



Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association

'Ford'ging Forward



November 2004

Now a Word or Two from Your President

A quick Drive Patrol Update. The house we've been watching at 2964 Poppleton became a full blown crack house over the last month. We kept track of it and got some good pictures and footage for the police. The police along with a code enforcement inspector visited the house and are in the process of closing it down now. There was a good round-up by the police at Park Ave. and Poppleton Thursday night. I don't have any facts or particulars to share yet. Places we should continue to watch include 1310 S. 30th Ave. for drug activity and 1308 Park Ave.

Time to change hats. By the time of the General Meeting, I'll have the information for the Neighborhood Cleanup. We have to designate a public area to clean up

as a public service. I've selected the east side of Hanscom Park along Park Avenue as well as the street itself from Poppleton to Woolworth. Aside from the cleanup, we should consider this our goal for this year; clean up Park Avenue. As near as I can tell, this is the last multiple housing site that needs help. I personally would like to see banners along Park Ave. like the ones Hanscom Park Neighborhood Association has put up on 32nd Ave., or something else to dress up the area. Let's all think about this and discuss possibilities at the meeting. That's all for now. Thanks.

- Tracy Willits

FBNA in the News

National: In January a CNN news crew spent three days in our neighborhood gathering material for a segment for the **Paula Zahn** show that aired on February 1st. They put together a nice "local hero" piece featuring our inimitable Jan Quinley and cut in some shots of the drive patrol and FBNA board meeting.

Local: On the suggestion of Neighborhood Watch Chair, **Michelle Roy**, KETV NewsWatch 7 has followed up its Sunday night story on our billboards with an online survey of viewer opinion. Here's the link to the story and survey: <http://www.theomahachannel.com/news/4171253/detail.html>

Destination Midtown Community Forums

Destination Midtown will host a series of community forums on implementation of the Destination Midtown plan in 2005. Participants will have an opportunity to meet the new Director and talk with the board about priorities and goals for making Destination Midtown the best place in Omaha.

For more information, contact **Tawanna Black** at 233-7142 or tblack@omahachamber.org. See You There!

Tuesday March 8TH 6-8 P.M.

@ OPS TAC Building 3215 Cuming St.

Thursday March 10TH 6-8 P.M.

@ Field Club of Omaha 3615 Woolworth

Saturday March 12TH 10 A.M.-12 Noon

@ First Central Congregational Church 421 S 36th St.

Contact Destination Midtown at 1301 Harney Street, Omaha, NE 68102

www.destinationmidtown.org

**February Meeting: City Council President Jim Vokal will be our guest.
Tuesday, February 22, 1107 Park Avenue, 7pm.**



In Remembrance: Bob Brown

This has been a sad and difficult couple of months for all of our association members, especially Mary and their family, as we have had to say goodbye to Brownie. One of the things about Bob was that he didn't like people to make a fuss over him and what he did. Well, this is our opportunity to shine that spotlight on him, and publicly acknowledge all he has done for the Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association. I'd like to begin this process by sharing a few stories about my relationship with Bob. I encourage others to write their stories down and share them on the web site and in future issues of this newsletter. It is by remembering that we keep his vision alive.

When Dave and I first moved into the neighborhood, Larry Jensen stopped by the house and invited us to attend a neighborhood association meeting. It was in the spring and the crime problems were beginning to become obvious. Dave had to work so I went. There began an amazing saga of our friendship with Bob. When I think of that first meeting it is hard to believe that we would grow to be, in Bob's words, "one he*l of a good team". When we met I took one look at him and thought "this scruffy guy is the famous Brownie, no way". Bob's first reaction to me was that I was a "goody two shoes who would be out of here in less than a year". Boy, were we wrong! How do I know that? He told me. You see that was one of the most amazing things about Bob. He told you straight up what he thought and he didn't play games. He told it like it was and expected you to put your words into actions before he put any value on them. He kept this association on track and kept the respect and the trust of so many people.

When I showed up at a board meeting and said I wanted to help he sent me to the Southeast PAC meeting. Later he admitted that he figured if I didn't get scared off by all the crime reports that he might "find something useful to do with me". Once Bob decided that I wasn't a fly by night do-gooder he began to give me more tasks to do. When the news media started paying a lot of attention to the

neighborhood, Bob made the decision that I would become the neighborhood spokesperson. Now mind you, he didn't ask me. I just started getting a lot of phone calls. I'd call him and say so and so called and wants to do a story. He'd say OK well you better do it. Later I learned that he was the one who gave them my phone number! When I finally caught on he just laughed and said, "you're it now girl!". He'd say things like "well you got the mouth and I got the brains". We laughed so much over that! He'd set me up and set me straight. After the first disastrous interview he taught me how to put the positive spin on what I told the press. I got a critique after each article or story.

Most of you don't know that when I served as president of the FBNA there was nothing that I did nor project I started without Bob's input. I would stop by the restaurant or call to get his reaction and guidance. He would ask questions and make suggestions before he gave a project his blessing or the axe. Sometimes I'd feel strongly about something he questioned so out would come his little notebook and he'd start making phone calls to get other members reactions. He was always fair and open to new ideas. He would sit back and listen to everyone's opinion before he gave his own. He was the constant reminder that we are an association not just a board of directors.

When I think about Bob, I think about wisdom. He was so good at reading people. He always knew when someone was trying to "con" the neighborhood. He would call their bluff before most of us realized that there might be a problem. It was amazing to watch. He'd pull out that notebook, make some phone calls, and things would start to happen. Bob would only let an issue go so far before he would step in. If he thought the association was headed down a side street he'd direct it back onto the main drag. He'd stay on an issue until the police department or the city or the property owner did something. It was as if he had a sixth sense about our neighborhood. For somebody who didn't go far beyond the corner of Park and Pacific he had his finger on

the pulse of the whole area.

One way Bob kept this neighborhood alive was with our celebrations. He started the picnic. Not only did he provide the food he usually picked the location! The Christmas party was his pride and joy. I'm not surprised that he was able to be with us and seemed so alive at the 2004 party. He would decorate and cook and fuss over the kid's gifts. He and Mary donated many of the door prizes. It was his way of making sure that our neighborhood remembered that we were a family that was meant to celebrate and enjoy each others' company. Thanksgiving was his holiday to celebrate with his own family but Christmas was for us. He wanted us to celebrate with as much energy as we fought crime.

The best gift Bob gave this association was the gift of a

unique identity. He was very proud of the fact that while we were one of the, geographically, smallest associations we were one of the largest when it came to making things happen. He took great pride in the fact that politicians listened when we talked. It ment a lot to him that "the city" would return our phone calls. Bob was like the phoenix on our logo. He raised this association out of the chaos and helped us soar! We are what we are because of Brownie. Every time you see a drive patrol car or receive a newsletter or see us on the news, remember that it is done to honor and respect the memory of the person that kept this association out of the ashes. I know for me the key words will be "what would Bob want us to do".

- Jan Quinley

TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT GREAT LOVE AND GREAT ACHIEVEMENT INVOLVE GREAT RISK
Dalai Lama

Neighborhood Watch Needs You?

With Spring approaching and people beginning to poke their heads out of their caves (okay, fine. I'm poking my head out of MY cave), it's time to assess our Neighborhood Watch program again. As I look at my original block captain call list, I see that most of them have moved away, or they're people I have never heard from again.

The Police Department requires very few things from us in order to maintain our status as a Neighborhood Watch neighborhood, but we have to stay active in order to keep our signs. As Neighborhood Watch Chair, most of that responsibility falls on me but I can't do it alone. There has to be participation on the part of the residents. Which means I need you.

There isn't much to it; you agree to be block captain for your street, you let your neighbors know how to get hold of you if they see something that might require police attention, you agree to call me and/or the police when anything happens that you find suspicious, and you come to an annual meeting. We combine the annual meeting with the summer picnic so even that is fun.

Lately, our association is getting a lot of media

attention for the things we're doing. Because of the billboards and a lot of hard work, prostitution has dropped by 42% in our neighborhood, but what is even better, in my opinion, is that we have new members signing up to join all the time now. Some are new to the area, but most are people who have lived here for some time and want to be a part of what we're doing. FBNA has become a force to be reckoned with in both the legal and political arenas.

This has all happened with very little assistance from Neighborhood Watch because we don't have enough people to really help out Drive Patrol and let them know in advance what houses on what blocks need their attention. Think what we can do with just that information!

Be a part of the solution. I will be bringing a block captain sign-up sheet with me to the February meeting. Sign up and help us out, or email me at Mroy@FBNAOmaha.com so I can put you on the list.

See you at the meeting!

- Michelle Roy
Neighborhood Watch Chair

**Mayor's Hotline 444-5555, FBNA Drive Patrol 342-3943
FBNA Neighborhood Watch 346-2288**

FBNA 2004

FBNA 2004/2005

Board of Directors and Chairpersons

President: Tracy Willits
342-3943
TWillits@fbnaomaha.com

Vice President: Jan Quinley
JQuinley@fbnaomaha.com

Secretary: Kelli Bowen
KBowen@fbnaomaha.com

Treasurer/Membership: Mary Brown
MBrown@fbnaomaha.com

Neighborhood: Michelle Roy
MRoy@fbnaomaha.com

Newsletter: Lee Murray & Barb Simcoe
LMurray@fbnaomaha.com

Web Master: Randy Roy
RRoy@fbnaomaha.com

Ombudsman: This position formally held by Bob Brown has been eliminated by vote of the membership. No one could have replaced Brownie.

Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association Membership Application

\$10 – Household & Associate
\$15 – Business & Apartment Owners
\$5 – Park Towers

Name _____

Address _____


Phone _____

Mail to: 1124 S. 30th Avenue; Omaha, NE 68105

Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association meetings are scheduled on the last
Tuesday of each month.

Call 342-3943 for up-to-date information.

Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association



1124 S. 30th Avenue
Omaha, NE 68105
www.fbnaomaha.com

- Meeting Monthly on the last Tuesday at 7pm
- Perk Avenue Cafe, 1107 Park Avenue. Call 342-3943