



The Park Bench

AEPNA Association Newsletter

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President's Letter

Cooperation and Caring

The January meeting was a great way to start the new year: good food, good fellowship and good speakers sharing good news. Thanks to everyone who brought soup and side dishes and thanks to everyone who set up before and cleaned up after the meeting. Check out more photos from the meeting on AEPNA's Facebook page and website (aepna.org).

Some members came specifically to hear Leah Meyer talk about starting a community garden in the neighborhood. Community gardens require a lot of groundwork before any real "ground work" can begin, so if you or a neighbor you know want to help with the planning or learn what it takes to make this happen, please contact me or Leah. Owners of two AEPNA business members told us about their businesses. Kathy Byrnes (Canvas & Cabernet in Aksarben Village) and Ann Konen (Tracks bar at 60th & Woolworth) shared stories of being drawn to the midtown area by the comfortable vibe and the opportunity for growth. They stayed late after the meeting and were swapping ideas on how each could help the other build business. That's exactly the kind of cooperation and caring that we like to see in our neighbors!

AEPNA bylaws require elections every two years. At the January meeting, all of the current officers agreed to stand for re-election because no other volunteers came forward and there were no other nominations. Our officers are committed to the association, and I am grateful to them for their dedication. Remember that this is YOUR association that exists for the benefit of the neighborhood at large, so I encourage you to step forward to be a part of the leadership or to serve as a volunteer on one of the committees that interests you. Your presence and contributions will help keep AEPNA active and effective.

I am privileged to serve an association with such dedicated officers in a neighborhood that's so vibrant. Thank you for your support of AEPNA and for being a good neighbor. I look forward to a busy and exciting year in the neighborhood and I invite you to be a part of it.

See you around the neighborhood!

Avery Schwer



Two business owners – Ann Konen & Kathy Byrnes

Next Meeting...
March 20th
6:30 – 8:30 PM

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

Bring a friend or two
 and join us!



Rendering of S/V Park playground renovation.

Park Plans

Pat Slaven from the Omaha Parks and Recreation Department joined us at the January meeting. She showed final drawings of the Schroeder/Vogel Park playground renovation and answered questions. We're still about \$10,000 shy of our matching funds goal, but the work will begin this year.



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An AkSarBen Boyhood

Remembrances of Richard Carey who was born in California right after the attack on Pearl Harbor then moved to a house at 60th & Hickory where he and his brother grew up and where Richard now resides.



Richard at boyhood home.

I remember...picnics in Elmwood park...the smell & sound of the AkSarBen races, the bugles and how our posse would roam the fence along Woolworth behind the stables (where tiny houses supposedly inhabited by track workers still stand)...parking lots packed with out of town buses...ice skating in the Coliseum on weekends...Red Skelton & other stars performing throughout the year...

I remember...the streetcars & brick streets (later on, Dad got some of those bricks which now line our alley)...walking to Crestwood for Mom with a list (sometimes, even Lucky Strikes!)...when my Norfolk cousins came to visit & we slept on the screened in front porch, even in storms....blankets on the ground to watch fireworks on the Fourth....Sunday church at Mount Calvary (shirt & tie).

I remember...WHISTLES...Mothers in the neighborhood had a special call for their kids (mine was 1 long & 2 short) and it meant business!

I remember...walking to Pickard School, where my Kindergarten teacher was Margaret Kiewit (of THE Kiewit family!)...4th grade, a new modern school Belle Ryan was built close to my house (I was chosen to turn the first shovel of dirt with Mayor Cunningham!)...7th & 8th grade at Beals on Center Street...for 9th grade a new "Jr. High" - George W. Norris, opened and, as "Rotary Boy", I turned another shovel....we looked forward to Friday nights at the Center Theater (but you had to behave when Joe, the owner, walked the aisle with his flashlight!)... finally, I got to take the #4 AkSarBen bus to & from Central High School!

I remember...Gorat's, Jack Holme's Steakhouse & Tavern, Evan's Ice Cream, A&W Drive In and The Versailles all along Center Street!

I remember...coming home from college & attending some classes at "OU" when practically the only building on campus was the Administration Building which seemed so impressive at the time!

I remember...feeling the changes of the 60's in the city. I travelled a lot for work & no longer lived in AkSarBen...but in the 70's, my partner & I bought a condo in Pickard School & returned...felt like home again...our front door was the original school entrance & the unit contained my Kindergarten & 3rd grade room!! We overlooked AkSarBen Field & the buses were back...and the Coliseum... until all was sold.



Richard at home (again).

We moved again, but after the loss of parents, we bought the Hickory cottage, gutted & renovated it....Voila...we're back!!! Neighborhood has changed...fewer trees... AkSarBen is thriving once more...University has a larger presence...the racetrack sounds have turned into band music...outdoor markets take the place of ice skating...a vast sports complex is on the horizon...hotels & apartments are going up...change continues!

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“...our front door was the original school entrance & the unit was comprised partially of my Kindergarten & 3rd grade room!!” Richard Carey (see Remembrances on page 3)