



Northland Neighborhoods News

As a cost-containment measure, the *monthly* Northland Neighborhoods News is distributed only on the NNI Website (www.nni.org). The Quarterly edition will continue to be published and distributed in both printed and online formats. We apologize for any inconvenience this causes our readers.

NNI's Safe Trick or Treat event tricks a few; treats thousands

In a momentary return to its bygone glory days, Antioch Mall's west parking lot was filled to capacity October 31, courtesy of NNI's annual Safe Trick or Treat event. While the official attendance count was 4,327, the actual count was closer to 4,800 according to observers on the scene. More than 15 zip codes were represented, with the main concentration from the Northland south of Vivion Road. More than 1,200 cartons of milk were distributed along with a massive sugar surge of 67,130 pieces of candy. A small army of 87 volunteers (14 of them new

to NNI) clocked 703 hours toiling before, during and after the event. Volunteers included groups from Eastgate Middle School, NKC, Oak Park, and St. Pius X high schools, and Isben Dance Studio. Major sponsors were the Neighborhood Tourism Development Fund, Antioch Mall and Belfonte Dairy. Amid all the fun, we need to remind ourselves that this event provides a safe, wholesome place for thousands of children to enjoy the great American pastime of Halloween.

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Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life in the Northland by collaborating with residents, businesses and institutions to empower neighborhoods to build and maintain their own healthy communities. We join with them in absolute dedication to finding solutions and, in that collective spirit, we will leave no neighborhood behind.



2010 EXCEL ready for January launch

Enrollment for the 2010 EXCEL Neighborhood Leadership Program is still open, but not for long. Class sessions will run from January to June 2010. Class size will be limited to 15, but interested persons should obtain an application now by contacting NNI at 454-2000. This

is year 3 for EXCEL. Graduates of EXCEL praise the intense but very enjoyable course. The program equips participants with know-how and experiences that enable them to lead their neighborhoods to success. The program includes sessions on personal leadership skills, demographics and

community analysis, state and local government, a poverty simulation, community infrastructure, information management, economic development, public education, public safety, and a City Hall group project. EXCEL is a collaboration of NNI and the University of Missouri Extension.

Community Center Holiday fund needs push from the Northland

Again this December, the Kansas City Community Center Holiday Parties will be hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department. There will be 10 parties, one in each community center. Parks is partnering with Toys for Tots again this year.

Parks and Recreation Commissioner Meg Conger, a Northlander, is asking for donations to help defray the cost of the parties. Severe budget cuts to the Parks Department put the parties at risk in 2008 and again this year. "The generosity of citizens made these parties possible last year, and our goal is to raise enough funds to endow the parties, making it unnecessary to fundraise each year, but rather to use interest generated from collected funds to pay for the parties," Conger says. Checks can be made payable to the Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Department. Parks Commissioner Conger assures that all funds collected will be used for the 2009 holiday parties, and remaining monies will be placed in a trust account for future parties.



**FREE
health
checks for
your child and your
home now available**

The Kansas City Safe & Healthy Home Partnership will review your child's health, and the health of your home. The Home environmental assessment includes checking indoor air quality and ventilation, dust and allergen levels, moisture and mold, a household chemical survey, a home maintenance survey, and a home safety check up. You can enroll today by calling 816-235-6331 or contact Yvonne Herrick at NNI, 454-2000 to see if you qualify.

1st District Problem-Solving sessions to replace Roads meetings

The popular 1st District Roads meeting is about to get even more popular as its scope expands to include other areas of concern.

The meetings will continue to be held at NNI's offices on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m.

Quarterly Volunteer Recognition

Jean Hicks

Born and raised in a small town in northwest Iowa, Jean Hicks had an early introduction from her family on community involvement. Her father worked for the phone company, volunteered with the Boy Scouts and at church, and even served several terms on the city council. He still found time to enthusiastically support all the activities of Jean and her four siblings, setting a lifelong example for community and family involvement.

Jean moved to Kansas City in 1982 and considers herself a veteran Northlander. When she moved to Sherwood Estates in 1993, she was drawn to the Homes Association and later was elected to the board. That was her introduction to NNI, which she discovered to be a “great resource for assistance with questions and problems.” In 2005, she moved into the nearby Wood Hills, which does not have a neighborhood association. But she stays in touch with NNI to remain informed.

As her own child rearing duties subsided, Jean began taking a little time for herself, completing an Associate Degree in Business Logistics from Maple Woods in 2008. She often shares her leisure and volunteer activities with her teenage son, Shane. “We enjoy sports and family outings with our dog,” Jean says. When not studying for a class, she enjoys doing a little quilting or yard work. Shane assisted her with the NNI Safe Trick or Treat football toss last year, giving them another chance to do something fun together.

Jean believes that staying active in the community is rejuvenating. “I enjoy helping others and watching them benefit from what I have to share.” She helped NNI with Safe Trick or Treat at Antioch Center the past two years, assists with the food pantry at church and with the BackSnack program. “I enjoy helping to put a smile on someone else’s face”, Jean says with a grin. “I mean, honestly, how often can an adult dress up like a snowman or a crazed chef and not get put in a straight jacket and taken away?”

Some would describe Jean Hicks as a conductor who takes her surroundings and makes all the different elements work together to create a harmony others can enjoy.

Last year, Jean took part in NNI’s EXCEL Neighborhood Leadership class to expand her knowledge in assisting the community. “EXCEL provided an opportunity to learn more about what is going on around me and how to tune in and help others. Being part of the Mock Trial class finale gave me an opportunity to show my passion for my community.”





Christmas Writings of Reta Jo Mitchell

(Editor's note: Reta Jo Mitchell is recovering from a lingering illness and was not able to provide her usual "Spotlight on Volunteerism" column for this quarterly edition. However, we are proud to present some of Reta Jo's Christmas writings. Please read them to children and grandchildren. And don't forget yourself. They are guaranteed to delight.)

Why Santa Comes to Penguin Park

Once upon a Christmas Eve, Santa Claus got lost.

The details are sketchy, but the story goes that Rudolph had come down with a nasty cold. He was croupy and achy, and his famous nose was redder than ever. Over his objections, Mrs. Claus rubbed the poor deer with Vicks ointment, plugged in the vaporizer, and covered him up with wool blankets. That meant that Santa and the other eight Reindeer must fly off into the night without Rudolph's trusty nose to light the way.

At first, the flight went well. There were no collisions with stars and no toys fell out of the sleigh. So far, deliveries to sleeping children were on time.

But the night began to blacken and the stars disappeared. A fog thicker than cottage cheese filled the sky. Soon Santa could not make out a single landmark below. Even the white tips of the Reindeer tails had vanished.

Searching frantically for something to give him his bearings, Santa put the sleigh into a sharp left bank and peered down. Nothing! The earth had been swallowed up.

Suddenly, lead Reindeer Dasher shouted: "Santa—down to the right—I can just make out a mountain peak!" Quick as a wink, Santa threw the

sleigh into a sharp dive. At first, there appeared several large, shadowy shapes, then there it was. Not a mountain peak, but a giant Penguin with its bright yellow nose pointed toward the sky!

Late night drivers along Vivion Road would have been amazed to see a sleigh full of toys, eight flying Reindeer, and the world's most famous pilot making a three-point landing in a shower of snow.

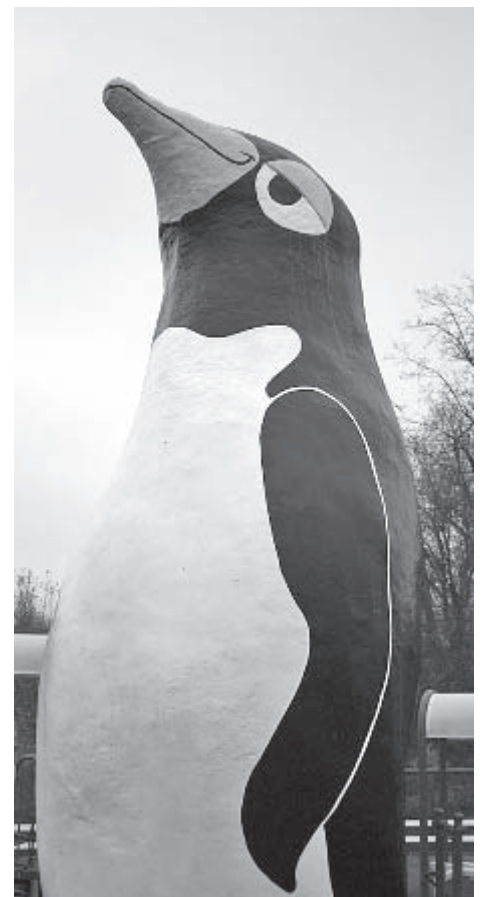
"Well jingle my bells!" roared Santa. "I've come down in a zoo!" Sure enough, this mysterious place not only had a huge penguin, but also an elephant with a tower on its back, a skinny Giraffe, and a lady kangaroo with a baby in her pouch.

Suddenly lights started flashing and music filled the air. As if by magic, animals appeared and began hopping to the tunes. A raccoon was seen lifting two little skunks up to the Running Rail. A red fox was taking a spin on the Merry-Go-Round with several chickens and two crows. A gray cat came zipping down the Spotted Frog Slide with three giggling field mice riding on her tail.

Santa was delighted. "Well jingle my bells," he chuckled. "I'll have to get down here again." Then as the fog began to lift, Santa released the sleigh's brakes. "Up, up and away!"

he shouted to the Reindeer, and off they flew into the night.

And that is the story of the time Santa Claus got lost, except for one thing. Each year he stops by the place he found—or that found him. Maybe he wants to share in the lights and the music and see the animals. Or visit with the children dropping by. Or just to feel the warm glow of Christmas that is always there in Penguin Park.



Santa's Official Hat Catcher

At the North Pole the reindeer are busy all year long. Everyday they do takeoffs and landings. They practice gliding around stars and clouds and even airplanes. When they are resting between flights they tease each other. "Donner, you are so clumsy!" said Cupid. "You almost tipped the sleigh over when you crashed into the handle of the Big Dipper."

Dasher laughed. "Vixen, you were a funny sight the time the wind blew Santa's beard over your eyes."

But the reindeer work very hard to be ready for their most important flight of the year.

One day they were practicing left turns over the Pole. As they flew around, they didn't even see the tiny reindeer peeking over the top of a snowbank.

"Oh my," sighed the little deer. "How I wish I could help pull Santa's sleigh. I am strong and fast but I am just too small."

It was true. He was so small he was called "Little Piccolo."

"If only Santa knew what I can do," he said sadly and walked away to find his friends, the Snowbirds.

The Snowbirds had taught Piccolo to fly. Not only was he fast, he could do something no other reindeer in the world could do. The others glided gently into the air but Piccolo knew how to shoot straight up like a rocket.

The Snowbirds had showed him how to tuck his fluff of a tail under and pull his hooves in and point his nose toward the sky. One quick *Zoom* and he could be right in the middle of the

Milky Way!

A few days before Christmas, Piccolo saw a sign tacked to a giant icicle: "PART-TIME HELP WANTED TO PULL SLEIGH." But he was much too shy to give his name to Santa's secretary.

Christmas Eve came. As usual, Piccolo hid himself behind the snowbank to watch the grand take-off.

The reindeer were prancing and pawing and tickling each other with antlers. And the sleigh overflowed. It was piled so high, Santa had to share the driver's seat with a fat Panda Bear.

Santa shook his head in amazement. "Jingle my bells!" he roared. "If we get through this trip without losing some of this big pile of toys, it'll be a wonder—Well, here we go!"

As they sailed off into the starry night, Piccolo sighed. Suddenly, something fell out of the sleigh. Down it fluttered. "Oh my!" cried Piccolo and quick as a wink he was airborne. He snatched the thing that was falling—it was Santa's own red hat.

"Santa—wait!" he called. *SWOOOSH!* He had flown far above the sleigh and landed on a cloud.

"Whoa!" shouted Santa when he reached the cloud. He looked over at Piccolo. "Well, jingle my bells!" he said in surprise. "How did you get up here so fast?"

"I just flew," Piccolo said shyly.

"What's your name, deer? And how did you learn to fly straight up?"

Piccolo blushed. "My name is Piccolo

and the Snowbirds taught me how to fly, Santa," he answered.

"Well don't just stand there," Santa said. "Hand me my hat before my ears get frosted." He laughed. "Young deer, I have a great idea. It's not only hats I lose—sometimes toys fall out of my sleigh. Why don't you come along as my catcher?"

Piccolo beamed. "That's an important job, Santa. I promise to do my best."

"Then scoot that fat Panda Bear over and climb aboard," Santa chuckled, and away they went.

When they hit an air pocket, the sleigh dipped sharply. "Doll overboard!" Santa shouted and down flew Piccolo. He caught the wailing doll and put her back in the sleigh.

"There goes a drum!" yelled Blitzen and again Piccolo sped to the rescue.

The fat Panda Bear leaned over to watch for lights below and fell out head first. "Save me!" he cried. In a flash Piccolo snared him by a foot.

Santa was very pleased with his new helper. "Piccolo," he said, "I want you to make this flight with me every Christmas Eve," and he slipped a bright red collar over Piccolo's head.

"Well, jingle my bells!" Piccolo giggled happily.

So, now you know why the toys don't fall out on Santa Claus's wild dash around the world. Well—sometimes they do. But they are always caught in time by the tiny reindeer called Piccolo who is also known as SANTA'S OFFICIAL HAT CATCHER.

Neighborhood Clips

The 2010 Census is coming

Every ten years, we all need to stand up and be counted. A complete and accurate census count is important for the entire nation. It is especially important for the Northland. The experts already predict that the Northland has significantly gained population over the last decade. Accurate population counts make for better planning for government agencies, schools, and businesses. Kansas City and the Northland could benefit through increased federal funding, which is often tied to census data. So, watch for the census information when it comes in your mailbox. It is a simple, 10 question form that will only take a few minutes to complete and mail back to the Census Bureau. The Census: it's in our hands.

NNI seeks qualified low income home repair contractors

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. is looking for qualified low-income contractors to do home repair work in the Northland. Qualification proposals from Section 3-eligible contractors are needed in the following categories: Heating and Cooling (HVAC) Systems; Roofing; Windows and Doors; Gutters; Plumbing and Water Heaters; Code Violation Remediation; Siding; Removing Barriers to Access; Weatherization Activities; Lead Testing and Abatement; Flatwork/Concrete; and General Contracting. Please contact Larry Washington or Yvonne Herrick at 816-454-2000 if you are, or know, a contractor interested in earning money while helping improve the quality of life for individuals and the community.

December senior workshop to focus on holiday cheer

Taking its annual break from formal programming, the December workshop will be all party and no work. Get an early start on the holiday season December 9 at 9 a.m. Be ready to enjoy good food, good friendship and good bingo. Regular workshops will resume in January 2010.



NNI's Neighborhood Roundtable has full schedule ahead

The Neighborhood Roundtable, held at NNI every other month on the fourth Tuesday at 6 p.m., features topical speakers, questions and answers, followed by a roundtable discussion of happenings in the neighborhoods. Here is the upcoming schedule:

January 26: Smokey Dyer, Director of the Kansas City Fire Department

March 23: Nathan Pare, KCMO Neighborhood Preservation Code Enforcement

May 25: David Warm, Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) Executive Director

Leaf, brush pickups scheduled

The City of Kansas City will collect up to 20 sacks or bundles of leaves and brush (excluding grass clippings) from Northland residences during scheduled curbside collections as follows:

If your trash day is:

Monday - Dec. 14

Tuesday Dec. 15

Wednesday Dec. 16

Thursday Dec. 17

Friday Dec. 18

Here are the rules:

- Sacks and bundles should be curbside by 7 a.m. on collection day.
- No more than 20 sacks and/or bundles per household.
- Sacks and bundles must not weigh more than 40 pounds each.
- Use only paper lawn debris sacks. No plastic bags.
- If you seal sacks, use masking tape only; do not use plastic or duct tape.
- No grass clippings. No trash.
- All branches must be bundled. Branches not more than 3 inches in diameter.
- Bundles not more than 2 feet in diameter and not more than 4 feet long.
- Use twine or jute rope to tie bundles; do not use wire or plastic tape.
- If wet weather is forecast, cover sacks/bundles with clear plastic.

If sacks and bundles are not collected on the scheduled day, residents must call the 3-1-1 Action Center within 24 hours. To report service related issues, call 311 or (816) 513-1313.

Perspectives - Lorie's House

By Jim Rice, Chief Executive Officer, NNI

It has become the American way to descend into frenzy during this time between the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Shopping, parties, decorating the house (including the death-defying task of stringing holiday lights). It all adds up to a kind of obligatory mayhem made worse this year by a sagging economy that will make the season bittersweet for many families.

It has been a very difficult year for NNI, as it has been for many of you. Governmental dollars are scarce. The economy has constricted the flow of foundation grants, depriving NNI and other non-profits of dollars we rely on to close the gap between government allocations and essential expenses. Money is not the only issue. We still must deal daily with a Kansas City housing department still trying to find its way five years after it was dismantled by former City Manager Wayne Cauthen. While the housing organization is more coherent today, it remains largely paralyzed by a lingering receivership and a draconian bureaucracy at the regional HUD office. As a result, NNI is buried in compliance paperwork that saps the energy from a staff that would be better utilized in fulfilling the NNI mission of helping families and neighborhoods build better lives for themselves.

But enough hand wringing and gloom mongering. This is a season for reflecting, finding hope...and giving thanks.

Here is a partial list of NNI "thanks givings."

- Overwhelming response to NNI's public service events. Night Out Against Crime Kick-Off, Safe Trick or Treat, and ABOPT served thousands of families, making our neighborhoods, families and children more safe and more stable.
- A dedicated staff and an outstanding Board of Directors, despite the most difficult financial year in NNI history, has sustained all of NNI's core programs and services.
- The generosity and community spirit of North Kansas City Hospital and its Chip In For Charity Golf Tournament, which yielded a \$31,000 grant to NNI when we needed it the most.
- Our Northland Council members and a cadre of dedicated City Hall professionals who, amid their own trials and tribulations, have consistently supported NNI through thick and thin (2009 being the thinnest of the thin).

And finally, we give thanks for the opportunity to build a house for Lorie Perdieu. Severely disabled since birth, Lorie has defied incredible odds to become a very accomplished young woman who now devotes her life to advocating for the disabled. Doctors told her parents she would eventually need to be institutionalized because she could never speak or walk. They didn't know Lorie. Today, she speaks fluently and eloquently, drives a specially equipped van, and takes care of herself and others. But she has never been able to have a home of her own. With a lot of help from the Northland's Christian Carpenters group and members of the Northland community, NNI will soon build Lorie a fully accessible new home in the Winnwood-Sunnybrook neighborhood. And, we will build it with love and thanksgiving for this disabled young woman, who is, after all, so very able.



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NNI Meetings and Events December 2009 - January 2010

Wednesday	12/9	Senior Workshop	9:00 a.m.
		1 st District Roads Meeting cancelled for December	
Tuesday	12/15	Greenhaven Neighborhood	7:00 pm.
Wednesday	12/16	Cop Talk	6:30 p.m.
Friday	12/25	NNI Offices closed Christmas Day	
		Meet Your Councilpersons meeting cancelled for December	
Monday	1/11	NNI Board Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday	1/13	Senior Workshop	9:00 a.m.
Wednesday	1/13	Forward Kansas City	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday	1/19	1 st District Problem-Solving	8:30 am.
Tuesday	1/19	Greenhaven Neighborhood	7:00 pm.
Wednesday	1/20	Cop Talk	6:30 p.m.
Monday	1/25	Meet Your Council Persons	6:00 p.m.