



WESTWORDS

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION



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February, 2011

www.westwoodcivic.org

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Gamble House Update

It has been just over a year since the full bore effort to save the James N. Gamble house began. The house now has a local historic designation which it clearly merits.

Currently there are still several lawsuits pending that Greenacres Foundation has filed against the City. In addition, there will be a hearing before the Housing Board of Appeals on February 2. Owners of vacant buildings in Cincinnati are obligated to have a Vacant Building Maintenance License (VBML) and to comply with requirements to maintain the building to a minimum standard and make it weather and water tight. Greenacres is arguing that they do not need to comply because they plan to demolish the house. They are also appealing the decision by the Historic Conservation Board to deny their request for a demolition permit.

Greenacres Foundation has now turned down several offers by Cincinnati Preservation Association to purchase the property. The most recent offers included one to purchase the entire property, and one to purchase just the house and the 2.7 acres immediately surrounding the house.

Historic Building Inventory

In the past, Cincinnati Preservation Association has done an inventory of historic buildings, homes and sites across the City, including Westwood, but because they had limited staff and time to do the inventory, only some of the more obvious historic houses and buildings made the list.

An effort is underway to compile a much more extensive inventory. Being on the list will not protect a building in any formal way, but it will help keep it on the "radar screen" so that if some threat surfaces in the way of development, or neglect, etc., it might influence decisions that could result in its protection.

You can help by providing us with information on houses and buildings in Westwood that you feel should be added to the list. Let us know about any building that is older than 1850, as well as those with a unique story or architectural quality. If possible, send information and photos to either info@WestwoodHistorical.org or Westwood Historical Society, PO Box 11095, Cincinnati, OH 45211. An inventory team will review all the information and determine which buildings will be on the list.

Volunteers to help on the team are also being sought. If interested send an e-mail (see above) or call Greg Kissel at 662-1156.

Liz Kissel



ELECTION NOTICE

The Westwood Civic Association annual Board of Directors election process has begun. Each year, five of our fifteen board members are elected.

Two nominating committees have been selected. Each committee will select up to five candidates.

The candidates names will be announced at the FEBRUARY 15, 2011 General Membership meeting, and the ballots will be mailed to the membership in March. Officers will be selected by the new board in April. If you want to join the WCA board of directors, email info@westwoodcivic.org or drop a note to WCA- PO BOX 11466 WESTWOOD OH 45211.

Fellow Westwoodians

With the rise in the price of metals over the past several years, many thieves find it profitable to take everything from aluminum lawn chairs to sewer lids. Unscrupulous scrap yards will buy almost anything made of metal, turning a blind eye to the obvious fact that many of these items are stolen. Most recently with the increase in vacant housing, thieves are breaking in and stealing the copper pipes from these homes. Additionally, several instances of air conditioners being removed from rear yards have been reported in recent weeks. Although District Three Police have made some arrests in these instances, they recommend neighbors be alert for suspicious activities. These include reporting suspicious persons, strange vehicles parked or cruising your street, strangers going door to door for suspicious reasons, trespassers and loiterers. If you have a vacant house near you, become familiar with it and maybe even check the doors occasionally. The owner, the realty company and the police would appreciate it. Last week a vacant house was burglarized of it's copper pipe. When the police interviewed the neighbor, she commented her dog went crazy at 3:00 AM for no apparent reason. Now we know why.

Remember to call 911 for any and all emergency situations and 765-1212 for all other police related issues.

John Sess
President

WCA MOVES BANK ACCOUNTS FROM ADVANTAGE BANK

Becky Weber

Westwood Civic Association voted at its January general meeting to move all WCA accounts from Advantage Bank to US Bank.

WCA had been working on a problem property at 2111 Harrison Ave. This property is well known for nuisance activity including murder (of a three month old baby), drugs, assaults, and 2 fires as well as code enforcement issues such as boarded windows, mold, rats, bugs, etc. The building had been owned by Mr. Abe Messer and was being foreclosed. The court appointed a receiver in September. The receiver was in charge of making sure the property was maintained. However, problems continued. Finally, in September, after many requests from WCA and neighbors to city council and the city administration, Roxanne Qualls requested members of building and inspections; CPD, Cincinnati Fire Department, and the city Solicitor's office go to the property and do a search. After all the parties went to the building for an inspection, it was determined the building was ordered to be vacated. Finally after years of problems, the building was ordered vacated in October of 2010.

After six years of problems at this property, the building was closed. The neighbors finally had some peace. However, two days after the building was vacated, prospective buyers were looking at the building to purchase. While WCA was working on getting the property vacated, Advantage Bank was busy selling the property. We wanted to know how that was possible and why the bank would sell the building knowing that the neighbors and WCA wanted the building demolished. The

Advantage bank representative had previously told the neighbors that the bank wanted nothing more to do with the property; they would give it to the city to be demolished.

In November of 2010, Mr. John Pielsticker, along with the new owner (Sean Blythe) of the property came to our Westwood Civic Association. After much discussion about the property Mr. Pielsticker told us he felt that the bank did the right thing by selling the building to someone who he felt would upgrade and take care of the property. He felt that would be better for the neighborhood than demolition. Advantage Bank had originally loaned money to Mr. Messer to purchase the building. At that time the building was already in disarray and had many problems. We told Mr. Pielsticker we felt that he should have considered the neighbors and community's point of view on this property. Mr. Pielsticker and Mr. Sean Blythe both felt it's not the building that is the problem, it's the people that lived there and the old owners who did not manage the property properly. We don't feel that this property warrants any more attempts to be saved.


We feel representatives of Advantage Bank have continued to make bad decisions regarding our neighborhood. These decisions go against the safety of our neighborhood. WCA feels it's best to let them know that we will not support their decisions that go against the well being of our neighborhood.

WCA has decided to move all of our funds to US Bank. Every two years US Bank financially supports Westwood Historical Society's home tour. As a matter of fact they are a huge contributor of the tour. They also have an office located in Westwood.

Westwood NSP (Neighborhood Support Program) Neighborhood Vote

Joel Kimmert

Attention all Westwood Residents: The official Annual Neighborhood Support Program (NSP) Vote will take place at the WCA Regular February Meeting (02/15/2011) at Westwood Town Hall, at 7 pm. This is one of the few votes we conduct annually where all Westwood residents are eligible to vote. For 2011, each Cincinnati neighborhood is receiving \$2,500.00 for eligible NSP Projects, versus the \$5,000.00 we received from the city for the past three years. Eligible NSP Projects include publishing this Newsletter, Neighborhood Improvement Projects and Membership Promotion Projects, just to name a few. Please come to the February Meeting to help us officially decide how to spend these funds for the 2011 calendar year.



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Westwood Citizens on Patrol
A COMMUNITY BASED DIVISION OF THE CINCINNATI POLICE



For a membership application
or to report issues of concern

WestwoodCOP@aol.com
OR
Call: 513-352-3533

Herschel Benkert
owner
Bus: (513) 662-7759
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Join us in the Community Learning Center (in the athletic field side basement) on the 1st Friday and 3rd Saturday for a different presentation each time. Refreshments served. Children welcome or child care provided.

All programs are FREE!!! And open to the public. Bring your family, friends and neighbors.

Saturday, Feb 19, 2-4 pm Healing Our Heartlands

Join the conversation and learn about the movement to make 2012 the Year of Reconciliation with Native Americans and Native Ecology with George Hardebeck of ARCHE (Arts Restoring Culture for Healing Earth) Facebook/ARCHE. This presentation holds special interest in Nature, Arts, Culture, Green Design, Health and Education. Childrens' art and writing activity during the presentation.

Friday, Mar 4, 7-8 pm Meet the Western Wildlife Corridor

John Klein discusses the long-lived success of this local habitat restoration organization which has restored natural order in local public lands along our portion of the Ohio River Valley. Their volunteer work days, family hikes and special wildflower events are unique, fun experiences for the whole family. Learn more at www.westernwildlifecorridor.org

News from Westwood COPP

(Citizens on Patrol Program)

Michelle Conda, Westwood COPP

The holidays have come and gone. Westwood COPP spent a lot of time at Glenway Crossings Plaza, Western Hills Plaza and across the street at the Glenway Krogers, serving as the eyes and ears of the police. Who knows how many people would have broken into cars if they hadn't seen us looking around carefully!

One of our duties is to issue "report cards" on vehicles. Perhaps you saw this in the news—we give cars a pink slip that reports what is easily visible from their car. We are pleased to report that we noticed a lot of people are putting their purchases in their trunk! What an improvement over last year! We are proud of our neighbors in Westwood!

You'll notice graffiti has been drastically reduced in the Westwood area. This is due to the police discovering one of our graffiti "artists" and putting a stop to it. In Westwood COPP, we have two people dedicated to removing graffiti or calling the city to have it removed.

We must have torn down 100 illegal signs in Westwood this winter. Signs are not legal in the right of way (or ROW, as we call it), nor can they be put on trees (in ROW) or light poles. You'll notice Westwood is quite "clean" in this respect!

As we walk and ride through Westwood, we keep our eyes focused. Theft of copper is a major issue in all communities. We look high and low for suspicious activity. Recently we found a couple of people taking down a metal fence at night from a demolition site. We called immediately on our radios—the police responded immediately. We don't know if this was a legal operation or not—our job is not to judge or jump in—we report what we see and let the experts handle the situation!

We have met many wonderful people in our travels. Not long ago we met some people near the Westwood Library who were extremely happy to see us keeping an eye out for them. This makes us feel good, and reaffirms to us that we are making a difference in our neighborhood.

I am not from Cincinnati, but since being a part of Westwood COPP, I feel like I'm part of a superb community with amazing people.

**Mercy Madness & Monte Carlo
Jenny Kroner Jackson**

Mother of Mercy High School's Dads Club will host the first annual Mercy Madness & Monte Carlo on Saturday, March 19, 2011 in Mercy's gymnasium from 8:00 p.m. – midnight. Live NCAA basketball tournament action will be shown on various televisions, Monte Carlo games will include Black Jack, Poker and Big Six and a full tuition scholarship will be raffled. Beer, wine, soft drinks and pizza will also be available for purchase. LaRosa's Pizzeria is sponsoring the event.



The fundraising and social event is open to current Mercy parents, past parents, alumnae and friends of the school. Proceeds from the event will support the Mercy Fund, which includes tuition assistance for many deserving Mercy families.

Admission to Mercy Madness & Monte Carlo is \$10 and includes three drink tickets and entry into a door prize raffle. For more details or to purchase tickets please contact Nancy Jamison, Development Coordinator in the Advancement Department at Mercy, at 513-661-2740 ext. 402 or visit www.mothersofmercy.org/MercyMadness.

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Brooke Romaniw

Keep Cincinnati Beautiful

The State Roadway Cleanup will be on Saturday, March 26 from 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM. This year, we'll be cleaning the top 10 dirtiest highway exit and entrance ramps (as voted on by Cincinnati residents) as well as our Daffodil & Daylily highway beds.

Cincinnati's Great American Cleanup will be on Saturday, April 16. Times may vary. Communities will be listed on our website with their project and contact information. Volunteers can sign up there or through your project coordinator And later - America Recycles Day is on November 15, and Make A Difference Day will be held on Saturday, October 22.



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Happy February! Although this is a short month, there's A LOT going on! Groundhog Day, President's Day, Black History Month, Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, and did you know this Chinese New Year is the year of the Tiger?

On the Same Page

This February and March marks the 10th anniversary of On the Same Page, a community-wide reading program organized by the Library in partnership with other arts and cultural organizations. To help celebrate a decade of reading with one another, this year the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden will be partnering with the Library as we read and discuss *Alex & Me: How a Scientist and a Parrot Uncovered a Hidden World of Animal Intelligence—and Formed a Deep Bond in the Process* by Irene M. Pepperberg.

Love is in the air at your library!

Cuddle up with a new romance novel, make a delicious meal for your sweetie, craft until your heart's content, or share a special story with your young valentine! Westwood has a great display of vintage Valentine's in our case as well as some great books in our *Love Me, Love Me Not*...display. Come in & check it out. You'll LOVE it!

Join us at the Westwood Branch Library for these exciting programs! For information on any of our programs, please contact us at 369-4474.

Book Club – Thursday February 24 at 7:00 p.m. – Adults
This month's selection is Alex and Me by Irene Pepperberg

Pepperberg, an animal cognitive scientist and associate research professor at Brandeis University, made history with her landmark research involving Alex, an African Grey parrot. Her detailed findings based on two decades of research were published in 1999 in *The Alex Studies: Cognitive and Communicative Abilities of Grey Parrots*. The story of their thirty-year adventure is equally a landmark of scientific achievement and of an unforgettable human-animal bond.

The Whomping Willows with Lauren Fairweather and Justin Finch-Fletchley

– Wednesday February 2 at 5:00 p.m. – All Ages
Rock out wizard-style with 3 Harry Potter inspired rock bands! Whomping Willows, Lauren Fairweather (of the Moaning Myrtles) and Justin Finch-Fletchley

Chocolate Taste-Off – Monday February 7 at 6:30 p.m. – Adults
Registration Required (No previous attendees, please)
Choose your favorite chocolate for your Valentine or yourself!

Movers & Shakers – Every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m. – Ages 1-4

I LOVE My Window Clings!—Tuesday February 8 at 6:30 p.m.—
Ages 6-12 *Registration Required*
Make a very LOVE-ly window cling for Valentine's Day!

Un-Valentine's Day Party – Thursday February 10 at 6:30 p.m. –
Ages 12-18 *Registration Required*

If Valentine's Day will be sad and lonely for you, wear black and fight back at our Un-Valentine's Day Bash. Bring your friends and your broken heart for snacks, games and more. Misery loves company.

Read to Reel Movie -- Monday February 21 at 2:00 p.m.

All Ages
Spend your school day off with us! Our feature presentation: *Legends of the Guardians: The Owls of Ga'hoole* (PG). Based on the *Guardians of Ga'hoole* series by Kathryn Lasky.

GED Practice Test – Thursday February 24 at 12:30 p.m. –
Adults, *Registration Required*
Determine if you are ready to take the official GED test. Call (513) 369-4570 to register.

Programs made possible by the Friends of the Public Library and the Kersten Fund. For more programs at other library locations, check out our program calendar: <http://www.cincinnati.library.org/programs/calendar.html>

Westwood Branch Library Hours of Operation:
3345 Epworth Avenue Mon./Tues./Thurs.: 12-8
513-369-4474 Wed./Fri./Saturday: 10-6
www.cincinnati.library.org

The library is OPEN Presidents' Day, Monday, February 21

Westwood Historical Society Meeting
The '37 Flood

Liz Kissel

74 years ago in January 1937, Cincinnati experienced its worst flood ever. Even though many residents lived up on the hills, few people remained untouched by the effects of the flood.

Phil Lind, who has collected old photographs of local interest for many years, will present a slide show of photos from his collection and tell the story of this devastating flood. Many of you may have enjoyed some of Phil's pictures which he has displayed in the past at the Westwood Library. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 9, at Westwood First Presbyterian Church. The meeting starts at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Please call 662-9109 or check out website at: www.cincyrec.org for further information and a full schedule of events.

YOGA CLASS - *Just scheduled* - Michelle Ward, Instructor. Tuesdays, beginning Feb 15 from 6:30-7:40 pm or Thursdays, beginning Feb. 17 at 10:30 – 11:40 am. \$8/class or purchase a pass of 5/classes for \$38 or 10/classes for \$70. Please bring your own mat and wear comfortable clothing. Pre-register.

ZUMBA - We are looking for a replacement instructor and have talked to at least 2 people, no details yet. Please call the center to be notified of when a class is rescheduled.

CRC POOLS - Please check CRC's website (www.cincyrec.org) for updates on this summer's pool situation or for donation information to the CRC Foundation Pool Fund. City Budget cuts caused us to close most pools and 2 centers this year.

TAEKWONDO - Classes for beginners through adults. Monday and Wednesday evenings-- \$35/month, with a discount for more than one family member attending. You can start at any time. \$40 uniform fee. Master Mark Stacey, 6th degree Black Belt, Instructor

HAPKIDO SELF DEFENSE - Also taught by Master Mark Stacey, is held every Monday & Wednesday evening from 8:30- 9 pm. \$5/class or \$35/month. Ages 13 and older.

AFTERSCHOOL DAY CAMP - Cost is only \$185/month. Transportation to Westwood Town Hall must be arranged through your child's school/Pupil Transportation. A varied daily activity schedule of sports, arts, homework help, and snack time.

YOUTH/TEEN SEWING CLASSES - 2 afternoons each week - Tuesday and Thursday. Cost will be \$40/8 week sessions. Pre-registration is required. Call now to register for Tuesday class from 3:30 - 5:30 pm and Thursday class from 4 -6 pm. Classes start in January and are ongoing through May. Each session repeats after 8 weeks & continues throughout the school year. \$40/session.

GUITAR CLUB USA - Ages 6 & older - Monday (Beginners) or Wednesday (Continuing) – from 5:30- 6:15 pm. \$80 for 8 weeks instruction. Great price for any music lesson. Book fee -- additional \$12. Youth guitars are available to rent or purchase through the instructor, Mark Deppenbrock.

HOMESCHOOL CLASSES - We will have a new instructor for Youth Art Classes - Michael Raterman. He will be teaching Homeschool Art, Clay Handbuilding, and Fun with Art beginning in March. Call to register your child. Mike is adhering to the same schedule as Joe did, see www.cincyrec.org for times and days. Cost of each class is \$40/6 week sessions. Clay Handbuilding has an additional \$10 materials fee.

YOUTH, ADULTS, & SENIORS - Check out the web site www.cincyrec.org for fun things to do, many activities and reasonably priced classes. Jewelry Making; Photography; Crafts, Double Dutch; Crochet for most ages, Wii Still Play for Adults & Seniors; Exercise classes/Line Dance; Quilting; Ceramics Adults & Seniors; Sewing on Friday nights for families. Much more listed on web site.

Westwood Community Gardens Update Joel Kimmet

Planning is underway for the Westwood Community Gardens for Spring 2011. The site is located on the northwest corner of Harrison Avenue and Talbott Avenue, 2163 Harrison, the site of the former Joy Apartments. Currently Westwood Civic Association (WCA) has submitted a "Land Use Agreement" with the City of Cincinnati to use the site as a community gardens for the next five years. As soon as the Land Use Agreement is approved, plans can go forward with grading the site, bringing in topsoil, leveling, and fencing the site. If all the site preparations proceed successfully through the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2011, planting can begin in the garden as soon as Spring, 2012. Successful meetings have occurred with the owners and staff of Harrison Pavilion Retirement Home located next door to the community garden site at 2171 Harrison Avenue. The Harrison Pavillion Home wants to "partner" with WCA to conduct gardening programs for the retirement home residents, once the garden is functional. Other groups including WestCURC and Westwood Works have also pledged support and volunteers for this project.

Upcoming activities planned for this Spring include the following: 1) Temporarily removing the current chain-link fence that separates the garden site from the Harrison Pavilion Retirement Home, so the ground under the fence can be leveled. 2) Bringing in tractors and land moving equipment to level the site. 3) Re-installing the chain-link fence on the Retirement Home side of the property, with the installation of 2 new gates. 4) Fencing-In the Harrison Avenue Side, and the Talbott Avenue Side, with the installatoin of 3 new gates. Look for future announcements upcoming in this Newsletter during March, April and May, 2011. There will be upcoming "Work Parties" where several volunteers will be needed! We may need 20 -30 volunteers during March, April and May to assist with the above listed work projects. If you are interested in assisting with the Westwood Community Garden, or would like to serve on the Garden Planning Committee, please contact Joel Kimmet at 513-200-4235 or Liliana Bramaseo at 859-816-4709. Our new Motto is: "Get Ready to Get Dirty!" , "See You All at the Westwood Community Garden Project!"

