

LBNA News



A publication of the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association

Association Officers

Larry Carl, <i>President</i>	255-4749
Bob Harmon, <i>Vice President</i>	274-5538
Lesley Lynde, <i>Secretary</i>	279-5701
Lynn Cutshall, <i>Treasurer</i>	255-3367

Members-At-Large:

Velma Anderson	255-8427
Janet Herrold	
Debbie Moon-Davis	274-6455
Allan Olney	271-9225
Kathy Tomlin	279-9172

Who We Are

An organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for over 2,300 households and businesses in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood. You are our neighborhood!

Our Boundaries

I-80/35 on the north; Douglas/Euclid Avenues on the south; Beaver Avenue on the west; the Des Moines River on the east.

Inside this issue:

Samuelson's First Year	1
<i>The Board Room</i>	2
SCRUB Day Oct. 17	3
Life in the Neighborhoods	3
<i>The Community Page</i>	4

LBNA Annual Potluck Picnic scheduled for Sept. 1! See page 3 for details.

Samuelson's First Year *by Cindy Roerig, Samuelson Elementary Principal*

Wow, what a phenomenal first year at the newly renovated Samuelson Elementary. Last year absolutely flew by. We loved starting some new traditions at our 21st Century School building located in our beautiful neighborhood of Lower Beaver.

Staff and students moved in exactly one year ago. Staff's greatest pleasure was witnessing firsthand the looks of excitement and anticipation on our students' faces as they walked through the doors for the first time. Their eyes were wide open and their jaws dropped in amazement. Students commented on how bright and colorful their new school was. Each classroom had a bold color accent wall based on Character Counts. Every student received a new desk and chair. For the first time, students had a separate cafeteria and gym. The gym was so large that they could run and play without running into walls. We could now assemble the whole student body in one place.

All of us experienced many highlights throughout our first year. We were able to purchase new playground equipment that was installed by many neighborhood



volunteers last August 2nd. Samuelson celebrated our official "Ribbon Cutting Ceremony" in late September which was well attended by community members. Kindergarten hosted a Grandparents Day and we honored our next-door neighbors, Don and Doris Ummel, as our school's "Honorary Grandparents." In March, families participated in a math and literacy activity night. Families learned a variety of literacy and math ideas that they could do at home together. Numerous music programs and sporting events were held throughout the year. One of our biggest events of the year was our field day. Students were able to participate in a variety of athletic events that were spread out over our spacious grounds. Even our PTO had a successful fundraising cam-

paign and they were able to purchase a new sign which will be placed on our front lawn. This will help keep our community informed of upcoming events throughout the year.

This year we will be implementing a new mathematics series called Investigations. Our math academic focus will be on problem solving and finding multiple ways to answer a mathematics problem. Students will need to explain their thinking. We just learned that the Des Moines School Board approved our grant application to be submitted to Prairie Meadows' annual "community betterment grant." This grant would help us purchase needed math manipulatives and would allow us to organize additional parent involvement events. In literacy instruction, we are going to continue to focus on academic vocabulary and will begin fluency professional development for staff.

We have truly enjoyed our first year here at Samuelson. Thank you to our community for welcoming us in your neighborhood. Please remember that you are always welcome at all of our events and programs. We love being in our new building and look forward to educating many future Hoover Huskies.

The Board Room

The President's Corner

It's the first of August and it has been a great summer. There's been a noticeable lack of severe heat through July and the mosquito population has been noticeably sparse. In my book, that's clearly an above-average summer!



President Larry Carl

Many times, over the last 25 years, friends and associates have asked both Jan and I "Why we chose and continue to choose to live in the Lower Beaver Neighborhood?" The first part is simple...we were moving back to Des Moines after four years in Waterloo in the early 1980s and we were looking for something very affordable. We were stuck with our home in Waterloo like so many of our Waterloo neighbors and friends and we needed something we could afford with two mortgage payments to make. Jan and I promised ourselves we'd find something different after the economy improved and we sold that second home in Waterloo. Well, things did turn around and we did sell our home in Waterloo. It only took the better part of another four years before we were ready to look for another home in another neighborhood.

A funny thing happened though...we didn't want to leave the friends we'd made in the neighborhood. The thought of giving up the full measure of nature we enjoy living on the very north edge of Des Moines was unthinkable. The mature trees, with the abundance of wild life, were just too attractive to a young couple with a growing family. Our first born was now settled at school and we simply weren't willing to give up the fact that everything we needed was within 5 to 10 minutes of our Lower Beaver Road address.

I still remember my parents wondering why we stayed in the neighborhood when I had declared early on that our residence was strictly a short-term arrangement. I didn't have to think to long or to hard. It's the fact that our Lower Beaver Neighborhood has "**Curb Appeal**"! Have you ever taken the time to simply drive through our neighborhood and look around? Have you ever noted how well we maintain our homes and landscape? Have you ever just thought how lucky we are to live in one of the more stable residential neighborhoods in Des Moines? Other than the occasional economic downturns, do you ever note how quickly homes sell in our neighborhood? Take some time and simply walk or drive though our neighborhood. I promise, if you haven't done it in awhile, you'll be surprised how many and beautiful changes have and continue to occur in our Lower Beaver Neighborhood.

We live in a fantastic neighborhood of the metropolitan area and it's up to us to keep it that way. Join with the **Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association** members and assure that your neighborhood continues to be one of the most sought after areas to live in of all of Des Moines!

News & Notes

Membership Dues

Yearly membership dues, now only **\$20 per household** are due in February. You may pay your dues at the Annual Meeting in February, or renew by mail using the membership form on page 6. Memberships run February to February.

New Board Members Elected

Officer elections were held at the February 16, 2009, General Membership Annual Meeting at Polk County River Place.

Elected were **Bob Harmon**, Vice President; **Lynn Cutshall**, Treasurer; and Directors-at-Large **Velma Anderson**, **Janet Herrold**, and **Debbie Moon-Davis**.

Bill Darby Honored

Each year, the LBNA presents the *Sophie Vlassis Volunteerism Award* to the LBNA board member who best exemplifies the tireless, do-anything attitude of the award's namesake, the LBNA's own **Sophie Vlassis**.

The 2009 *Sophie Vlassis Volunteerism Award* was presented to **Bill Darby**, for his years of spearheading the annual SCRUB Day and his organizational efforts at LBNA's former meeting location, Glen Echo Christian Church.

LBNA Committees

Beautification

Currently open

Business Development

Currently open

Communications

Allan Olney, 271-9225

Community Relations

Brian Millard, 274-5038

MLK Enhancements

Brian Millard, 274-5038

SCRUB Day

Brian Millard, 274-5038

Special Events

Sophie Vlassis, 277-7809

Traffic

Lynn Cutshall, 255-3367

Welcoming/ Membership

Currently Open

Volunteering for a committee is fun! Not only can you make a difference in your neighborhood, you also have the opportunity to meet wonderful people and form new friendships!

Please contact any of the committee chairpersons if you are interested in volunteering. Your assistance is both welcomed and appreciated!

Even the Easter Bunny finds time to volunteer for the LBNA!



MLK Enhancement Project nears completion *by Brian L. Millard*

The MLK levee reconstruction has been going well. The drainage gate has been installed allowing water to drain from inside the levee when the river is normal but can be closed when high water is threatening. The new level of the levee is high enough that another 500-year flood will not come over the top. This levee is designed and owned by the City of Des Moines, not the Corp of Engineers. Care was taken by Des Moines Public Works and Engineering to meet all the standards so it can provide the measure of protection needed for our neighborhood.

The sewers should be greatly improved with all the work being completed at the Prospect Park sewer-pumping station. Time will tell if enough has been done to protect residents' basements near MLK. The City of Des Moines has been offering residents funding to have sewer check-valves installed on their main lines and to have their sump pumps redirected away from the sewers.

The Trestle to Trestle bike trail has been redirected off the levee and now runs along MLK through our groves of trees. This will be an enhancement to our green space and is being used even more now. The city added two bicycle access walkways from our neighborhood. Our London Planetrees (an improved version of the American Sycamore) did not make it through last winter, and they comprised 50% of our street trees along our MLK project. Public Works' Forestry Department will be obtaining replacements for planting in 2010.

Many thanks to **Councilman Tom Vlassis** for taking a leadership role in getting the levee rebuilt!

Please contact **Brian Millard** at 274-5038 if you would like to serve on the MLK Enhancement Committee or help redesign the flowerbeds.

SCRUB DAY

Clean out your garage, basement, or attic, and on **Saturday, October 17, 2009**, load it up and bring it to SCRUB Day held at **River Place, 2339 Euclid Avenue, from 7:00 am-noon.**

You may drop off general household trash, furniture, tires on or off the rim, appliances, trash containers, lawn mowers without fluids, water heaters, TVs and computers. Car batteries and propane tanks will not be accepted, nor will hazardous or toxic chemicals such as oil or paint.

Life in the Neighborhoods



By Tom Vlassis
Des Moines City Council
Ward 1

Neighbors, joining together, have helped to increase the quality of life in Des Moines in many ways. Beautification, traffic improvements, street and sidewalk repairs and most important of all, getting to know one another are all good reasons for forming the many neighborhood associations.

There is one more association being formed, Prospect Park Neighborhood Association, which will abut the south border of the Lower Beaver Neighborhood Association, and will cover the area from 30th Street to the river and from Hickman to Euclid/Douglas. There is another association, Martin-Hickman within those boundaries and it is a separate association.

The City does its part by providing the services that are essential for that quality of life. Citizens have recognized this over the

years as we continue to do the *Performance Report*, a survey of citizen satisfaction. From the 2008 report:

83% of citizens have a "feeling of safety in their neighborhoods"; 70% are satisfied with the "quality of community assets"; 64% like the entertainment destinations available in the City; 65% are satisfied with the "lifelong learning opportunities". Taxes, however, are a different animal—only 30% were satisfied with the "fairness of taxes and fees"—I guess that would be expected as no one likes taxes.

The City commissioned the 2008 survey and mailed a report to every residence in Des Moines. The 2009 survey will not be mailed, but will be available on-line at the City's Web site www.dmgov.org. It will also be the topic of several broadcasts on the City television on Channel 7 and should be available about late October.

As always, I am available for your comments and questions at home (277-7809) or by e-mail at vlassis3@mchsi.com. Feel free to contact me at any time.

— Tom Vlassis

The Community Page



Polk County Update

By Angela Connolly
Polk County Board of Supervisors
5th District

River Place

The Board of Supervisors recently approved and is moving forward with essential repairs for the River Place Complex. These repairs include a new roof for the west strip mall section of River Place which we call River Place West as well as sanitary and storm drain work and a generator for the complex. The Board has decided to wait until next budget year (FY 10/11) before moving ahead with further improvements to River Place West for additional staff relocation.

Polk County has applied for an I-Jobs grant to assist in funding additional flood protection measures at River Place. The grant will assist in paying for flood walls that would be constructed on the building's north and west sides.

The Polk County Conservation Board will be replacing the dead trees south of the rain gardens with the same size and type of tree in late September. The City of Des Moines has finished replacing the asphalt off of the trestle-to-trestle trail off of ML King and most of the final grading has been completed. Signs should be down and the trail open by August 10th.

The City of Des Moines plans to close the trail between ML King and Bob Lenc Landscaping to make repairs to sewer manholes and the Conservation Board will be closing the trestle bridge over Beaver Creek for repairs in the near future.

Hoover High School Basketball and Tennis Courts

You may have noticed the Hoover basketball and tennis courts have been recently overlaid with a new coat of asphalt. Polk County Public Works has reported that the asphalt overlay is in place and the courts have been striped.

IEC Expansion

The Board has received and is in the process of reviewing the RFP for design services. The expansion will be paid for by extending the existing IEC payment structure with gaming revenues an additional four years. Expanding the IEC to replace the additional meeting room/ballroom space at the Plex will make the Plex building available for other uses such as court space.

American Hockey League (AHL) at Wells Fargo Arena (WFA)

On June 26th the Board took action to reject a written proposal received from Neligan Foley, LLP, the law firm representing DM Hockey Holdings LLC. The proposal provided for DM Hockey Holdings, LLC., to pay Polk County \$700,000 after the sale of the AHL team and after all debts were paid, if that much remained. The Board, in good faith, entered into a non-relocation agreement with DM Hockey Holdings, LLC. Polk County has honored this agreement and expects DM Hockey Holdings to honor its part of the agreement by either playing AHL hockey in Des Moines or paying the County the full agreed upon amount (\$12.5 million dollars) to relocate. With this action, the Board then directed the County Attorney to move forward in filing an injunction regarding the non-relocation agreement.

On July 7th, the AHL announced that its Board of Governors voted to involuntarily suspend the Chops from operating in 2009-10 season as a result of DM Hockey Holdings' violation of league rules. Global Spectrum (IEC private management firm) will be working to fill the dates left open at WFA by the suspension with additional sports and concert events. The Board, along with the AHL and Global Spectrum, believe that AHL hockey can be successful in Des Moines. The AHL has assured the Board that the league wants a presence in Des Moines and is committed to working with Polk County and Global Spectrum to keep AHL hockey at WFA.

Courts

The Board has engaged the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) to perform a review of court function and space

issues. The result of this study will provide information that will allow the Board to identify future courts space needs. This study should be complete by November.

Weatherization Stimulus Funds

Polk County has received an additional \$6,505,205 in funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program to be expended during the next two program years. This stimulus funding will be administered by the Department of Energy through the State of Iowa Bureau of Weatherization. Polk County's Weatherization Program has received an average of approximately \$1.3 million dollars of funding annually from 2006-2008 from three separate sources; the Department of Energy, Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program and Mid American Energy. With the addition of the Stimulus funding, annual funding will total \$5.23 million dollars or a 400% increase from the previous 3 program years.

Current Weatherization funding provides for approximately 200 homes weatherized annually. The Stimulus funding will provide for 654 homes weatherized each of the next two years. This increase will result in up to 9 full time employment opportunities over the life of the grant and a need for 22 additional contractors. In addition to the immediate employment opportunities, the long term effects are substantial. Each low-income home weatherized will provide for a more energy efficient homes resulting in lower energy costs, reduced dependence on Energy Assistance programs and a reduction in energy usage.

To qualify for weatherization assistance, guidelines require the applicant's income to be at 200% of poverty. For a family of four this equates to a monthly income not to exceed \$3,533 or an annual gross of \$42,400.

Should you have questions regarding these or any other issues facing Polk County government, please feel free to contact me at **286-3120** or angela.connolly@polkcountyiowa.gov.

— *Anaeta Connolly*