



The Witherbee Buzz

Vol. 15 No. 4 Newsletter

Fall 2018

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

WITHERBEE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 8TH

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association will hold its Annual Meeting on Thursday, November, 8th beginning at 6:00. This year, the gathering will be held in the Johnson Conference Room (lower level) of Tabitha Rehabilitation Center (48th and Randolph). Please come in the front entrance and you will be directed to the meeting room.

Entertainment, food and fun are planned so get this on your calendar!!!

Attendee's will have the opportunity to enjoy the stories, humor and musical expertise of our own Witherbee Neighbor, Doris Weins!! Doris was the 2017 recipient of the Community Service Award from the AARP/NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) and she taught LPS elementary students for 39 years. Many Lincolniters have been inspired and captivated by Doris's very special brand of entertainment so this is one show you won't want to miss!

There will also be an election of officers at the meeting as well as the annual election of board members. If you are interested in helping keep our neighborhood the special, mid-town gem that it is, please consider becoming a board member.



SEE INSIDE STORIES:

Ed Zimmer Walking Tour - page 4-5

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Pool Party & Holiday Lights - page 8

Could it be YOU?

WNA Looks to Fill Seats on Board of Directors

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association has been serving our little piece of Lincoln for over 15 years now. None of the work would be possible without the effort of countless volunteers who have contributed their time, talents, and energy over the years. Currently there are several empty seats on the WNA Board of Directors that we are looking to fill. Could it be YOU?

Many of our readers have helped out with or attended WNA meetings and events in the past. Some of our newer neighbors are just becoming familiar with the WNA and its mission in the neighborhood. Whether you're a neighborhood veteran or newbie, we would love to have you help us continue to make central Lincoln a great place to live!

Board members are expected to attend monthly meetings (typically held the first Thursday of the month at 7pm in Tabitha's LifeQuest Conference Room) and several special board meetings per year. However, we recognize that life is busy and we understand when Board members have to scale back their efforts at times. Please don't tell yourself that you are "not qualified" or "not" enough of something to volunteer. We simply ask that you be a current member of the WNA, enjoy working with teams, and have an interest in building community and connections in our neighborhood.

We invite you to attend our November Annual Meeting, where we celebrate our volunteers and elect officers for the next year. This meeting is a great chance to socialize with neighbors and get an idea of what serving with the WNA would look like. We are holding the meeting in the Johnson Conference Room (on the lower level) of Tabitha Rehabilitation Center on Thursday, November 8. Please note this is the second Thursday of the month. Food, entertainment, and elections will be held from 6-8pm that night. If you're unable to attend but are interested (or know someone else who might be) in serving on the Board, please email witherbeena@gmail.com and a volunteer will be in touch with you. Please consider!

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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President's Message

Hello Neighbors!!

This is my final message as the President of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association, as our new President will be taking office at the WNA annual meeting on November 8. I want to thank the members of our organization who have worked so hard to keep this fine neighborhood in their ever-present care.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the people who work to complete the events that make YOUR neighborhood cleaner, safer, well organized, informative and fun!

The Neighborhood Clean-up in May has been famous for winning awards for most pounds of trash and junk hauled away AND it makes our neighborhoods a clean, beautiful place to call home.

The WNA garage sales are organized, advertised, and come complete with signs and maps so that you might be more successful at turning your "stuff" into dollars in your pocket.

The WNA Pool Party/Block Party is successful at bringing together hundreds of neighbors who swim, eat ice cream, enjoy games and entertainment all while meeting new and old friends. ALL for FREE!

If you are one to walk about, you can find the Yard of the Month. It is a feast for anyone who appreciates a beautiful garden.

The Holiday Lighting Contest is a creative competition that gives everyone in our neighborhood a reason to smile!

Many of our monthly meetings begin with Scheduled Speakers that enlighten, entertain and educate those in attendance.

AND, in addition to all this, quietly, behind the scenes, the WNA board and committees are watching and discussing the workings of the many governing bodies that create the laws that affect our daily lives.

The Witherbee Neighborhood Association was created in 2003 by a group of your concerned neighbors who felt the need to communicate as a watchful, unified and organized group with our local government and neighbors. Fifteen years of attending to YOUR best interest have produced positive results and have given everyone in the WNA the security of living in a neighborhood that cares for one another.

Please ask yourself, What Have I Done to Help My Neighborhood? There are many opportunities available, most of them very small in actual time commitment. No specific talents are required, except the willingness to be a partner with your neighbor in keeping YOUR neighborhood a friendly place to live.

As the WNA President, I have repeated this message in every Buzz newsletter for the past two years with the hope that new individuals will step up to serve. This is a time of cultural shift in our collective lives, and it is up to YOU to make a difference. Please contact anyone on the WNA board and let us know that you are ready to make a difference.

As the outgoing President, it has been an honor and my pleasure to carry on the legacy set by the original WNA founders.

Mary Beecham-Schwab
President



Christ in Christmas at Cristo Rey Catholic Church

By Mascha Miedaner

Nativity, Nacimiento, Belén – these are all words used to describe an exhibition of figurines and scenes depicting the birth of Christ. The idea of recreating the nativity scene was begun in Italy by St. Francis of Assisi who is credited with creating the first live nativity scene in 1223. He wanted the focus of Christmas to be on the birth of Christ rather than gift giving and materialism. These live performances were very popular and nativity scene enactments flourished throughout Italy. Statuettes and figurines came to replace the live animals and people. Charles III, who had previously been the ruler of Naples, brought this Italian tradition to Spain when he took his place on the throne.

Here in Lincoln, the Cristo Rey Catholic Church has a Belén (Spanish for Bethlehem) which the public is invited to view. Each year, since 2004, a group of volunteers come together to build the Nativity scene. This diorama not only represents the manger scene of the birth of Christ but also includes the towns of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Cana, and Nazareth. It is 12 feet wide and 28 feet long. It takes volunteers about a week to construct the scene.

Jose Herrero is the artistic director and the guiding hand behind this creation. Having grown up in Spain, Herrero is very familiar with this tradition. When moving to Nebraska from Washington, D.C., he decided to create a monumental scene and thought the social hall at Cristo Rey would be the perfect place for it. Herrero enlisted the help of Pepe Casarin and with Pepe's technical skills began building the houses and structures. The diorama has expanded each year with new additions. Herrero's travels to the Holy Land, Spain, Italy and other countries have inspired him. He has also worked with the Asociación de Belenistas de Madrid (Nativity Builders Association of Madrid) to gather ideas for the Belén.



The tableau presents the life of Christ and depicts many scenes from the Bible. There is Nazareth where the angel Gabriel revealed himself to Mary, a wedding in Cana where Jesus turned water into wine, and Bethlehem with the manger where Christ was born. Everyday scenes are woven in also, the pottery barn, fruit vendor and others. Included amongst the more than 300 figurines is a rock from the Holy Land. Every four minutes, the scene is lit as the sun comes up and darkens as night falls. The work that goes into the creation is a way to prepare for the Advent and is an offering to God.

The roots of the word catholic mean “universal”. The volunteers who help with the building of the scene come from many countries - Mexico, China, Kenya, Ecuador, and the United States. The scene is open to all so that anyone can take part in this experience. Herrero says, “This is a way to bring people together. To show the culture and traditions of the people who attend the church and the volunteers taking part in the building of the Nativity. The birth of Christ is also a celebration of life which we can all take part in no matter our faith or beliefs.” The scene is a way to pay tribute to the Holy Family and all those that also are going through similar hardships.

Rev. Ramon Decaen, pastor for the church, hopes that “people will take the time to come and visit our Belén so that they can slow down their hurried pace and remember the reason for the season.”

Donations are accepted and help to support both Cristo Rey here in Lincoln and a church, Kitukuni Parish, and the Nyumbani orphanage in Kenya. (Additional information about Nyumbani can be found at www.Nyumbani.org.)

The church is located at 4221 J Street, Lincoln. The Belén can be seen from December 20 - January 10 and is generally available for viewing during church hours, 8 am to 10 pm. Please call the church office at 402-488-5087 to confirm dates and hours.



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A Witherbee Walking Tour with Ed Zimmer

By Mascha Miedaner

Thirty eight residents gathered at the WNA August general meeting to hear Ed Zimmer, local historian and City of Lincoln Historic Preservation Planner. Ed filled in the specifics about the people and places featured in his article about the history of the Witherbee neighborhood (see Summer 2018 issue of *The Buzz*) with slides and amusing anecdotes.

This talk was followed up with a September Walking Tour. The area covered was the western third of Witherbee. Forty-five people showed up at Woods Park and then Ed led them through the neighborhood starting with the Parkview Apartments at 33rd Street; highlighting the homes of Lyman Frost and ending up at the oldest known home in Witherbee at 3311 N Street. There were so many interesting homes with interesting stories that the walk was extended by a half hour to two hours in order to cover them all. The following are only some of the buildings that were featured.

Ed began the tour at Parkview at 400 S. 33rd Street. This house started out as a single family home for Arnott C. Ricketts and family. He was an attorney in Lincoln and purchased the lot for \$1,000 from Lyman and Laura Frost in 1885. It was built circa 1890 by T. P. Harrison. The home was turned into apartments sometime in the 1920's and continues as rented apartments today.

Redeemer Lutheran Church at 510 S. 33rd Street is a wonderful example of the Gothic Revival style. Built in 1946, the original building is the small southern section with its entrance on the SW facing 33rd Street. In the 1950's the church was enlarged to its present size. Fritz Craig was the architect and in 1951, he also designed another church in Witherbee, St. Teresa Catholic Church at 735 S. 36th Street.

As we walked south on 33rd, en route to the Frost home at the corner of Randolph and 33rd, Ed pointed out the home at 624 33rd Street. This home was designed by Everett Dodds and is called the "Ashford" model. According to information from the Nebraska State Historical Society, "Professionally, he became known for being a specialist in up-to-date residences and bungalows of the better class." Most likely these home plans were purchased for about \$10 from the many architectural designs by Dodds. Again, from the Nebraska State Historical Society's webpages, "Dodds achieved such a status that his building plans were shown weekly in the Omaha World-Herald." The distinctive features of this style are the "eyebrow" over the front door and the prominent chimney on the front wall. There are other examples of this style throughout Witherbee. As you walk or drive in the neighborhood, see if you can find them.

The large home at 3318 Randolph was designed by Ferdinand Comstock Fiske, a prominent architect in Lincoln from 1887-1930. This home was built in 1916 for Flora Frost Snell and her husband NZ Snell. Flora is the daughter of Lyman and Laura Frost, owners of the original 80 acre farm which later became Frost's subdivision and also lends their name to Frost Drive and Frost Court. NZ was not only an attorney and partner with A. C. Ricketts of Parkview but also an auto dealer. A garage was a prominent feature of this home. It was later enclosed and houses the current pottery business.

Another member of the Frost family, Lyman and Laura Frost's son, Lincoln, resided at 3500 Randolph. His house no longer stands. He was a well-known attorney and also a judge for 23 years. He developed the Lyman Park Subdivision which extends from Randolph to J Street and 33rd to 37th Street.

Laura Avenue, the centerpiece of this subdivision was named for his mother, Laura Frost. On Laura Avenue at number 3426, there is another "Ashford" which was built in 1926 for a cost of \$4500.

3600 J Street is notable because Claude C. Campbell, founder of Campbell's Nurseries and Garden Center, moved his business and built his home here in 1926. At the time, this property was an acre of bare land.



The large stone house at 3530 J Street was owned by Arthur Hjalmar Edgren, Lancaster County engineer. The home was built in 1920 for Arthur and his wife, Effie. Prior to living in this home, they lived in a frame house just to the east of it at 3540 J Street. The building permit for the stone house lists "self" (Edgren) as contractor and there is no architect cited. The house is built in what is known as Mission Style because of its tile roof, stone construction, and curvy dormer parapets. The home consists of 3,792 square feet and sits in the middle of a 1.16 acre lot.

In addition to his duties for the county, Edgren wrote articles

Continued on page 5

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for various trade magazines. In (Jan- April 1919, vol. 5) he construction of the "14 ½ miles six roads from Lincoln into the highways were built "to remove He also wrote for Concrete 1920) describing the efficient in Lincoln. He wasn't a resident died October 3, 1932 at age 48.

Further along J Street, we House" at 3433 J Street. This Miller for Theo Goldammer, Company with an estimated cost of \$7,000. Inside there is tile, tile, and more tile. Both the tub and shower, walls, and floors were tiled as was the kitchen sink. Take a look at the roof. What looks like wood shingles are actually tiles!

On the north side of J Street from number 3450 to 3330, the houses are set back 60' from the street as required in their subdivision. Ruth and William Schlaebitz, who platted the land and built their own house at 3440 J Street in 1935. They apparently envisioned a future extension of a J Street boulevard east from the Capitol and their houses are set back, ready for that day.

Ed suggested that during springtime, prior to the trees leafing out, the view of the Capitol at sunrise from 35th and J Street is spectacular.

We made our way north on Frost Drive to Frost Court. This street was developed in 1950-1960 and has many examples of mid-century modern homes.

The home at 3455 L Street is certainly unusual, not only for its design elements, but also because it was designed by a Manhattan Project physicist, Theodore Jorgensen. He designed and built this home in 1958. According to his obituary in the Lincoln Journal Star, "He installed a radiant, underfloor heating system before anyone knew what that meant, his daughter said. He tilted the house's roof so that, in the winter, sun beams flowed inside; in the summer, they were blocked." He also wrote a best-selling book, *The Physics of Golf*. He became interested in golf when wooing his second wife, Dorothy, who loved to play golf. He taught at UNL for many years and died at age 100.

Ed pointed out the ginkgo tree in the front yard that loses its leaves all at once. A hard frost triggers all the leaves to drop at the same time.

The family that occupies 3501 Woods Avenue was on the walk. Their home is a fine example of a mid-century modern and was designed and occupied by architect, Steve Cook. He was the superintendent of construction for the Pershing Municipal Auditorium. They are only the second family to have lived in the home. They, too, have an unusual tree in their front lawn, a bald cypress. Unlike other conifers, the bald cypress loses its needles each winter and grows a new set in the spring.

The final address that we visited was 3311 N Street. Ed believes that this house was built circa 1890-1900. If one looks carefully, one can notice some ornamentation on the barge board that is indicative of the Queen Anne style. Per his obituary, "For many years, Halleck C. Young operated a dairy farm at 33rd and O Street." According to Ed, this home was probably the farmhouse. When H.C. moved to Lincoln, he roomed with Charles Dawes who would become Vice-President under Calvin Coolidge.

With that, we concluded our tour and returned to the present.

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.



one for Dependable Highways extolls the virtues and superior of brick highways radiating in surrounding county." Brick the handicap of deep mud." Highways magazine (March organization of snow removal of Witherbee for very long as he

stopped in front of "The Tile house was designed by J.B. owner of the Tile and Marble



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County Commissioner: What the Voting Public should know about this Elected Position

by Tim Duey

Former Democratic speaker of the House Tip O'Neal once said, "all politics is local." And while that's as true today as it was back when he said it, people still don't seem to grasp the power local elected officials have over their lives.

Oh sure, tell them that Donald Trump is going to slap tariffs on steel or that Brett Kavanaugh is being considered for supreme court, and people are happy to tell you just how they feel. But, ask them who their County Attorney is (Joe Kelly) or who their County Engineer is (Pam Dingman,) and you'd think you'd asked for the square root of 390,625.

During my time campaigning in the Witherbee neighborhood I've learned this the hard way. Time and time again I'll knock on somebody's door, tell them I'm running for county commissioner, and then spend the next five minutes explaining just what the heck a county commissioner does. So, partially out of a desire for a sense of catharsis and partially out of a desire for a well informed electorate, I've taken it upon myself to explain it. Here's mud in your eye.

County Commissioners sit on the County Board, there are five of them representing five districts in Lancaster County. Witherbee, where I live and where the seat I'm running for draws its mandate, sits in District One.

The County Board's primary responsibility is to oversee the county budget, which is drawn from about 13% of all county property taxes collected, or, \$191.4 million. The various departments and agencies that draw funding from the county budget are as diverse as they are important. The sheriff's department, the county jail, the county engineer, and the public defender's office submit their budget for approval to the county board as does the county, district and juvenile court.

Those are just a few of the important oversight roles the County Board fills, basically, if it's a service that extends beyond the city limits to the rest of the citizens of the county, it falls to the county board to provide oversight for the use of taxpayer funds.

Interestingly enough, this means that the board's oversight includes the budgets of several elected officials. That's why it's so important that the board members aren't just some nepotistic appointment rubber stamped by an apathetic electorate voting along purely partisan lines.

Got a neighbor with five foot weeds in his yard? Weed control falls under the county board. What if your child is a minor in trouble with the law? The Lancaster County Board oversees the Youth Services Center. Are you struggling with mental illness? You guessed it, the county board over sees the Board of Mental Health.


It's easy for people to get apathetic about local politics in this age where it seems like shadowy forces determine the outcome of the vote long before a ballot is cast. But only 24.79 percent of eligible voters turned out to vote in this year's primary election, and your local government officials are too important to be chosen by anyone other than the people they represent. Please, take an hour, sit down and look at who is running, then make a decision and vote. If you don't have time to get out to the polls you can request an absentee ballot and do it from home. Whatever you do, just don't stay home and sit on your hands. The only time your vote doesn't make a difference is when you don't cast it.



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Club 4 Fitness Gym

By: Nancy Shelley



If you are a member of the Witherbee Neighborhood Association and are 55 years of age or older, you are eligible to join the Club 4 Fitness Gym at Tabitha Health Care Services. Club 4 features both innovative and traditional workout equipment including two treadmills, two ellipticals, one recumbent bike, a NuStep, an AirDyne bicycle, free weights and mats for stretching. There are also two big screen televisions to watch while exercising as well as an indoor walking track. The cost to use these facilities is \$20.00 for six months or \$40.0 for a year's membership.

Club 4 is located at Tabitha's main campus, 4720 Randolph Street on the fourth floor in the north wing. The Club 4 Fitness Gym is open daily from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. via the south main entrance. You may also enter via the LifeQuest entrance from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. on weekdays only. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact Cheto Cerda, the Wellbeing Coordinator, at 402-484-9820.

Keeping an Eye on City Hall Bicycle Lincoln

By: Rick Bagby

What do you think of 'bicycle boulevards'? Are you ready to put one on L street through our neighborhood? Recreational and commuter cycling is growing along with the population. Transportation by bicycle is cheaper and easier than by car if we put the same planning into infrastructure as we do for autos. Public input and review are a key part of the planning process. Review meetings are planned soon. Stay informed Lincoln. Public improvements are guided by those who show up and speak up.

Learn more here: <https://www.lincolnbikeplan.com/>



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Holiday Lighting Contest 2018

Right now many of us are spending more time raking up the never ending piles of leaves that come with living in such a wonderfully tree established neighborhood, but it's never too early to start thinking about the white stuff and all the holiday fun that goes along with it. So get ready to break out those icicle lights, wreaths, inflatables, manger scenes, Santa's, snowmen or whatever puts you in the Christmas spirit! The Witherbee Neighborhood Association is once again sponsoring a Holiday Lighting Contest with future Buzz recognition and PRIZES (\$\$\$) for a variety of categories.

- 1) Traditional/Simple Elegance Award
- 2) Lincoln Electric System Superior Customer Award (most lights)
- 3) Visions of Sugar Plums Award (kid favorite)
- 4) Reason for the Season Award

Judging will occur during the third week-end in December (15th -16th) and winners will be notified the following week. This gives everyone plenty of time to get those lights untangled, replace burnt out bulbs and dust off Santa and his reindeer!!

Call or email Mary Schwab with your own home as a nomination or another home that you feel deserves recognition at witherbeenamary@gmail.com or (402) 440-4131.

WNA Pool Party - What a Difference a Year Makes

By: Rick Bagby

300+ in the pool and 25 gallons of ice cream. Song and dance with Josh the Otter while learning water safety. LPD connecting with community. Saltdogs ticket giveaway. Old cars and new friends.

Many of your neighbors came together to celebrate summer and another year of community in midtown Lincoln on a fine evening in early August. Turnout was much higher with this year's warm weather and clear skies, requiring two quick trips for more supplies. What a great problem to have. The renovated plaza outside of the Woods Tennis Center proved once again to be an excellent spot for an evening in the park.

Thank you to organizers Mary Schwab, Kathy Holland, Kathy Stastny; to Kevin Heim and the staff of Woods Tennis Center, to the Cornhusker Model A Club, and most of all to all the volunteers who made it possible.

Thank you. It's your event Witherbee!

