



VIEW FROM the hill

Neighbors in harmony improving, preserving & protecting - www.vhna.net

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The PURPOSE of VHNA is to improve the quality of life of residents & preserve property value. Our goals include encouraging improvement of properties, protecting the health and welfare of residents, promoting interaction among neighbors, encouraging participation in government and fostering pride in our homes and neighborhoods.

Our TERRITORY extends from the south side of Jefferson St to the north side of So. Grand Av, and from the east side of Walnut St up to but excluding Second St. Membership is not limited to residents or property owners in that area.

MEMBERSHIP is open to all who support our purpose and goals. Dues are \$10 per year. You may join via US mail, at a membership meeting or online at: www.vhna.net.

Our MEETINGS are held on the second Monday of each month from 7 to 9 pm in room 201, at Laurel United Methodist Church located at Walnut and South Grand.

VHNA Guest Speaker Paul O'Shea

Plan to attend our VHNA Membership Meeting, to be held October 8th, at 7:00 p.m. at Laurel United Methodist Church, located at the corner of Walnut St and South Grand Av.

Please join us in welcoming our speaker, **Paul O'Shea**. Paul is a li-



censed architect, registered in Illinois and Missouri. He is certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and had been Chief Architect with Crawford, Murphy & Tilly, Inc. In addition to many other involvements in various civic and professional organizations, **Paul is currently serving as the City's Planning and Design Coordinator**. He will present the City's short and long range design plans to us using a PowerPoint presentation.

Paul is knowledgeable about the Springfield Green gateways, Downtown & the R/UDAT project, the State Capitol Campus concept, connected neighborhoods and much more. Don't miss this opportunity to find out first hand what's in store for Springfield.

History of the "Hill" — Part 1 By: Dee Nelson

Webster defines "history" as an account of what has happened; narrative; story; tale. When we consider the "history" of our Vinegar Hill area, most, if not all, is based on oral history which gives us the interpretation of the individuals being interviewed. If you check the Vinegar Hill Neighborhood Association web page (<http://www.vhna.net/history.html>), you can enjoy a great Vinegar Hill history written by Bill Castor.

Another account, gleaned from the Sangamon Valley Collection at Lincoln Li-

brary tells us that Vinegar Hill is the granddaddy of all "nick named" neighborhoods. The southeast corner of Spring and

Cook was the site of the famous vinegar works. The "hill" was the current site of the Illinois State Capitol and the highest point in Springfield, both facts of which inspired the name, "Vinegar Hill".

Indications are the vinegar works was in operation about 1861 to 1865 with a road from the hill (state house site) to the factory. Nobody seems to know who owned the old vinegar works or the actual years of operation. If you're interested in VHNA's history, look for more of the story in next month's "View from the Hill".



Quality of Life Issues

By: Bill Castor



Recently we had dinner with a neighbor who just moved to Springfield from Carbondale to attend SIU School of Medicine. Since I went to college in Carbondale, I related stories to him about some of the roach infested dumps friends of mine rented in the "tree streets" area, just off campus. While it didn't surprise me to hear he had a hard time finding a decent house to rent in a quiet neighborhood in Carbondale, I was surprised to hear him say he had much the same problem when he looked for a place to rent here in Springfield.

I guess it shouldn't be a surprise though. The incoming med students will tend to want to rent in a neighborhood relatively close to the school, and those by and large, are the older neighborhoods in Springfield like ours. So we have a steady stream of students looking for rental property in the

area and having trouble finding it! Why?

I think the answer is that landlords (that is, responsible landlords who properly maintain their properties and screen tenants) see that the city is not doing its part to maintain our older neighborhoods and just decided to stay away from them and not invest in them.

If the city will not invest in improvements to infrastructure, repair sidewalks, trim trees, properly illuminate streets, enforce health code violations, tow derelict vehicles, shut down drug houses, enforce noise ordinances, or see to the collection of garbage and yard waste in our neighborhoods, then how can they expect people to want to invest THEIR money in these neighborhoods?

These are the quality of life issues we all need to address if we expect real and sustained improvements to be made in Springfield's older neighborhoods.



NOW is the Time to Save Money on Your Energy Bills

By: VHNA VP, Bob Croteau

The arctic winds of last winter caught many or nearly all of us off guard with their depth and duration. Single digit temperatures were replaced with below zero ones. Wind chills can make getting comfortable in our older homes difficult and expensive.

Many of the older homes in our neighborhood association are under-insulated and most are draftier than those in newer neighborhoods. Older building styles and age contribute to the problem but they are not necessarily aspects that are difficult to overcome. You should have 9 to 12 inches of insulation in you attic, and your walls should have insulation blown into them as well. If you have been diligently reading your CWLP bill inserts you already know that to help you out, CWLP has significantly upgraded their Super Charged Insulation Rebate Program with new higher rebates available of 30% of the cost up to \$500 per house to help pay for those improvements, so you have no more excuses to wait.



Not sure where to start? CWLP now is offering the "Money Back" Energy Audit and Blower Door Test. Have an energy auditor inspect and test your house's air-tightness for a \$25 fee and have it refunded if you complete any or all of the prioritized recommendations. In addition you can get reimbursed for any weatherization materials you buy up to \$25 worth.

However, there are plenty of smaller projects that you can start on right now. The most important problem and easiest to fix quickly, tends to be drafts coming from windows, doors and baseboards or in the basement around the foundation. If you feel a draft simply follow it with the back of your hand to its source. The best time to find these leaks is when the cold winds are blowing but the best time to fix them is right now.

CWLP will be holding periodic free hands-on Low Cost / No Cost Weatherization Workshops at the downtown Lincoln Library on how to install these measures and other helpful hints for the winter and air conditioning seasons. You also get to take home a starter kit of sample materials for free. The next workshop is **Tuesday November 6th at 7 P.M.** You must call them first to pre-register at **789-2070**.

**How wonderful it is that nobody
need wait a single moment before
starting to improve the world.
- Anne Frank**

******* News Flash *******
**Springfield City Government
is Complaint Driven**

Okay, this is probably not news to most folks who've had problems in the neighborhood. Unless you call the city and complain, chances are nothing will be done. Lets say a neighboring house is vacant and the grass is growing out of control. Yes, you can come to the neighborhood association meeting and report it. We hope you will, but first call the city and report it right away. The sooner you get a complaint in, the sooner it will be dealt with. Does that mean tomorrow? No, but it will be pursued.

Why does it take so long to get these problems taken care of? Well, in the USA people are generally free to do as they choose until their actions infringe on others' rights. Even then, there is "due process of law" that must be followed, and while that process can be slow and frustrating, it protects our rights as well.

How should you make a complaint? This may seem obvious, but there's a big difference between complaining and making an effective complaint on which prompt action will be taken. Here's what to do:

Step 1: Get all the facts documented in as much detail as you can before you call. Write them down.

Step 2: Be sure you contact the right party to report the complaint.

Step 3: Take detailed notes of who you speak to, their job title and their phone number and what they tell you. Ask them to repeat it, if necessary. Let them know you're taking notes.

Step 4: Have them explain what they'll do in response to your complaint, when they will do it and what the next step is. Make it clear you plan to follow-up.

Step 5: Follow-up with them and with the neighborhood assn. We can work together with you to help get it resolved.

IMPORTANT: When a police report or complaint is being made, while it's good to call and talk to, or leave a message for, Dave Barringer, our neighborhood police officer, FIRST call the police dispatch or emergency number to get a report on file.

For a police report, follow the same steps. Be persistent! Your problem may seem unimportant to the dispatcher who gets hundreds of calls, but they have a duty to report it. Sangamon County is handling Springfield police dispatch now and we've heard of dispatchers refusing to take reports because "the police are too busy to respond to this type of call". They should take the report anyway. If this happens to you, get the name of the dispatcher or keep track of the date and time, so our Aldermen can investigate.

Who Ya Gonna Call...

Emergency: 911

Springfield Police Dispatch — 788-8311

Neighborhood Police Officer, Dave Barringer — Cell: 652-2255

Police Drug Unit — 788-8498 (3 to 11 pm)

Springfield Public Works — 789-2255

Ward 5 Alderman: Sam Cahnman — 528-0311

Ward 6 Alderman: Mark Mahoney — 544-7944

VHNA VOLUNTEERS

Greeting / Condolence Cards
Betty Green 522-2690

Newsletter Editor:
Bill Castor 416-1212
wm.castor@yahoo.com

Block Stewards:
500 block Allen Street
Louise Hodge 528-9768
400 block Allen Street
Mona Colburn 522-1702

Canedy & Chenery Sts.
Ted Keylon 528-8466

College Street
George Tinkham 753-2737

Cook & Edwards Sts.
Bob Croteau 753-3449

Fayette Avenue
Bill Vickers 789-1732

First Street
Cathy Twyman 528-1918

Henrietta Street
Dee Nelson 528-7702

Jackson Parkway
Tom Cullen 744-2511

Pasfield Street
Ron Kuethe 744-0118

Spring Street
John / Sherry McBride 971-3313

Vine Street
George Bastin 971-5760

Walnut Street
Dennis / Emilia Rogers 522-4279

Williams Street
Charles Hudson 747-0338

THANK YOU ALL !

View From the (City) Hall

Ward 5 Alderman, Sam Cahnman

Mark Mahoney introduced his much awaited garbage ordinance at our September 18th Council meeting. The ordinance would clearly put the responsibility for garbage removal on landlords. The current ordinance puts the responsibility on landlords and tenants, making it difficult to know whom to prosecute when a rental house lacks garbage service. This is a step in the right direction. The ordinance would also license haulers, require trash to be picked up in alleys when possible and require haulers to notify the City when garbage service is cut off. The latter provision would enable the city to determine whom to prosecute for violating the City Code provision requiring every resident to have garbage service. Mahoney plans to amend the ordinance with a provision dealing with yard waste. To give your input on this, go to the Public Affairs Committee meeting Monday, October 1st at 5:15pm

That is also when my resolution on evening bus service to the college campuses will be heard. As you probably know, the Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD) obtained a \$371,000 federal grant to create a pilot program for evening bus service. The SMTD has devised 3 routes, northeast, southeast & southwest. None goes to the University of Illinois at Springfield (UIS) or Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC), even though on the southwest route the SMTD plans to run 2 buses each going in opposite directions. It is important for the colleges to be served, not only for the college students, but also for non-students who wish to attend functions there and college employees, who work evenings.

I am working on revising my CWLP rounding up check off ordinance to help the homeless. The proposed ordinance would give CWLP customers the option of rounding up their payment to the next dollar, with the difference going to help the homeless. For example, if your bill was \$47.31, you would send a check for \$48 and the extra 69 cents would go to a fund to help the homeless. There were some problems with the compatibility of my original ordinance with CWLP's billing system. I am working on a change to iron this out.

It has now been one year since the previous City Council's smoking ban took effect. There has been a marked increase in cigarette butts on the downtown sidewalks since then. Every city trash receptacle downtown has a cigarette receptacle on each side. Sometimes they are hard to see, but if you look, you'll find them. Please, if you smoke downtown, use the cigarette butt receptacles to dispose of your butts. You can reach Sam by phone at 528-0200, via email at samcahnman@yahoo.com or at his office at 915 S. 2nd, Springfield, IL 62704.

Ward 6 Alderman, Mark Mahoney

VHNA representatives Mario Ingoglia and Bill Castor met on Saturday, September 16th to review problem properties throughout the Vinegar Hill neighborhood. In attendance were NPO Dave Barringer, Commander Chirs Buscher, Lieutenant Bill Neale, Pat Buckley from Public Works and the Alderman. The goal of the meeting was to identify the problem properties and the issues and to come up with a plan of action for dealing with each one of them. After the meeting a working memorandum was distributed to all in attendance with plans of action for each property. The group will meet again in late October or early November to review progress.

The long awaited garbage proposals for cleaning up our neighborhoods was introduced and discussed during the October 1st Public Affairs Committee. The proposal would change city code to hold property owners responsible for residential garbage service, require licensing of waste haulers, require haulers to notify city thirty days prior to cutting off service, and allow the city to assign waste haulers for those who do not have service.

An amendment has been proposed that will be debated by the Public Affairs Committee and voted on by the council later in October. That amendment would require the pick up of yard waste by waste haulers within the week of being set out by the resident. It would eliminate the use of stickers by creating a system of if it gets set out it gets picked up. The proposal would also require the city to determine by April 1, 2008 which residents do not have service and if they refuse to get service the city will assign them a hauler and charge them \$250 per month.

The proposal also calls for the city to begin recycling colored glass by April of 2008 through four times a week scheduled drop off or through an experimental curbside program. Finally, the proposal will create a Garbage Commission that will meet after the proposed changes have been in affect for over a year. The Commission will be charged with reviewing the progress and making any recommendations for improvement to the Mayor and City Council.



VHNA Membership Mtg. Minutes September 10, 2007

The meeting was brought to order at 7pm by President Mario Ingoglia & the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was recited.

Bill Castor was not present and we did not have the minutes for the last meeting. These will be presented for approval at the October meeting.

Vince Duiker passed out photos of a building on the NW corner of New and Capital. He wished to alert the Neighborhood Association to the fact that this building is being remodeled to apparently house a group home for convicted felons, "Tower of Refuge, Inc. He doesn't feel they probably have building permits and the man working on the building shouts sexual comments to the high school girls that walk near the building and also uses vulgar finger motions. The committee recommended Vince contact both the Building and Zoning Committees. Vince stated he will continue to follow up on the owners and will report back to the membership.

Dave Barringer reported he is adding a section on zoning to his booklet. He feels this is an important section. He will try to bring the new Police Chief to our meeting. The members felt he would be a welcome speaker. Dave also said now that summer is passed, the police should have more time to be proactive.

Mark Mahoney reported that the 'beat circles' are still being worked on. He hopes to set up some small groups to go over the area and designate properties that should be concentrated on by the police. Mark also stated the budget is coming up at the City council

and citizen input is important and appreciated. They should be concentrating on two areas this year, police and infrastructure. He asks that issues such as streets and side walk problems be brought to the council's attention. Meetings for citizen input will be held. The garbage ordinance should come up for a vote in October.

Art Lawson reported that the city is still working on pot hole repair and branch pick up. Mark Mahony complemented the city on the branch pickup program. He stated he no longer received complaints about branch pick up

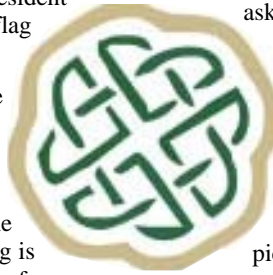
Betty Green reported a card was sent to Bea Jones who fell breaking her hip an ribs and was in the hospital. She is 95 and still gets out and walks downtown. Betty also reported the Day Lilies in the Lawrence garden were divided a week ago Saturday..

Sam Cahnman reported that he is still working on the check off program to assist the poor in paying for their utility bill.

Leatrice Deppe let everyone know that there are restaurants in town who will be providing 10% of their profits to the Food Bank on September 18. She provided a telephone number to those wishing more information or to volunteer for the Food Bank.

Dee's sister volunteered to make agendas for everyone attending the meetings, if Bill would e-mail the agenda to Dee before the meeting.

Judy Ingham moved the meeting be adjourned at 8:15. Betty Green seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.



Officers

Mario Ingoglia, President — 744 - 6969

Bob Croteau, Vice-president — 753 - 3449

Judy Ingham, Treasurer — 544 - 5642

Bill Castor, Secretary — 416 - 1212

Please join today! You need not be a resident or property owner in our association area to join, as long as you support our mission. You can join online at: www.vhna.net, but must mail a check or attend a meeting to pay dues. You can also fill out the form at right to join and mail it with your \$10 dues payment check to:

**VHNA
P.O. Box 1026
Springfield, IL 62705**

Membership Form

Name *

Street address *

City * State * Zip *

email address (if you wish to receive more timely information)

Phone *

Cell phone (* denotes required item)

May we list your contact information in the VHNA directory to be distributed only to members? (circle one)

YES / NO

Please suggest issues VHNA should address or activities you think will help better our association: (attach sheet if needed)

VINEGAR HILL
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN.
POST OFFICE BOX 1026
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62705

www.vhna.net



Coming to the VHNA Neighborhood

Tower of Refuge, Inc. – 329 S. New St



A community-based nonprofit corporation that helps prison inmates and people formerly incarcerated has **invited us to attend their Ribbon Cutting and Open House, to be held Saturday, October 13, 2007, at 1:00pm, at their new facility at 329 S. New Street.** LORENZO and BEVEY LOUDEN founded TOWER OF REFUGE INC in 2005 in Springfield. Its purpose is to reduce the rate of recidivism in Illinois through various programs and community efforts. The organization provides several re-entry services to help people who are in prison, former inmates and their families. Programs and services include education, employment readiness, health education, Bible study, family reconciliation and housing assistance. For example, the organization is facilitating community re-entry services at the Logan Correctional Facility in Lincoln and is partnering with another group at the Jacksonville Correctional Center in mostly transitional services. "Our re-entry services are a little different. We spend a lot more in-

depth time with the re-entry services. Our program is designed to cover their last 24 months of incarceration," said Bevey Louden, the organization's director of programs. "The idea is to help them get prepared for life on the outside and to begin to make that mental, physical and emotional adjustment although they're still incarcerated." The Loudens' personal experience with incarceration is among the reasons they founded Tower of Refuge. Lorenzo, the executive director, is an ex-felon who was sent to prison at the age of 19. He served 17 years behind bars, having been sentenced to six to 18 years for conspiracy and 50-60 years for a contract murder under an indeterminate sentence. He's been out of prison since 1994. "We have collectively been doing volunteer services of many different types. I've always been drawn to those who have the most severe need and who seem to be overlooked," Bevey Louden said. "My brother was incarcerated, and as he approached his release, we began to understand the complications all over again of finding him a place to go, what was an acceptable program for Department of Corrections, how do you help him evolve." The Loudens decided to address such needs on a larger scale through Tower of Refuge. Volunteers are welcome to help in various ways, including rehabilitation of two houses the organization will be acquiring. An individual is needed to coordinate donations. People also are needed for fundraising. Tower of Refuge is funded mostly through donations. Tower of Refuge also seeks to reconcile family relationships and protect the integrity of neighborhoods. "This program isn't just about the individual. It's about the entire community," Lowden said. (The above information includes excerpts from an SJ-R Article published 1/27/07 and from an invitation VHNA received from the organization.) Please attend the open house to find out more about the organization.