



The Witherbee Buzz

Vol. 17 No. 1 Newsletter

Winter 2020

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

March Meeting = Home Safety

By Mary Schwab

**Thursday, March 5 • Tabitha at 48th & J St.
• 7:00 pm •**

SINCE 9/1/2019 there have been 366 POLICE RECORDS for 68510!

We are asking YOU, the fine neighbors of our Witherbee area, to come listen, learn and bring your concerns and comments. Neighborhood and home safety should be a priority for all of us!

HELPING YOU BUILD A SAFER COMMUNITY

“Do you have a home security camera?”

These were the first words the Lincoln Police officer asked me as he was writing reports on auto and garage thefts in our Witherbee neighborhood last July. At the time, my answer was, “no, but I will soon”.

Lincoln’s Police Chief, Jeff Bliemeister, as well as the two Captains from the Center and Southeast teams, who protect us in our Witherbee area, were present and very thoroughly engaged in meeting our neighbors at the annual WNA Pool party and Ice cream social in August. They were there to remind all of us that home safety is our responsibility, first. I learned about security doorbells, cameras, and motion lights at that Witherbee event. If you want to feel well taken care of and learn what we can all do to make WNA safer, come and learn from your LPD. You know they care about all of us!

Our Center and Southeast team Captains, Mike Woolman and Don Scheinost, have generously agreed to teach us more about a secure neighborhood. They will involve the team from the Crime Prevention Unit in giving all of us information on HOME SECURITY. Please join us as we show them our appreciation and the support and respect they deserve at the WNA meeting on Thursday, March 5th 7:00p.m. at Tabitha, enter through the main south doors.

By the way, if you ask, I will share the app I now have on my phone with videos of my 4-legged nighttime prowlers, fox, raccoon, possum, and a variety of cats and dogs.

WNA Annual Celebration Wrap-Up

The main business of the 2019 annual meeting was the election of officers and directors to the WNA board. The following slate was adopted by the members in attendance:

Officers:

- Kathy Holland - President
- Mike Kreikemeier - Vice President
- Mascha Miedaner - Treasurer
- Sherry Miller - Secretary

Directors:

- Lisa McNeel
- Tim Duey
- Jay Ridenour
- Rick Bagby
- Mary Rowan
- Christine Nesmith



President Kathy Holland recognized and thanked Mary Schwab and Kathy Stastny for their service on the board.

Following the business meeting, WNA neighbors enjoyed a light meal and an incredibly entertaining and informative presentation by Ed Zimmer, Lincoln Historian, about the history of the middle third of the WNA neighborhood.

(Find more info on Ed’s presentation in an additional article in this Buzz issue on page 5.)



SEE INSIDE STORIES:
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About Your Witherbee Neighborhood Association

Boundaries:

33rd to 56th & 'O' to Randolph

Meetings:

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

www.facebook.com/witherbeena
www.WitherbeeNA.org

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402-413-0156

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President's Message



What a start to the new year! On January 2nd WNA hosted a meeting focusing on a proposed development at 41st Street & Randolph. The developer, Ken Rosburg and his wife Lana, were present along with the engineer for the project, Joe Brakenhoff of REGA Engineering Group. George Wesselhoft from the City Planning Department was also present. The area to be developed is 4.15 acres, between 40th & 42nd and Randolph & J Streets, sitting at about the address of 4040 Randolph. The proposed development would include the building of 13 new homes, a new street--41st St. Circle, and would add a sidewalk from the northernmost homes to J Street. Ken and his engineer answered questions regarding the project for over an hour. There were nearly 40 Witherbee residents present, along with others who would be impacted by this project from the 40th & A neighborhood.

Some of you may remember that in 2003 a proposed development of this same property, Randolph Square, was the initiative that resulted in the formation of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association. That project included the building of a 100 child daycare center, a 16 unit apartment-condo building and two, 8 unit buildings. WNA opposed that development due to a significant increase density (32 new dwelling units along with a large child care center) with the end result, a change in the character of the neighborhood and increased traffic. Residents surrounding the proposed development organized and were able to persuade the City Council to deny the permits that would have authorized the project (7-0 vote).

As of this writing, a task force of WNA residents has collaborated with the developer and the City Planning Department to work out a compromise that assures the development remains single family homes and that the architectural design of the homes fits the character of our neighborhoods.

From someone who has not worked on a project like this before, I have been amazed at what neighbors can accomplish. We have been fortunate that the developer has reached out to us, his neighbors, for our input. Individuals with the City Planning Department have been very willing to answer questions and help us define and articulate our goals.

Although the WNA Board understands there are some who do not share our position, we hope all will be satisfied with the end results. WNA is pleased that this area will eventually be filled with new, single family homes that are cohesive with current neighborhoods and are of an architectural design that encourages neighbors getting to know neighbors.

Yes, a busy start to 2020 and there is much more to come!! We hope to offer programs of interest to all, with one of our first programs focusing on home security. Please share with us your topic ideas and your ideas for social events. This is your neighborhood, your community!

If you would like to live in a community in which you have pride, then dedicate yourself in a spirit of humility to your responsibilities in that community.

~ Herbert Victor Prohnow

Kathy Holland
2020 WNA President

The Witherbee neighborhood association would like to thank the following organizations and households for sponsoring the Buzz newsletter with their membership donation.

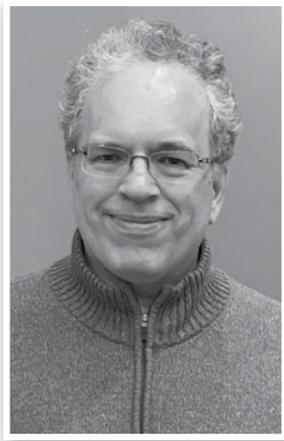
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Rick & Mary Jo Shibata

Welcome New Board Members!!



Hello Neighbors! My name is Rick Bagby and I thank you for welcoming me back to the Witherbee board. I'm excited to see the energy among neighbors as we work together to preserve and to improve our neighborhood. As Lincoln spreads into the county and surpasses 300,000 residents it would be easy to overlook existing neighborhoods, to let decline

take over through neglect. It is the active involvement of those who live here that preserves quality of life. It's up to us. Together we shape our experience, our lives in midtown Lincoln.



Hi! My name is Christine Nesmith and I have served on the WNA board in the past and am excited to step into that role again!! I moved into the neighborhood in 1995 - 25 years ago! My house was affordable and in a great location to everything. I love being in Witherbee because we have a great neighborhood association where we know our neighbors and we work

together to improve and enhance the lives of all who live here. I've gotten to know a lot of my neighbors because I walk my dog through out the neighborhoods daily. As a representative of WNA, I am open to questions and concerns, so feel free to reach out in person or via email.



Hello to All!! My name is Mary Rowan and I am a new board member for WNA. I love being part of this neighborhood as I have lived in the same house for 42 years with my husband Pat. We raised our two children here and have many, many happy memories of our years here on Lenox Avenue. Witherbee Neighborhood is close to everything and it has been a wonderful place to

garden, spend time with neighbors and family. I get to enjoy watching my grandkids play in the same park and sled down the same hill as my own children did!! Some things have changed in our neighborhood but the good things have remained.

I am happy to say there is no better place to live than in Witherbee Neighborhood, the center of Lincoln!!



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The BIG EVENT is Coming!

Mark April 4th on your calendar and get signed up!!

The Big Event team is excited to announce that over 3,000 UNL students, faculty and staff volunteered last year and it looks to be an even bigger turn out this year. The mission of the Big Event is to simply say ‘Thank You!’ to the residents of Lincoln by upholding the University’s core value of service. This event gives students the opportunity to show their appreciation to the community they call home while they are at college. Everyone is eligible for assistance regardless of their income or abilities.

This year it will be held Saturday, April 4th from 1:00 to 4:00. The event is entirely student run and funded by donations from the community. It was started at Texas A&M in 1982, adopted by UNL in 2006 and continues to be an excellent opportunity for students and community members alike.

To sign up, visit the website at the bigevent.unl.edu and click “request volunteers”, then a “private residence”. From there you will fill out the provided form on our event website. You may also sign-up by calling us!

Once you sign up, there will be an Operations Staff member contacting you closer to the event to get more information about the time of the event, how many volunteers you want, and what work you would like to have done.

Applications are currently being accepted!!

The volunteers can assist with many small jobs around your home and/or community organization. These include small paint jobs, yard work, hauling trash, window cleaning and other miscellaneous tasks. For safety concerns, the volunteers cannot use ladders or power tools!

Please do not ask them to break the rules!

We hope many of our Witherbee neighbors will take the opportunity to spruce up their homes and yards with help from the volunteers. It’s a Win, Win for all!! If you have a neighbor who might benefit from this service, please consider offering to help them with the sign up. A huge ‘thank you’ to The Big Event planning committee, volunteers and sponsors.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the sign up, please call Lisa McNeel at (402) 499-8279.

***The coordinators of the event ask that we share the following statement: “While we do our best to allocate our resources to serve the community, The Big Event cannot guarantee all requests will be met”.



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Walking the Witherbee “Middle Third”



On Sunday, September 8th, sixteen people joined Ed Zimmer, local historian and City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Planner, on a walking tour of the Witherbee Neighborhood.

We learned the history of people and places in the “Middle Third”, an area bounded by O and Randolph Streets and 40th and 48th Streets.

Beginning at Witherbee Park, 46th & O Streets, we wound our way through the Witherbee Neighborhood and ended the walk at Tabitha Health Care Services, 46th & Randolph Streets. Most of the housing in this area dates from the middle of the 20th century and like all of Witherbee, there were older and younger residences side by side.

The source of the Witherbee name comes Erasmus Witherbee of Wisconsin. He was a Civil War Veteran who claimed his veteran’s benefit of 160 acres of farmland which encompassed the middle third. Even though Erasmus never lived in Lincoln, his heirs, when platting this land in 1925, gave it the name of “Witherbee Gardens” with Witherbee Boulevard winding its way through the area. Houses that currently have addresses on 47th Street between L and M were originally platted with Witherbee Blvd. addresses. Witherbee Gardens covered the section from J to O Streets between 44th and 48th Streets. In 1929, “Witherbee Addition”, boundaries of J to L Streets between 40th and 44th Streets, was platted. A park on the original plat became the Witherbee Park of today.

We began at the Praise Temple Church of the Living God, 130 S. 46th Street. This church was originally built in 1952 as the First Wesleyan Methodist Church.

On 47th Street between M and L Street, you will notice many 4-plexes of both limestone and brick construction. H.K. Watson is listed as the owner of these plots. Selmer A. Solheim, a Lincoln architect who designed the Governor’s Mansion, was also the architect for these buildings which were constructed in 1947 and 1948.

One of the best features of the Witherbee Neighborhood is its trees. At the corner of L & 47th, we admired a majestic American elm and the row of cedars at the east property line of 386 S. 46th Street. At the NE corner of L & 44th Streets, Ed pointed out the significance of a ventilation pipe sticking out of the ground in the backyard. This home was built in 1950

during the Cold War and has a bomb shelter.

As we travelled along 44th Street to Witherbee Blvd., we noticed many homes with triangular braces surrounding a window. Quite a few of the homes in this area were built by Peterson Construction Co., a prominent builder during the mid-century and we conjectured that this triangular piece was part of the signature of a Peterson built home. Many of their houses were built on a slab without a basement.

We made our way to 40th Street and discovered houses built by Wilhaus F. Wagner. He is listed on the building permits as owner, architect, and contractor. Looking at the history and timeline of these houses, Ed surmised that Wagner would build and live in one house; then build another, move to it, and sell the previous one to keep his cash flow going. The houses at 640, 702, and 705 were built by Wagner as was 4000 Randolph.

Walking along Randolph Street, Ed pointed out many homes of note. Quite a few of these residences were built in the 1920’s and 30’s and have a distinguishing feature. 4100 Randolph is a 1926 Brick bungalow with an eyebrow dormer. 4240 Randolph was built in 1920 in the American Four Square style and has a large Catalpa tree in front. It was the home of the druggist who practiced at the building which now is occupied by the frame shop at 4001 Randolph St. The brick home at 4200 Randolph was built in 1939 in the Colonial Revival style. An upper deck porch is featured at 4310 Randolph which was built in 1930.

The owners of 4410 Randolph were gardening and took time to share some stories about their home. It was built sometime between 1900 and 1920. John Butler, a noted Lincoln photographer lived there and used the lawn and garden as settings for his photos. Note the lovely terraced garden in front with garden art sculpture created by one of the owners.

We continued along Randolph to the corner of 46th and the start of the Tabitha property. Tabitha was founded in 1886 as an orphanage by Rev. Henry Heiner. It has expanded both its scope of services and property development. Its role as an orphanage ended in 1960 and Tabitha continues today providing comprehensive senior care services. Monthly meetings of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association are held at Tabitha’s LifeQuest Center.

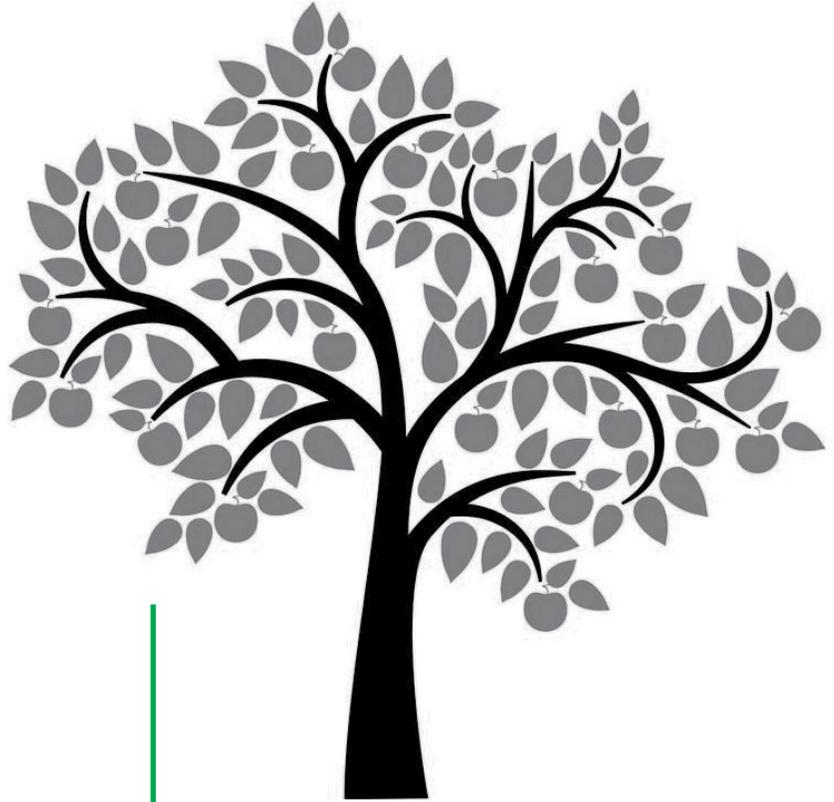
If you would like help researching the history of your home, contact Ed Zimmer at 402-441-6360 or by email at ezimmer@lincoln.ne.gov. To learn more about Lincoln history, talks by Ed Zimmer and Jim McKee, another Lincoln historian, can be found on You Tube.

UPDATE on Witherbee Park's Ash Trees

The devastating results of the Emerald Ash Borer is making itself seen all across our city's neighborhoods and while many of Lincoln's ash trees have been removed or are slated for removal, fortunately not all of them will meet that fate.

More than 1,000 public trees were removed in 2019, bringing a three-year total to approximately 1,900. But, city officials will soon start identifying what they call high-value trees, whose size, significance, health and location could make them candidates for long-term -- and more costly -- chemical treatment.

"We anticipated there would be some public trees that were important enough that we would continue to treat those," said Lynn Johnson, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. "We would want them to be trees that are in good enough condition so they have many years of anticipated life." Johnson went on to say that the five mature trees that shade tiny Witherbee Park near 44th and N streets are good candidates. Let all of us in WNA keep our fingers crossed that these trees remain on the selected list and that the treatment is effective.



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WNA Holiday Lights 2019 were Spectacular!!!

The displays were amazing, the themes diverse and the weather cooperated for the three teams of judges who traveled every street and neighborhood while enjoying our Witherbee neighbors' holiday lights.

The displays were so amazing this year, that our judges could not come up with an over-all winner for several of the categories so, we awarded multiple first place winners!! Thank you to all who lit up the sky and shared the joy of the season with your neighborhoods. Gift Certificates for the winners in the categories were delivered on the 25th/26th of December, much to their delight.

We look forward to having YOU join in the fun next year.



Winners for the 7 Categories for 2019 were:

Traditional Elegance:

3515 Woods Ave
3415 M st

LES Superior Customer Award: (Most Lights)

4921 L st

Kids Favorite:

200 Piazza Terrace
600 So. 53rd st

Dancing Lights Show:

650 So. 55th St.
385 So. 37th st
3940 Randolph

Reason for the Season:

3330 Woods Ave

Historically Bountiful:

4200 Randolph

Non-Residential Radiance:

Calvary Cemetery / 3880 L St.



Support our Troops Care Packages

Spirit of America is taking donations to deliver a care package for Nebraska's men and women deployed overseas. **Please drop off donations at 325 N 52nd St.** Thank you for supporting our Military!

"Heroes Into Homes" is a non-profit Veteran assistance organization, helping homeless Veterans into homes. Spirit of America is collecting canned items for their pantry. Please drop off your donations in the Credit Union lobby. Thank you for supporting our Vets!



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EAB NEWS

The Emerald Ash Tree Borer has arrived in Lincoln and is looking to destroy your Ash trees. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture confirmed this in August 2018. You will need to choose between saving and removing your ash tree soon.

You will most likely never see the beetle or the larva until it's too late!

Contact us to find out what your options are and how we can help.



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Join Us in Making a Difference in 2020!

Since the Witherbee Neighborhood Association (WNA) was organized in 2003, your neighborhood association has accomplished many important things to help maintain and enhance the neighborhood you call home. To help keep it strong we are conducting our annual membership appeal. As your neighbors and WNA volunteers we hope that you will send in your membership (or sign up or renew online at www.witherbeena.org/membership).



knowing more or want to help, please contact Kathy Holland at 402-483-6397, email: rh30222@windstream.net.

When we each do a little, we all do a lot. Please become a member and participate at whatever level of involvement that fits you and your schedule. Everyone has a talent, skill, idea or area of interest that would be an important contribution. There are many jobs, large and small, within the

organization. Please attend a meeting or participate in an activity! You do not need to be a member to participate. Come check us out!

Your membership dues help support the production of our newsletter, help with the cost of hosting our annual neighborhood pool party/ice cream social and other activities. But more importantly, we need your input and your ideas. If you are interested in

And finally, one of the best reasons to participate in WNA – it is a great way to meet nice and interesting people – from across the street, down the block and throughout your neighborhood.



Become a new member or renew your membership today!

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Membership Categories:

- ___ Household\$20.00
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- ___ Sponsor (listed in Buzz newsletter).....\$50.00
- ___ Business (listed in Buzz newsletter).....\$50.00

Contributions: Donations to WNA of \$50.00 or more will receive a tax deductible receipt.

Preferred Method of Contact: ___ email ___ phone ___ text ___ physical mail

Please complete this form, indicate your area of interest below and mail along with your payment to: WNA Treasurer, P.O. Box 5431, Lincoln, NE 68505.

You may also now pay your dues online at www.witherbeena.org.

- ___ Newsletter Production (editor, writer, graphic designer :**Please Circle.**)
- ___ Distribute Newsletters
- ___ Membership Committee
- ___ Neighborhood Clean-up
- ___ Garage Sales
- ___ Pool Party/Ice Cream Social (or other social event)
- ___ Yard of the Month
- ___ Holiday Lights Contest

- ___ Witherbee Connect
- ___ Government Liaison Committee

If you don't see something you are interested in here, please tell us your ideas and suggestions.

