



The Witherbee Buzz

Vol. 22 No. 1 Newsletter

Winter 2025

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

Justice in Action featured at the March Meeting

by Julie Flodman

Representatives of Justice in Action will present at our March 27th meeting. Justice in Action (JIA) is an interfaith, grassroots, coalition of caring people and faith communities building strength together to face the struggles of their neighbors in Lancaster County. According to their website, "We harness the power of organized people to address big community problems." Currently JIA is working on three big issues: Mental Health Navigation, Adult Pre-Trial Diversion and Affordable Housing. Their efforts will not stop until the problems associated with these sleepless night issues are solved.



Learn more about their efforts, their research, and the steps they have identified to solve these big issues by working with a coalition of City officials and representatives of non-profits who are tackling these same problems. We expect to hear more about

the solutions and action steps they are proposing to help stabilize Lincoln's Affordable Housing market.

Save the date and plan to attend the WNA March 27th meeting at 7 pm, Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S. 33rd St. Signs will be posted to direct you to the meeting room.

To learn more about the work of Justice in Action, go to <https://www.justice-in-action.org/>

Witherbee Neighborhood Assoc. Membership Drive 2025

by Rod Lane

You are invited to get to know your neighborhood! The Witherbee Neighborhood Association is not a regulatory body; we are simply a group of neighbors who want to foster a community atmosphere where we live.

Our Membership Drive runs from January through March 2025. During the drive all household memberships are \$15.

A strong neighborhood association supports positive changes in our area. WNA helps build relationships between neighbors. The association advocates for a safe and livable community with City officials & City Departments. More personally, it's a fantastic way to connect with the people you share your space with.

Paid membership is essential for our budget, and it connects us through various neighborhood activities, including:

- Neighborhood Garage Sales
- Neighborhood Clean-Up Project
- Quarterly Newsletter

- Community Crime Watch
- Representation at the Mayor's Round Table
- Speakers and Advocacy for neighborhood interests
- Summer Pool Party
- Networking Opportunities
- Yard of the Month
- And many more!

Strengthen our neighborhood by renewing your membership today! Your support is vital to our community's success, and mailing in your membership helps us make a difference block by block. To renew it online – scan the QR code on the membership form inserted in your newsletter to pay with PayPal or Venmo.

Please join us at the Witherbee Neighborhood Association meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7pm at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 South 33rd Street.

We invite everyone to participate, so please bring a friend or neighbor to share in our efforts! Thank you for your continued support.

**Witherbee
Neighborhood Association**

Boundaries:

33rd to 56th & 'O' to Randolph

Meetings:

Fourth Thursday of the month, 7pm
Redeemer Lutheran Church

www.facebook.com/witherbeena

www.WitherbeeNA.org

PO Box 5431
Lincoln, NE 68505
402-413-0156

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President's Message

Mike Kreikemeier



Membership Matters

I hope everyone's new year is off to a great start. Before 2025 gets rolling too fast I want to remind everyone to join or renew your membership with the Witherbee Neighborhood Association. Membership is a bargain, with annual dues starting at \$15 you can support activities like the Neighborhood Cleanup, Pool Party and Ice Cream Social and the Holiday Lights Contest. In addition to those fun activities your membership also supports the many ways WNA advocates for a safe and

livable neighborhood. WNA has an active Crime Watch team that works with LPD keeping the neighborhood safe. WNA members are engaged with Lincoln City Council members as well as City and County departments to stay informed and voice positive opinions on matters that are important to the neighborhood and the city of Lincoln. WNA publishes and distributes this Buzz newsletter 4 times a year. Each issue is full of useful information about the neighborhood.

A membership form and envelope is included in this issue of the Buzz. WNA will not be mailing out membership forms this year. Please fill it out and send it in. Do it now, it only takes a few minutes.

The WNA board is made up of neighbors like you that volunteer their time and talent to make our neighborhood a great place to live. **Your membership matters. Thank you for joining WNA.**

WNA Calendar of Events

Feb 27	WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
March 27	Justice in Action discussion on Fair Housing in Lincoln, WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
April 24	Gardening in Your Backyard, WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
April 27	Flower Power Pot Luck, 5-7p Witherbee Park, 46th & O St.
May 3	WNA Spring Cleanup, 8a-Noon; 48th & M St.
May 22	WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
June 5-8	WNA Annual Garage Sales
June 26	WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
July 24	WNA monthly meeting 7-8:30p Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S 33rd St.
Aug 3	WNA Pool Party and Ice Cream Social, 6-8p Woods Pool, 3200 J St.



Lincoln on the Move ¼-cent Sales Tax on April 8 Ballot

by Kathy Holland

If the Lincoln on the Move quarter-cent sales tax is continued, it is estimated that it will contribute \$18 million annually to improving existing streets and constructing new streets for a projected total investment of \$144 million in eight years.

Supported by voters in 2019, it will return to the ballot on April 8, 2025 and the program would take effect October 1, 2025 and expire September 30, 2033.

Going without Lincoln on the Move means a future with fewer street improvements, longer wait times for street projects, and higher street repair costs for everyone as interest rates and material costs climb. The City completed 65 projects in six years with Lincoln on the Move funding. Without this funding it would have taken the City up to an estimated 22 years to complete the same number of projects.

The Witherbee neighborhood benefited from street improvements supported by this fund. These projects included: Randolph from 40th– 56th; 52nd—Randolph to O; 45th—Randolph to O; and other streets in the area of 36th – 38th and 42nd – 48th Streets. Due to be completed this year, 40th—from A to O. (Note: Randolph Street, from Capitol Parkway to 40th St will be completed with Federal funds.)

Visitors to our city contribute 30% of all Lincoln on the Move sales tax funds to improve our streets.

A ¼ cent sales tax is 2.5 cents on a \$10 purchase and 25 cents on a \$100 purchase. The average annual impact can vary depending on how much each resident spends annually. That impact has been estimated anywhere between \$31 annually to \$45.

Members of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association voted to support the Lincoln on the Move initiative and renewal of the quarter-cent sales tax at our January 23 meeting.

Lincoln on the Move website: Lincoln.ne.gov/Streets
Projects website: Lincoln.ne.gov/Projects

New Board Member



Bruce Sandhorst

I have been retired for 12 years after working at the University for forty years. I have been doing Small Claims Court Mediation several times a month since my retirement. Roberta and I have three children and four grandchildren with another one on the way!

We have lived on N Street for over forty years and love this neighborhood! I enjoy time with my grandkids, traveling, woodworking and keeping the house and yard up.

I appreciate what the Witherbee Neighborhood Association has done in the past and want to contribute to its continuing success.



Annual Membership Drive

January-February-March

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submitted by Tabitha

At first glance, Tabitha's S2age Living, An Eventide Affiliate, at the corner of S. 47th & L Streets is a beautiful apartment building in the heart of Lincoln. Step off the curb and inside you will find it is much more!

"What sets bright and airy S2age apart is who calls it home," shared S2age Director, Susan Langford. "We have a welcoming atmosphere, competitive rental rates, suites filled with premium finishes and appliances along with great gathering spots inside and out. A rooftop terrace, complete with firepit and grills, pet friendly offerings such as a dog run and pet spa plus weekday continental breakfasts are just a few of the amenities. Add engaged older adults (55+) and College of Health Sciences student residents into the mix and it is a game changer, each benefit from intentional neighboring."

"If you are thinking of downsizing, yet don't want to give up your tried-and-true Witherbee location, S2age is a fantastic option. Alleviate the worry of maintaining your home and yard and trade it in for a new apartment that is still in your neighborhood," added Langford.

Contact S2age Director, Susan.Langford@Tabitha.org or 402.484.9981 to schedule a tour or check out Tabitha.org/SageLincoln to upcoming view events.



Great places to gather are built into the community.



Neighbors and Boy Scouts take a break from planting to pose for a picture at Witherbee Park on November 23, 2024.

Spring Flowers in Witherbee Park

by Mike Kreikemeier

Spring will be blooming in Witherbee Park. A large group of neighbors and several Boy Scouts from Troop 28 planted over 3500 spring flowering bulbs in Witherbee Park last November. The bulbs were purchased with a grant from Keep Lincoln and Lancaster County Beautiful and a Strong Neighborhoods grant awarded by Lincoln Community Builder Coalition.

Additional donations from Witherbee board members allowed even more bulbs to be purchased and planted for an even bigger flower show. The flowers will be a special attraction in Witherbee Park this Spring.

Thanks to everyone that helped with this community improvement project. I can't wait until Spring!



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Hours:

M.-F. 8-6

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WNA New Social Facebook Page

WNA rolled out a neighborhood social Facebook page in February, 2024. This is in addition to the Facebook page that highlights events and city related issues. The social page is an excellent way to get to know your neighbors from 33rd to 56th streets and every block in between.

Let's share happenings in the neighborhood!



Neighborhood Watch Signs!

by Julie Flodman

Have you noticed the Crime Watch yard signs in a neighbor's yard? Crime Watch Team volunteers have elected to display their yard signs to remind friends and neighbors they are a part of the Witherbee Crime Watch Team. The signs were designed by team members, approved by the Lincoln Police Department, and printed by GoldenRod Printing. We believe the signs provide a warning to discourage someone from perpetrating a crime in our neighborhood. The costs of printing these signs was absorbed by the Witherbee Neighborhood Association (WNA).

Additionally, members of the Crime Watch Team have been working with the City to ensure our neighborhood has uniformly spaced and complete coverage of Neighborhood Watch signs. The team has spent several hours verifying the locations of all Neighborhood Watch signs within Witherbee and mapping their location. They are working with the Department of Traffic Engineering to recommend additional locations where a sign is needed so that there is equal coverage throughout our neighborhood.

The Crime Watch Team is a very active group within the WNA. Crime Watch Team volunteers become the eyes and ears of the Lincoln Police Department. By investing a small amount of time and attention to activity in their neighborhood they make Witherbee a safer place to live. If you would like additional information about their projects or would like to join, contact Julie Flodman at jsiffing@yahoo.com or call the WNA phone at 402-413-0156.



Holiday Lights Shine Bright

by Mike Kreikemeier

Thanks to all of the Witherbee Neighbors that shared their Holiday Light Displays. The lights made the Holiday season a bit more joyful and bright.

The Holiday lights committee members were Mike Kreikemeier, Julie Flodman, Kathy Holland & Mary Schwab. Hy-Vee gift cards were awarded to all of the winners. Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all of the neighbors that decorated their homes for the Holidays.

Photos of the winning homes are on the Witherbee Facebook pages. [Facebook.com/witherbeena](https://www.facebook.com/witherbeena)



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Lincoln Neighborhood Alliance Reboot

by Mary Schwab

The Lincoln Neighborhood Alliance was an organization that created a space for Lincoln's neighborhood associations and leaders to collaborate and socialize. It disbanded several years ago. The "reboot" meeting, organized by Issac Remboldt, Irvingdale neighborhood, was held at Bennett Martin Library on September 28th.

Subsequent meetings were also held in October, November and January. The meetings have been attended by WNA President Mike Kreikemeier and representatives Mary Schwab and Julie Flodman.

The goal of the inaugural meeting was to set the vision of the group, exchange resources, and socialize with other neighborhood leaders.

During this meeting, small groups gathered to discuss successes and challenges neighborhood associations are facing.



Many of the groups reported Newsletters, Plant Sales, Social/Cultural/Holiday Events, Historic Walks, Walk Audits, Garage Sales, 4th of July Parades and Clean-Ups are the most frequent activities and events of neighborhood associations.

Increasing and maintaining membership was the most frequent challenge reported, specifically how to get young people, renters and new neighbors involved. Housing justice issues and lack of housing was identified as another significant challenge.

Future meetings of the Lincoln Neighborhood Alliance will be held on the third Saturday of the month, 10:30 – 12:00, at Bennett Martin Library.

If you would be interested in attending these meetings to represent our neighborhood, please contact one of the WNA Board members for more information. The best way to solve our challenges is to do something in cooperation with other neighborhood associations!



Redeemer Lutheran Church

510 South 33rd Street

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In Memory of our Friend – Jim Ihrle

by Kathy Holland

One of our long-time neighbors and a staunch volunteer for the Witherbee Neighborhood Association, Jim Ihrle, passed away December 24th. News reports indicate he was found in his basement with a smoldering fire about 1:30 AM on that date.

Jim grew up in Lincoln. Following graduation from high school, he was drafted into the Marines and served his country in the Vietnam War. He worked for Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph many years and retired from there.

Jim was a long-time resident of the Witherbee neighborhood and was an active volunteer for the WNA nearly from the beginning. While looking for a photo of Jim from our files, it was not surprising that I found Jim in pictures when a crew was needed to get a job done. He was a regular when work-days were held at Witherbee Park, at our annual clean-up, and picking up supplies for our ice cream social or other event.

When our newsletter was initiated he helped come up with routes so that a copy could be delivered to every



home in Witherbee. His carport was the pickup spot for our newsletter bundles so volunteers could retrieve their bundle at their convenience. Up until a few years ago, Jim delivered an extra route or two if needed so that all the newsletters would get out. In addition, he walked the south side of "O" St. from 40th to South Cotner delivering newsletters to businesses and our advertisers. He was the "face" of the WNA to many businesses and to our advertisers.

Besides his volunteer work for WNA, he was a passionate volunteer for the Lincoln Children's Zoo, the telephone museum, the Speedway Motors Museum and Little League baseball. He was a runner and a biker and explored many of the bike trails in Lincoln. His carport and driveway was a popular spot for neighborhood children. He was affectionately known to them as "Grandpa Jim".

Jim was a good neighbor and a loyal volunteer. He will be sorely missed.

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April 24th Meeting – Hawley Hamlet Neighborhood Garden

Two of the co-founders of the nationally recognized “Hawley Hamlet Neighborhood Garden” will be the featured presenters at the April 24th Witherbee Neighborhood meeting. The Thursday evening 7:00 p.m. presentation will be held, as traditional, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 510 S. 33rd Street.

Starting in 2009 with their own private yard in the Hawley Neighborhood, Kay Walter and Tim Rinne began converting their entire lot from inedible grass lawn to an “edible landscape” of vegetable beds, berry patches, fruit and nut trees and native plants.

From that single food-growing garden in their two-acre residential block, home gardens have cropped up on 13 different properties, annually serving over 20 neighboring families. In a block with no vacant lots, four-fifths of an acre of what was formerly lawn (the equivalent of 80 yards of the Memorial Stadium football field) has been



repurposed to gardens for human food production and wildlife habitat for pollinators.

This home gardening project is doing more, though, than simply providing nourishing, good-tasting, affordable fresh food for these residents’ tables. It’s building “community”. Food brings people together—and out of that “community” we

all get stronger, healthier neighborhoods.

Kay and Tim are currently collaborating with a group of neighborhood activists and master gardeners to launch a “Do-It-Yourself Home Gardening” campaign to encourage home gardening throughout Lincoln. In their April presentation, they will share their thoughts on steps urban homeowners can take on their lots, in their blocks and across their neighborhoods to grow some of our own food and to become better acquainted with the neighbors we live among.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held Nov. 21st

by Rod Lane

On the evening of November 21st, we came together at Redeemer Lutheran Church for a truly memorable occasion—the Witherbee Neighborhood Association’s annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. This event celebrated the incredible spirit of our volunteers, the heartbeat of our community, whose unwavering commitment and passion shaped Witherbee into a good place to call home.

Throughout the evening, volunteers and board members mingled, savored delicious food, captured joyful moments in photos, and enjoyed captivating live piano music and a hilarious comedian. Meanwhile, dedicated board

members worked diligently behind the scenes to ensure everything flowed smoothly. Board President Mike Kreike-meier took the stage as the master of ceremonies, proudly presenting awards to our outstanding volunteers, whose contributions deserve the highest recognition.

To all our volunteers, thank you for your relentless dedication and the genuine care you show to your neighbors and neighborhood. Your efforts are the foundation of our vibrant community, and we are immensely grateful for all you do!

For more highlights from this memorable event, visit our Community Facebook Page.

