hawthorne Elementary would be made at the School Board's October 9th meeting.

While the school board has been in the process of drawing new boundaries for Lincoln Schools, it was proposed to close Hawthorne and send students to Eastridge, Randolph, and other schools. The building could then be re-purposed, although there are no definite plans about what that purpose would be.

The school board has been holding open meetings to solicit public reaction to the proposal. Parents and interested residents have been rising to voice their opposition to the closing of Hawthorne as an elementary school.

The School Board will hold an open meeting at Hawthorne School **Tuesday, September 4th at 7 p.m.** All interested people are urged to attend and share their thoughts about the future of Hawthorne.

Realizing that many working residents are finding it difficult to attend School Board meetings, Michelle Strand, President of Hawthorne PTO, has created an internet petition drive to allow folks to voice their support for keeping Hawthorne Elementary open. The petition can be found at [www.petitiononline.com/hawPTO/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/hawPTO/petition.html). If you are unable to speak to the School Board at one of the meetings, you are invited to read the petition, and sign if you agree. (A link to the site can be found at [www.witherbeena.org](http://www.witherbeena.org)).

WNA members passed a resolution at their August 2nd meeting to oppose the closing of Hawthorne Elementary. The WNA Board of Directors is studying the issue and will render their recommendation soon.



Hawthorne School building basks in August sun while Lincolinites ponder an uncertain future.

### Topics & Speakers Set for Sept. and Oct. WNA Meetings

The **September 6th** WNA meeting will be addressing the proposed closing of Hawthorne Elementary School, which is located at 300 S. 48th Street. Ed Zimmer, who is the Lincoln Board of Education District 4 representative, which includes most of the Witherbee neighborhood area, will be attending to address questions. Neighborhood attendance and discussion at this meeting will be extremely important since the WNA Board will be voting on and deciding what their official position is on this matter. Also, Gregg and Cindy Trautman will be our guest speakers for September and they will be updating us on the construction of their 5,000 square foot office building located near S 37th and 'O' Streets.

The **October 4th** WNA meeting will have the proposed new Lancaster County jail as the main program topic. Plans are to have an appointed member of the newly created county jail review committee as our guest speaker, who will present an overview of the project and answer questions concerning this proposed \$94 million project.

## About the Witherbee Neighborhood Association

### Boundaries:

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

### Web Site:

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

Meetings: 7:00 p.m. first Thursday  
of each month at Tabitha Lifequest  
Center, 48th and J.

### Executive Board:

Steve Schwab, President  
440-7630  
[ohair42@aol.com](mailto:ohair42@aol.com)

Mike Fitzgerald, Vice President  
486-4073  
[seven\\_f\\_ranch@juno.com](mailto:seven_f_ranch@juno.com)

Larry Frisch, Secretary  
486-9380  
[lfrisch@alltel.net](mailto:lfrisch@alltel.net)

Karen Vogeley, Treasurer  
435-6022  
[karena\\_ne@yahoo.com](mailto:karena_ne@yahoo.com)

Fred Freytag, Past President  
430-6658  
[fredfreytag@binary.net](mailto:fredfreytag@binary.net)

### Additional Board Members:

Mary Kay Kreikemeier 477-9194  
[mkk@alltel.net](mailto:mkk@alltel.net)

Lisa McNeel 476-9786  
[lisamcneel@earthlink.net](mailto:lisamcneel@earthlink.net)

Russell Miller 488-2568  
[neb31340@alltel.net](mailto:neb31340@alltel.net)

Christine Nesmith 484-7673  
[nesmicac@allstate.com](mailto:nesmicac@allstate.com)

Curtis Wood 817-3809  
[cwood57@neb.rr.com](mailto:cwood57@neb.rr.com)

Fred Zarate 486-3448  
[fzarate@alltel.net](mailto:fzarate@alltel.net)

Newsletter Editor:  
Larry Frisch 486-9380

Web Development:  
Fred Freytag 466-4655

## President's Message

For many of us, this is one the busiest times of the year. Activities involving family and friends such as picnics, reunions, vacations, sporting events and annual events such as pool parties and block parties are things we look forward to and enjoy. Of course, there also may be those outdoor yard projects or exterior home improvement projects we have decided to take on, although this usually is the hottest time of the year!



Steve Schwab

Numerous activities are also underway or being completed in the Witherbee neighborhood this summer that indicate that midtown Lincoln is definitely being rejuvenated.

They are as follows:

- Northeast corner N. 33rd & 'O' Streets - new Starbucks store and other retail to open when new building is fully leased
- S. 37th & 'O' Streets ( on 37th) - construction underway of a one-story 5,000 sq. ft. office building
- 145 S. 40th Street - Calvary Cemetery is installing a new wrought fence, landscaping and other improvements
- Southeast corner S. 45th & 'O' Streets (4501 'O' Street)- Urban Development currently working with the property owner to redevelop this 14,420 sq. ft. lot is zoned H-2 (highway Business District)
- Stormwater Improvement Project, N 50th & 'R' Streets and N 52nd & 'O' Streets - bids have been received by Public Works and work will soon start when contract is awarded
- Paving Project, N. 50th Street from 'O' to 'R' Street- bids have been received by Public Works and work will start when contact is awarded
- Demolition at 5000 'O' Street for new \$15 million Hy-Vee Store- site currently being cleared for redevelopment / Hy-Vee will start construction fall 2007 and store will open spring/summer 2008
- Midtown Commons at S. 50th & 'N' Streets - Westgate Bank @ Midtown, 50th & 'O' Streets, has donated all the landscaping that has been installed by Finke's Nursery for this public greenspace
- Midtown Commons at S. 50th & 'N' Streets - Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department has been maintaining this greenspace area and will seed it to grass this fall. Urban Development has also obtained a grant that will establish an on-site water source that can be used to water trees, plants and turf. Funding is for a water tap, meter, backflow preventer and quick-couplers
- Urban Development is continuing to work with interested developers to redevelop various commercial sites located adjacent to the northeast corner of N 48th & 'O' Streets

Our first ever Celebration at Woods Park event that was held on July 15th was fun and very successful. Please read more about it in this newsletter. Thanks to all who helped make this neighborhood event possible. I know we will be doing it again next year and foresee it becoming an annual neighborhood event.

The proposed closing of Hawthorne Elementary School, 300 S. 48th Street, at the end of the 2007-08 school year is now being discussed by WNA, the Hawthorne PTO and those who have their children enrolled there. The possible closure will be discussed at a public meeting hosted by the LPS board at Hawthorne on Tuesday, September 4th, at 7 PM., It is expected that the school board will hear a first reading of the proposal at its September 25th regular meeting and act on the proposal at its October 9th meeting. As residents of Witherbee, I encourage all of you to be involved and informed since the ultimate decision will effect our neighborhood. If you have questions concerning this, please attend the public meeting at Hawthorne and contact Michelle Strand, Hawthorne PTO President, at [shelhusk@hotmail.com](mailto:shelhusk@hotmail.com).

Steve Schwab, WNA President



## Witherbee Neighbors Welcome Newcomers to Stuhr Park

Saturday morning, April 21, over 25 Witherbee neighbors gathered to welcome seven new residents to Stuhr Park and help them get settled in their new home. The neighbors were people. The newcomers were trees. Yes, that's right. They were **trees**. The neighbors were eager participants. The trees were fortunate recipients of a lot of tender, loving care.

West Gate Bank, one of our neighborhood's newest businesses along "O" street, partnered with us by providing hot coffee and cold juice as we gathered for the event. Total cost of the seven trees from Finke's Nursery was \$1,189. One-third of the cost was paid for by a tree-planting grant from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, one-third by the Lincoln Parks & Recreation Department and one-third by WNA.

Witherbee neighbors, armed with shovels, rakes, gloves, and a lesson in tree planting by City Forester Steve Schwab, carefully planted the trees and mulched them. Add a generous helping of water and you have a wonderfully successful neighborhood project which will have long lasting effects. (Thanks to all who helped that morning!)

Several participants have volunteered to be Foster Parents to the trees. The foster parents' role is to make sure the trees get enough water during the extra hot part of the summer. They agreed to deliver 10 gallons of water to their foster tree each week that it doesn't rain. And, yes, there have been several weeks since the trees were planted that we have not had rain. The trees are doing well.

Many thanks go to the following Witherbee neighbors for being foster parents to the new trees in the park: **Stacy Svoboda** (representing **West Gate Bank**); **Renee & Joe Dugan** and their daughters, **Lilly & Sophie**; **Dee & Curtis Wood**; **Tom & Sharon Vandernack**; **Ann Richards**; **Cheryl Hejl**; **Lila Kellehr**; **Alicea & her son, Josh McCluskey**.

After this gratifying event, many of the volunteers lingered in the park, drinking their morning beverages and talking as they sat on the picnic tables. It was a beautiful morning and a great reason for getting together.



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## Free Scrap Tire Collection

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## “We Should Do This Every W


The weather forecast was for clear skies and hot temperatures. The mercury pushed higher throughout the day and made ice cream a great menu choice. Then of course there was water, spraying water, pools of water, water games, and the challenge of jumping off the tower, or the high board, or even the low board.

There were those who were so young that only pictures will tell them they attended. There were those who can recall which houses were built when and don't refer to a house by number, but rather by it's most memorable occupant. Singles attended, couples attended, and families came with children, sometimes lots of children. All within our neighborhood were welcome to the free event.

The first annual Witherbee Pool Party and Ice Cream

Social on July 16 was a success. WNA thanks all who attended and for those who planned, purchased and served. In all, 6.5 gallons of ice cream and several kinds of toppings were consumed. Countless conversations took place. All who played the games won. Some launched water balloons with a sling shot and all launched the foundation for what we hope will be an annual event. Hope to see you next year.

“The weather, the crowd, the games, the ice cream; everything came together perfectly,” WNA President Steve Schwab told the channel 8 TV reporter who was there to interview him and film some of the festivities.



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(Read article on page 6 for more information)  
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## Week!”

Being WNA's first Pool Party & Ice Cream Social, organizers weren't sure how many participants to plan for. The crowd of over 100 that had been disbursed across three pool areas from 6:00 to 7:30 came into focus when the pools closed and swimmers made an exodus for the ice cream social north of the pools. "I looked up from serving ice cream to a couple of people and saw the side walk leading from the pool full of people," Schwab said. "It turned out to be a perfect size crowd for our first year. Now we know how to organize the activities and we have an idea of how much ice cream and help will be needed for what we expect will be larger crowd next year."

The consensus of success was underlined when one youngster was overheard telling his mother, "...We need to do this every week!"

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# WNA Calendar 2007

Check our web site for more details and updates.

www.witherbeena.org

**All WNA membership meetings first Thursday of each month 7:00 P.M. at Tabitha's LifeQuest Center.**

*(Please note that membership is  
Not required to attend WNA meetings.)*

**Sept. 6th:** WNA monthly meeting at 7 pm. Topics - Proposed Hawthorne School closing with Ed Zimmer, and construction of new office building at 127 S. 37th and discussion with the developers Gregg & Cindy Trautman.

**Oct. 4th:** WNA monthly meeting at 7 pm. Topic - proposed construction of new Lancaster County jail and discussion with member of appointed review committee on how it will be done.

**Oct. 19th:** Last day to enter recipes for Hawthorne PTO fundraiser cookbook. Contact Michelle Strand at 438-8234 if questions.

**Nov. 1st:** WNA 4th Annual Meeting at 7 pm. Keynote speaker will be Mayor Chris Beutler.

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# Wetherbee Cleanup Day Not Sunk By Heavy Rain

By Curtis Wood

Mother nature unleashed a deluge of rain upon the volunteers gathered to launch the Annual Cleanup Day on Saturday May 5, 2007. At the appointed hour for everyone to gather a storm cloud sent the folks back to their homes for dry clothing. Although we had what seemed like the largest rain of the season, the clouds moved on allowing the Cleanup Day to get a later start. The rest of the day was beautiful and the donations began in earnest by 10:00 a.m.. Spirits were only temporarily dampened as people brought their items all morning in the nice weather.

The weather had only delayed a very successful event. Two large roll-offs were filled with general trash from the contributors. Several new residents were thankful for the opportunity to rid themselves of their unwanted materials at a low or no cost in a very convenient location. A flatbed trailer and pickup load of building materials were sorted out and donated to the Eco Store for recycling. Others dropping off took some things home for they had need of it. A free swap meet evolved under our volunteer super-



Volunteers wait for another load.

vision. One person's trash turned in to another person's treasure.

Fred Zarate volunteered his vehicle to transport several computer items that required special handling to get to the recycle location. The donations for recycling these computer goods more than paid for the disposal fees resulting in cash for the WNA treasury. The event qualifies the WNA for other grant money from various organizations to help us fund the disposal.

Metal, appliance, and brush collections were off a bit this year. I believe this to be a sign that we are having an impact on the neighborhood with these cleanup days. There is just less to handle at the cleanup day. The publicity of having the event annually keeps cleanliness in the minds of our residents.

Braeda/Runza furnished snacks and drinks including Miller and Paine cinnamon rolls. Their support and newly constructed restaurants are a welcome addition to our neighborhood. Dee Wood and Ann Richards picked up the donated snacks as well as serving them to all who volunteered and several of the folks dropping off their items. The hot coffee was appreciated after the damp start.

Thanks to all the volunteers and residents who contribute to make this event a success year after year. There is always great fun during the work. A very rewarding time, I must admit.

## Woods Tennis Center Offers Free Neighborhood Event!

You and your family are invited for an evening of fun, fellowship, and FREE Tennis! Woods Tennis Center is sponsoring a special event for all Woods Park neighbors on Sunday, September 9th from 3:00-4:30 pm. This event includes free court time and instruction. Racquets are available and balls will be provided.

The event will begin with instruction on separate courts for Little Aces (pre-school and elementary school students), Juniors (middle school and high school students), and Adults of all ages and abilities. After the lesson, gather your family and friends on a court to play singles, doubles, or just hit! Instructors will still be available to give guidance with scoring and tips. To cap off the event, neighbors are encouraged to congregate at the clubhouse to sit, chat, and eat popsicles! For more information about the event or to RSVP, please contact Woods Tennis Center at 441-7095.

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# Loren Bertscher and companion dog are familiar sight in Witherbee

by Mary Kay Kreikemeier

Late in September of 1916, 16 presidents ago, when the US population was approximately one-third of what it is today, in the midst of WWI, when our nation's population was more rural than urban, he was born. Loren Gerischer came into this world on a farm somewhere between Oskaloosa and Beacon in Iowa.

A five year old brother, Glen, and a 2 year old sister, Gayle, welcomed him. His father farmed and his mother was a farm wife. Two years later in 1918, one more sister, Doris, would come along. Medicine being what it was Band-Aids were not invented until 1920 and penicillin came into being to treat bacterial infections in 1928. Neither of these advancements would have helped. Loren's mother had contracted tuberculosis, an infectious disease that typically attacks the lungs. A treatment for tuberculosis wouldn't be developed until 1943. By then his parents had been dead for 18 years. When Loren was five his father died. His mother would follow two years later, both from the same disease.

Aunts would take in the siblings, but not all together. At different times Loren lived in these Iowa towns, Muscatine, Iowa City, Des Moines, and then St. Paul, Minnesota. He spent some time in country school. Education wasn't stressed, though he would have liked to have had more schooling. Social Security was established in 1935, the year Loren turned 19.

Hitchhiking was prevalent and an accepted form of transport, especially in the days of World War II. So Loren hitchhiked to Wyoming and worked for a time on a sheep ranch.

He has held a series of jobs: bellhop, janitor, night watchman, dishwasher, and other jobs as needed. He has formerly worked at the Department of Roads. He worked at the Lincoln Country Club from 1967 - 1995. He worked at the Lincoln Airport for a few years beyond that. By this time, he was in his eighties.

While in Lincoln, he lived in town, then moved to First street across from B and B Greenhouse. Eventually, he moved to 37th Street, a couple houses South of O Street. His cemetery plot in Wyuka is paid for and Loren has been know to quip, "Yeah, when I die, I'm just moving across the street." He now resides in a duplex on L Street.

Loren averages between 10-20,000 steps per day. He walks everywhere and is typically in the company of his dog. There was Fallon, the husky, then Sable, the collie, and most recently, he was spotted about town with Mike, the pug. Sadly, Mike was hit by a car while crossing 33rd Street and died on July 3. These dogs have been constant companions, unless Loren is catching

the bus or going to his volunteer job of folding the church bulletins every Friday.

He has made fast friends with a couple that formerly lived on Woods Avenue. He came into their lives shortly after the untimely death of their infant son, "It is truly a blessing to know him. Every day he demonstrates how to live a quiet, simple life. He was undaunted by the October snowstorm of 1997. We looked out of our window and here comes Loren and Fallon trudging up the middle of the street," stated Steve Mach.



Loren and Mike in good times

Loren is not much of a fisherman, but will talk at length about fish worms. He possesses an almost encyclopedic knowledge of animals.

He loves to read, esp. Hardy Boys mysteries. He enjoys working jigsaw puzzles. He doesn't own a television.

Much has changed in Loren's ninety years of life. In the year Loren was born, Albert Einstein completed his mathematical formulation of a general theory of relativity. What is relative to Loren remains pretty plain: health, well-being, getting another faithful, furry, four-legged companion, and his friends and family.

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## Help us Celebrate Hawthorne

To celebrate Hawthorne's diversity, The Hawthorne PTO will be putting together a cookbook as its only major fundraiser for the 2007-08 school year. We are especially interested in recipes that are part of your heritage. If possible, please submit recipes in English. Recipes can be submitted in Spanish, Vietnamese, or Arabic and will be translated into English.

This collection of recipes will showcase the incredible diversity we have at Hawthorne Elementary School. The cookbooks will be for sale around the holidays and will make great gifts for all your friends and family.

We are requesting that you submit your many special recipes online. The instructions for entering recipes online are included here: 1. Go to [www.typensave.com](http://www.typensave.com); 2. Click on the "login" button; 3. For the contributor, type in your name; 4. For the Group login, type in "hawpto"; 5. For the Password, type in, "8t5yr".

Any questions, or to obtain recipe forms, please contact Michelle Strand at [shelhusk@hotmail.com](mailto:shelhusk@hotmail.com) or 438-8234, or Tanya Burianek, [tannyb@earthlink.net](mailto:tannyb@earthlink.net). All recipes must be entered or received by Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

Thanks for your support!



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## Witherbee Neighborhood 2007 Garage Sales

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association sponsors many activities, such as cleanups, lighting contests, tree planting and garage sales.

Unlike last year, residents didn't experience too much heat for this year's garage sale. The good weather and doing our sale on the same weekend as the 40th and A neighborhood helped all of us have a good sale.



Ready for the Sale.

The small fees from each participant purchased newspaper advertisements. Flyers were posted at various local businesses while our website had detailed information about what was being sold at each address. Sellers and buyers could, and did, download and print the information in order to visit the sales that interested them.

People from all over Lincoln arrived to look over the furniture, mowers, clothing, toys, and all the other items. And they bought much of it! Twenty five families had a sale, some on one or two days, some on all three. Our association has been sponsoring a June garage sale for several years and next year will be no different. If you want to participate, read the details that will be published in the 2008 spring newsletter.

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