

# Northland Neighborhoods News



Next month, be sure to read the *monthly* April edition of Northland Neighborhoods News online at NNI's Website ([www.nni.org](http://www.nni.org)).

Only Quarterly editions are printed and mailed. Call (816) 454-2000 to have your e-mail address added to or removed from our database.

## BIDS + BREWS = EQUALS FUN AND BARGAINS ON MAY 8

NNI's spring benefit, "Bids and Brews," has everything: silent auction, beer tasting and an enjoyable evening. It all happens Saturday, May 8, 2010, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Embassy Suites – KCI. Prices are \$30 a ticket and \$300 for a table of 10, a reduction from 2009 prices. Sponsorship names have changed to fit the Bids and Brews theme, but dollar levels remain the same: Presenting - \$5,000, Stout - \$2,500, Ale - \$1,500, Lager - \$750.

Dave Mecklenburg, co-chair of the Beer Tasting, would like to see a strong neighborhood presence at the event. "In my neighborhood, we have neighbors who regularly enjoy

an evening out together. Bids and Brews is a perfect opportunity for getting together and helping NNI at the same time," Mecklenburg says. Neighborhood organizations can also get their names in lights by donating auction items. Business firms can invest in the event by rewarding employees with tickets and donating auction items.

Everyone who attends Bids and Brews can count on a wide and plentiful variety of auction bargains, a tantalizing line-up of unusual beers to taste, and a mouth watering hors d'oeuvre buffet. Call Northland Neighborhoods at 454-2000 to reserve your tickets or tables.

NNI Board member ElizaBeth Clayton again serves as Auction Chair. Board members Dan Fowler and Dave Mecklenburg co-chair the beer tasting. Board Secretary Mary Jo Burton coordinates the overall event. Reserve your tickets and tables today by calling NNI at 454-2000.

## 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.

## TARGETED HOME REPAIR PROGRAM TO "ENCORE" SOON

Thanks to a community spirited developer, targeted home repair is about to return to neighborhoods in the North Oak corridor area. The program is part of the North Oak TIF plan fueled by new development along North Oak, principally North Oak Village at Vivion and North Oak. HJ LLC (Hunt Midwest and the R.H. Johnson Company), developers of North Oak Village, advanced

\$200,000 to jump start the home repair program. The program was to have been financed by the sale of \$1 million in bonds, but the economic recession has temporarily rendered bonds unmarketable. When the bond market adjusts to normalcy, the bonds can be issued and HJ LLC can be repaid its \$200,000. In the meantime, some 40 home repairs  
*(continued on page 2)*

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## GIVE THE NORTHLAND A STRONG VOICE THROUGH THE 2010 CENSUS

Phase one of the 2010 U.S. Census is underway as workers verify addresses of households across the country. Eventually, more than 140,000 U.S. Census workers will count every person in the United States and will gather information about every person living at each address including name, age, gender, race, and other relevant data. Here are some helpful tips about the Census process:

- If a U.S. Census worker knocks on your door, he or she will have a badge, a handheld device, a Census Bureau canvas bag, and a confidentiality notice.
- Do not give your Social Security number, credit card or banking information to anyone, even if they claim they need it for the U.S. Census.
- The Census Bureau might ask for very basic financial information, such as a salary range.
- The Census Bureau will not ask for Social Security, bank account, or credit card numbers, nor will employees solicit donations. Any one asking for that information is NOT with the Census Bureau.
- Census workers may contact you by telephone, mail, or in person at home. However, the Census Bureau will not contact you by e-mail, so be on the lookout for e-mail scams impersonating the Census. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an e-mail that are supposedly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Please stand up and be counted. A complete and accurate census count is important for the Northland. The Northland has significantly gained population over the last decade. Accurate population counts provide better data for planning agencies, schools, and businesses. Kansas City and the Northland could benefit through the increased federal funding linked to population. 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.

## TARGETED HOME REPAIR PROGRAM TO "ENCORE" SOON (CONTINUED)

*(continued from page 1)*

can get underway as soon as the TIF Commission selects a contractor for the home repair work.

If you are a homeowner in the North Oak Benefit District and meet certain income guidelines, you will be eligible for a home repair grant of up to \$4,500. Grants cover improvements such as roofs, windows, siding, heating and air conditioning, driveways and other non-

cosmetic repairs. Boundaries of the benefit district are 47<sup>th</sup> Street/I-29 on the north, 32<sup>nd</sup> Street on the south, I-29/I-35/Woodland on the east, and North Main on the west. The program will be called ENCORE (Enhancing Neighborhoods by Concentrating Organization, Resources & Energy). NNI hopes to be selected as the contractor so it can build on the past success of the CHAMP and SMART targeted home repair programs.

### Directory of services available at NNI

- Neighborhood organization, by-law and board development, neighborhood cleanups, including a tool library
- EXCEL neighborhood leadership program
- Space for neighborhood meetings
- Monthly senior citizen health, education and recreation workshops
- Crime prevention training programs and Night Out Against Crime Kick-Off
- Comprehensive code enforcement (4 KCMO code officers are based at NNI)
- Neighborhood Computer Center
- Comprehensive home repair programs
- FOCUS Center: voter registration, pet licensing, code enforcement, animal control satellite, notary public, KCPD Office of Community Complaints, police-community interaction
- Monthly "Meet Your Councilperson" meetings
- Monthly "Roundtable" and communications workshops
- Clearing house on economic development projects that impact neighborhoods
- Neighborhood newsletter printing

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

### Jay And Mary Ann Stock

Stock is a good last name for Jay and Mary Ann, for they are indeed strong, solid and supporting. And they are genuine originals.

The Stocks have been residents of the Kansas City area for the 77 years of their lives. Mary Ann was raised in Kansas City, Kansas and Jay was born in Raytown and raised in Kansas City North. Both graduated from North Kansas City High School, where they met and became smitten with one another. They married in 1954 and reared eight children. To Mary Ann and Jay's everlasting pride, their children produced 19 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

After a stint in the Navy, and with Mary Ann's hard work and considerable support, Jay earned an engineering degree from the University of Kansas. It was a very demanding time for a young couple parenting their first two children with meager resources. Despite the heavy household workload, Mary Ann found time for employment in the office of the Dean of Engineering and was able to direct Jay to a small scholarship and a summer job, providing enough resources for survival while Jay finished school.

Armed with his engineering degree, Jay gravitated to the blast furnaces, steel molds and slide rules of the legendary Armco Steel Mill in the northeast industrial district. He would spend 30 years there. In the meantime, Mary Ann mastered the arts of chauffeuring kids to parochial schools, practicing first aid, counseling eight children and managing a family budget that never had any excess funds. She also

**Stock** (stok) *n.* a supporting framework or structure; the original from which others derive; strong, solid.

assisted in maintaining the family's rental holdings, which helped pay the bills.

Over the years, Mary Ann and Jay worked as a team and individually, serving on PTA and church committees, as neighborhood committee members and active participants in neighborhood events. With support and encouragement from Mary Ann, Jay served on the NNI Board, County health boards, and several Kansas City committees and commissions, including the Waste Minimization Commission, the Wet Weather Study Group, the Kansas City Neighborhood Advisory Council, the Ethics Commission, the Light Rail Committee, and both Gladstone and Kansas City Code Enforcement Revision Committees. Jay also served on the Governor's Council on Aging, and the Missouri Speaker's Senior Advisory Group on Aging.

After Jay's retirement, the Stocks felt life had treated them very well and that it was time to give back to the community. Thus began a continuing mission to help those in need with the same kind of help they had received over the years. Jay and Mary Ann still feel keenly the hardships experienced by their families during the Great Depression and the early years of their own marriage when making ends meet was a challenge.

Today, the Stocks spend six days of the week, every week, delivering food, clothes, and furniture to 15 different charities and non-profits. They have developed a kind of pantry and warehouse on wheels, providing a life-line to thousands of people in need. When a Stock family car or truck pulls into your driveway, help is not far behind. Yes, the Stocks have achieved their goal of "giving back," and then some.



## SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERISM

### The Mitchell team sets a high standard by Jim Rice

It is impossible to write about Reta Jo Mitchell and not include Bruce Mitchell, for she and Bruce are partners in every sense of the word. They met in Norman, Oklahoma where Bruce was an instructor in a Navy flight school and Reta Jo was a graduate fellow at the University of Oklahoma. One day, Bruce announced to Reta Jo: "If you're not doing anything this Saturday, let's get married." They did—55 years ago. Their journey brought them to Kansas City in 1957 where Bruce hired on as a TWA flight engineer.



Their teamwork began when Boy Scout leader Bruce enlisted Reta Jo to help prepare scouts for citizenship merit badges. During her teaching career at the University of Kansas City and later at Park University, Bruce helped Reta Jo evaluate her student essays on technical subjects. When Bruce helped TWA folks restore the Northrup Alpha airplane now displayed in the Smithsonian, she cooked stews and chili for those devoted volunteers. Bruce rebuilt his

*(Author's note: This space is normally reserved for the column by Reta Jo Mitchell. I take this opportunity, while Reta Jo is recuperating from a protracted illness, to turn the spotlight on Reta Jo and Bruce Mitchell. They will, no doubt, be annoyed with this attention, however well deserved. Please excuse the writing. It is amateurish compared to Reta Jo's expertly crafted prose. Know that my intentions are of the highest order, even if the writing is not. – Jim Rice)*



own plane, a 1943 Army observer called a "Grasshopper," and taught his son Russ to fly it. Reta Jo, a teenaged Rosie the Riveter during World War II, created a nose art display (remember Betty Grable on the fuselage of a B-17?) and displayed it at airshows. Rosie the Riveter was an apt persona for young Reta Jo. To this day she is a strong advocate for women. She once quipped, "Women are like tea bags. You don't know how strong they are until you put them in hot water."

Both Mitchells were active in PTA. When son Russ was manager of

Winetonka's football team, Bruce welded the broken helmets. When Russ attended William Jewell College, both Mitchells served on the Parent's Board. The Mitchells also designed parade floats, winning a first place in the Snake Saturday Parade for the Northland Christmas Store and the Clay County Clothes Closet. As a Penguin Park committee member, Reta Jo wrote the poem that helped raise funds for the park's restoration. Penguin Park is among Reta Jo's most treasured spots on the planet. She has authored a series of poems and stories about it.



Reta Jo and Bruce, collectively, have served 22 years as officers in the Holiday Hills Homes Association. She has written dozens of columns for the NNI Newsletter on the subject of volunteerism.

Poet Reta Jo likes writing campaign songs for friends running for office—including Teresa Loar, Deb Hermann, Troy Nash and Kay Barnes. Wordsmith Reta Jo also coined the phrase, “Little Orphan Annex” to describe the perennial shortchanging of the Northland on City services and capital improvements. Recently, the Mitchells co-authored columns for the *Northland Star* about aviation. They’d like to see our airport have displays about famous Kansas City folks. (“We’re a lot more than Jesse James,” she says.) And, given their skill at luring others—and especially each other—don’t be surprised!

It is somewhat ironic that one of Reta Jo’s favorite writing tasks is to extol the virtues of other volunteers. Hence, her long-running Spotlight on Volunteerism column in the NNI News. In a small way, this guest column seeks to balance the accolade scale.

Reta Jo and Bruce both helped restore White Oak Chapel, the church of freed slaves, now located on the grounds of Stroud’s Restaurant. While writing features for the old Sun-Chronicle, Reta fell in love with the legendary Winnwood Beach. The Mitchells’ efforts gave us the mural and display at the Clay County Annex and the Winnwood Beach site marker at Chouteau Crossings Shopping Center.

More than a decade ago, Reta Jo became a YouthFriend, writing about this great mentoring program and tutoring kids in writing at Winnwood Elementary School. As a member of North Kansas City School’s Living History speakers’ bureau, she makes talks to students about Winnwood Beach, writing poetry, the environment, Rosie the Riveter, and the cultural contributions of the American Indians. When Living History began, Bruce said to his wife: “Don’t try to lure me into this!” But, of course, she tried...and won. Now he gives talks about his one-room school days in Iowa, World War II, and the theory of flight. Together they make talks about and generate contributions for “Operation Support Our Troops.” “You can love the warriors while hating the war” is their premise. They’ve helped send hundreds of Care Packages to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Bruce sews neck coolers for the troops and has made more than 450 of these valuable, heat-combating scarves.



## PERSPECTIVES

# At the Heart of Northland Neighborhoods

by Jim Rice

### The NNI Board of Directors

#### Executive Committee

Kevin Masters, President

Dick Davis, Vice President

Tom Schweitzer, Treasurer

Mary Jo Burton, Secretary

#### Board Members

Angela Betts

Charles Chamberlin

ElizaBeth Clayton

Lory Daniels

Dave Dunlop

Dan Fowler

Richard King

David Mecklenburg

Keith Nelson

Marty Schuettpelz

Dennis Tedford

I hope most people would say that Northland Neighborhoods has a good heart. NNI staff members—even the sometimes caustic and curmudgeonly CEO (me)—care deeply about the people and neighborhoods we serve. NNI volunteers regularly give of their time, talent and hearts to NNI and countless people in need. But there is another group—often less visible than staff or volunteers—that is a big part of NNI’s big heart.

Fifteen members strong, the NNI Board of Directors is drawn from neighborhoods, businesses and institutions from across the Northland. The members bring diverse and expansive talents to the tasks of recession fundraising, strategic planning and governmental relations. In my 46 years of serving for and serving on non-profit boards, the NNI Board ranks as one of the best.

Even with full agendas, the NNI Board leadership runs efficient one-hour meetings. Discussion is spirited but always civil and constructive. The Board’s standing committees of Administration and Finance, Governmental Affairs, Neighborhood Relations, Planning and Development, and Resource Development analyze the issues and bring their conclusions to the full Board. This produces good policy and keeps Board meetings crisp and decisive. The Board has, over the last six years, produced policies on Conflict of Interest, Succession, Records Retention, Advocacy and more. The committees have stimulated neighborhood newsletter training programs, a

homes association deed restriction study and an upcoming seminar, and a guest public official series that brought Platte and Clay Counties, Riverside, Gladstone, North Kansas City and MODOT into NNI for in-depth discussions with the NNI staff and Board.

During the past year, Board committee members immersed themselves in the NNI Strategic Planning process during committee meetings and at the annual Board Retreat. And it didn’t end there. The Board took responsibility for key action steps and committed to ongoing monitoring of the Plan. I would wager that no other area non-profit Board is better vetted in its organization’s core planning process or has a better understanding of the organization’s mission and operations. None of the foregoing should suggest that the NNI Board is a micro-manager. Quite the contrary. This Board understands the healthy separation of policy and day-to-day management. Indeed, its good work on the policy side empowers the staff to more effectively manage the organization we all love. Yes, NNI has a heart, and it beats strong.



## NEIGHBORHOOD CLIPS

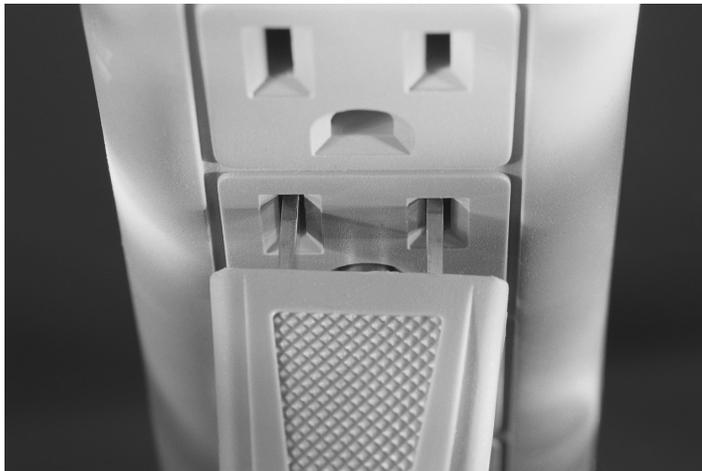
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### Attention newsletter editors: next Resource Exchange is April 27

April 27, 6-7 p.m., is the next bimonthly conference for neighborhood newsletter editors. The "Editors' Resource Exchange" is an opportunity for newsletter writers and editors to brainstorm newsletter topics and exchange ideas on how to spruce up their publications. Editors' Resource Exchange will be held on the 4th Tuesday of *even* numbered months from 6 to 7 p.m. at NNI. The program will alternate with the Neighborhood Roundtable which is held on the 4th Tuesday of the *odd* numbered months. Guest speakers will be at some of the exchanges to stimulate ideas and share journalistic tips.

### March senior workshop will be electrifying

The Wednesday, March 10 senior workshop at 9 a.m. will feature Jami Lewis, KCP&L Customer Relations Representative. Jami will provide tips on energy efficiency, programs and services available to help with your electric service, and information on how to receive utility assistance.



### Synergy Services to host Youth Campus Grand Opening

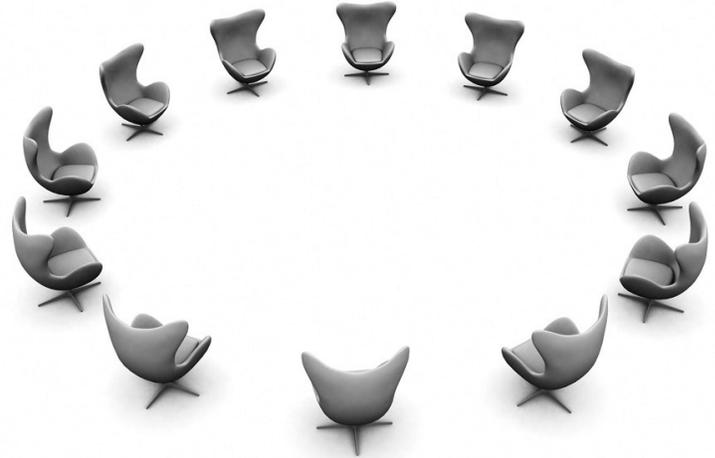
Synergy Services invites you to attend grand opening festivities for Synergy's new Homeless Youth Campus, 2001 NE Parvin Road:

#### **Sunday, March 14, 1 to 5 p.m.**

Celebration of young people with youth-focused activities and entertainment

#### **Monday, March 15, 6 to 8 p.m.**

An evening of fun for the whole family featuring Stone Lion Puppet Theatre production and activities



### March 23 Neighborhood Roundtable to focus on code enforcement

The Neighborhood Roundtable, held at NNI every odd numbered 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. The March 23 Roundtable features Nathan Pare, KCMO Neighborhood Preservation Code Enforcement. Nathan is a life-long Northlander who can likely answer any and all questions about the code enforcement process. Here is the schedule for future Roundtables:

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

**July 27:** Pat Klein and the Kansas City PIAC Process

**September 28:** Kansas City's Neighborhood Advisory Council

### NNI seeks qualified low-income home repair contractors

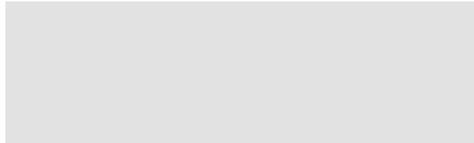
Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. needs qualified low-income contractors to do home repair work including: Heating and Cooling (HVAC) Systems; Roofing; Windows and Doors; Gutters; Plumbing and Water Heaters; Code Violation Remediation; Siding; Removing Barriers to Access; Weatherization Activities; Lead Testing and Abatement; Flatwork/Concrete; and General Contracting. Please contact Larry Washington at 816-454-2000 for more information.

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc.  
3015 Vivion Road  
Kansas City, MO 64116

Phone: (816) 454-2000  
Fax: (816) 454-1747  
Email: [infolni@nni.org](mailto:infolni@nni.org)  
Web: [nni.org](http://nni.org)

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## NNI Public Meetings and Events March/April 2010

Wednesday, 3/10	Senior Workshop	9:00 a.m.
Monday, 3/15	NNI Board Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 3/16	1 <sup>st</sup> District Problem-Solving	8:30 a.m.
Tuesday, 3/16	Greenhaven Neighborhood	7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 3/17	Cop Talk	6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, 3/23	Neighborhood Roundtable	6:00 p.m.
Monday, 3/22	Meet Your Councilpersons	6:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 4/14	Senior Workshop	9:00 a.m.
Monday, 4/19	NNI Board Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 4/20	1 <sup>st</sup> District Problem-Solving	8:30 a.m.
Tuesday, 4/20	Greenhaven Neighborhood	7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, 4/21	NNI Town Hall Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Tuesday, 4/27	Editors Resource Exchange	6:00 p.m.
Cop Talk cancelled for April; will resume in May		
Monday, 4/26	Meet Your Councilpersons	6:00 p.m.