



The Park Bench

AEPNA Association Newsletter

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President's Letter

Soup Fest!

We cancelled the November meeting because of the weather. While waiting in the church parking lot to notify members who didn't get the cancellation notice, I had a nice visit with Leila Meyer, a new neighbor who is interested in starting up a community garden and the Bonfantes who shared some stories of the neighborhood from decades ago.

Elaine Bonfante reminded me that one of the greatest treasures of our neighborhood is the many people who have lived in the area their entire lives. They know the back stories, the legends and the lies about the places around us. Their memories may not be perfectly accurate, but they offer a truth that adds layers of richness to things we may take for granted or overlook. See Elaine's story on page 3 of the businesses that used to be along 60th Street between Pacific and Leavenworth.

The speakers who were slated for the November meeting will join us in January. We will hear from the Omaha Parks Foundation, Omaha Parks and Recreation as well as Canvas & Cabernet in Aksarben Village. That meeting will also be our Soupfest, which was one of our best-attended meetings last year. I guess that good food draws people out even in the dead of winter! AEPNA officers will provide the soups. You bring the sides, desserts and your neighbors.

I look forward to seeing you there!



Elaine Bonfante,
longtime neighbor

Avery Schwer

Next Meeting...

January 16th

6:30 – 8:30 PM

Guest speakers from:
Omaha Parks & Recreation
Omaha Parks Foundation
Canvas & Cabernet

SOUPFEST!

Soups provided by
AEPNA officers
Sides – Potluck:
A-L- desserts
M-Z- salad/veggies

Saint Matthew Evangelical
Lutheran Church
1725 S. 60th Street
3rd Thursday
Every Other Month

Bring a friend or two
and join us!

Visible Project for Eagle Scouts

According to Brian Miner, Eagle Scout projects need to be **VISIBLE** projects. Eagle Scout Luis Minor's project was to do something visible in the neighborhood. He and Scout Troop 597 came together with Midtown ReTree, Indian Creek Nursery and some AEPNA members in early November to plant trees.

They planted 18 trees, used 11 yards of mulch, applied 140 pounds of fertilizer and spread 50 pounds of seed with the help of some 30 people working for more than 120 hours combined.

Brian also said that every year new Life Scouts are looking for Eagle projects, so Eileen Slane has already invited them to be a part of the cleanup work that will happen at Shroeder/Vogel Park before the new playground equipment gets installed. Thanks to the Scouts for making a difference in the neighborhood! Check out more photos of the project at AEPNA's website www.aepna.org and our Facebook page.



AEPNA Members Help with Eagle Scout Project

pay it forward

is a phrase
we hear most every day
but all this month
we're living it
in a tiny, simple way

a touch of hope

some wonder, too
a bit of joy somewhere
if you hear from us
please do your part
and let it spread from there

a joyous december  dundee bank

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Neighborhood
Association**

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Small Wonders

When 60th Street Was West O

When Elaine Bonfante was a girl growing up on 60th and Leavenworth Streets, the streetcar tracks ended at 60th Street and turned around near the ice house to go back downtown. A Standard Oil filling station (now a used car lot) sat on the corner, with a drugstore and a Piggly Wiggly grocery store (now apartment buildings) to the south.

Elaine remembers when the fire stations switched from horse-drawn engines to trucks, the fire horses were put to pasture near where the sewer work was recently done on the park side of 60th. Whenever the horses heard sirens blaring, they stampeded and broke out of the corral. In their excitement, they trampled the terraces of the houses across the street.

For the last 50 years, Elaine and her husband Joe have lived in the home which she knew as Goldie Kelso's School of Music. Goldie taught music and singing there and Elaine and the neighborhood kids used to try to distract the students' lessons by making noise outside – they climbed a tree and dropped cans to make noise!

One of the bad parts of living for a long time in one area is seeing things you love change, be bulldozed, or fall into disuse. Elaine's happy memories of Elmwood Grocery on 60th & Pacific include taking the owner bouquets of flowers and getting a whole candy bar in return. Joe's memory of the building's years as home to Arms and Ammo include watching the owner shoot a shotgun to see if the shell worked. The gun was aimed into a hole in the floor, but the surprise of the blast almost sent Joe through the roof! An address once lively as a gathering place now doesn't have any kind of public life except as a bus stop.

Spend some time with your older neighbors to hear some of the history behind landmark buildings and your home. You might be surprised to learn that a creek once ran through your back yard, that a nondescript building was the hideout of a bank robber or that bands of gypsies once camped right across the street. We are looking for stories of the area told by longtime neighbors. If you have old photos and stories of the area, please contact Colleen Ciciulla at colleenciciulla@gmail.com or at 402-556-3462.



Once a lively place

Time to Renew!

Please renew your membership so you can continue to receive the newsletter. Use the form below.

Consider a gift membership for a new or favorite neighbor!

AEPNA Membership Form

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Home Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

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 \$10.00 \$20.00

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Omaha Christmas Bird Count – Birding with a Twist

Come learn about the Omaha Christmas Bird Count at the UNO Student Center on Saturday, December 7 from 9 AM to noon. The newly founded Urban Bird and Nature Society presents birding with a twist. The cost is only \$12 per person or \$20 per couple. Email theurbanbirdandnaturesociety@cox.net for details or call Diana Failla at 402-651-5779.