

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.

December 2008

Arts Cafe 2008: Continuing the tradition

By Jacqui Weeks, a Cottage Grove Neighbor

In the twelve minutes before Arts Café, my roommate said to me:

Look, I see a pom squad!
Is that a band playing?
Wow, look at that painting!
Hiya Karen Ainsley.
I hope it will stop raining!
What a nifty striped tent.
Do I smell hot coffee?
YAAAAAAAAAAAAAY N-N-N!
I love Arts Café.
Hot Gumbo!
Do you see the crowd?
[to which I said]

Yes! And a Pumpkin on a Bale of Hay.

Several days before the Arts Café was due to launch, I was already thrilled. I fell in love with the NNN at the 2006 Arts Café on Cottage Grove, and it was wonderful to see the big striped tents go up for an event that makes me bounce up and down with glee every year. And in spite of the brief downpour that threatened some of the morning baked goods, we had a sunny day as warm and as charming as the many residents who contributed to the festive atmosphere.

I was scheduled to work at the welcome tent in the mid-afternoon, but spent the morning trotting around to see the different sights. I wish I could mention everyone, but I'll mention a few highlights – At 815 Lindsey it was great to see Dale and Judy make a guest appearance with their lovely silver and bronze sculptures back on Cottage Grove (they lived here for 30 years!), and delightful to see new works by neighborhood favorites Joe Taschetta and Dan Slattery. At 911 Lindsey, I was amazed by Connie Wendt's delicate handcut snowflakes (gorgeous, fun, and eco-friendly), and dazzled by Tim Scott's photography – I knew that he had done the pictures for the Garden Walk, but hadn't had a chance to see his finished work before. Fortified with an excellent slice of German chocolate cake made by the ladies from Faith Baptist Church, I wandered past two different groups of enthusiastic musicians and more tantalizing smells from the food tent. The marvelously colorful paper hats that kids made at Health-Works! made a great counterpoint to the heaps of decorations that Jeff Stanifer's crew had spent the previous day arranging up and down the block. Of course, the houses themselves are some of the most impressive artworks – both the hundred-year old wood beautifully restored, and the brand-new design lovingly crafted by the crew from Habitat for Humanity. Welcome new neighbors!!

Cottage Grove itself was also alive with artwork: more breathtaking photography by Sonje Gejji, whimsical and imaginative aprons restored from household "Kitch" by Susan Adamek, Carol Heslop took the time to explain to me how original felt purses could be made from oversized hand-knitting, and Anne Binder offered me a hand-lettered License to be Creative (no expiration date included). Inspired, well-fed, entertained, and delighted I want to thank everyone involved for another entirely memorable holiday!

ps...After glaring at me for working her casual comments into a ditty, and heartily thanking the various sponsors of the Arts Café for *not* letting me compose all (any) of the music played on November 2, my roommate actually did wander off to go explore the transformed block for herself, and I suspect that she enjoyed it every bit as much as the rest of us!



YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE

Save the Date

Join us for the
Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc.
Annual Meeting
& Breakfast with Mayor Steve Luecke

Saturday, January 31, 2009
9:00 – 11:00 am

At the Charles Martin Youth Center
802 Lincoln Way West
(corner of Lincoln Way West & Cushing)

MONTHLY NNN MEETINGS

December Committee Meetings are canceled.
Enjoy the Holidays!

Safety Committee Meeting

Thursday, January 15, 2009

6:00 pm

NNN Offices

Environmental Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 27, 2009

6:00 pm

NNN Offices

THINGS AROUND TOWN

A Christmas Story

Dec. 4-7, 10-14, 19-20

8:00 pm (Sundays, 3:00 pm)

South Bend Civic Theatre

Tree Lighting Ceremony

Friday, December 5, 2008

5:30 - 6:45 pm

Jon Hunt Plaza; in front of the Morris Performing Arts Center

Holiday Art Walk

Saturday, December 6, 2008

11 am - 5 pm

Admission is free

www.circaartsgallery.com

The Nutcracker by Southhold Dance

December 13 & 14

Sat. shows at 2 pm & 7 pm, Sun. show at 2 pm

Morris Performing Arts Center

For more information on things happening in Downtown South Bend go to:

www.downtownsouthbend.com/calendar.php

QUESTIONS? Call us at 232-9182

This newsletter was produced [in part] with the assistance of the City of South Bend Community Development Program through funds made available by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1977.



Congratulations Lexi! She won an iPod Shuffle for participating in the Arts Cafe Scavenger Hunt!

Get Ready To Be Wowed - Change is Coming...

On Saturday, November 15th more than 48 neighbors attended NNN's General Meeting to meet and hear Residential Marketing Specialist Sue Solmos share her marketing plans for the near northwest neighborhood.

As Sue was providing data concerning South Bend's future growth and real estate trends, it became crystal clear to me how our neighborhood would fit perfectly into her plans. Why not the near northwest neighborhood, after all, we are a neighborhood full of wonderful attributes, ripe for marketing.

Sue's momentum is contagious and her spirit of responsibility is infectious. She's already begun marketing the near northwest neighborhood to realtors and they're excited to get on board. She's successfully recruiting realtors that believe in our neighborhood, realtors willing to help market the quality of life that downtown neighborhoods offer.

Sue's marketing plan also includes some new stakeholders that have the power to help make a difference. She's engaging the Chamber of Commerce, businesses, private investors and most importantly the neighbors - the voice in our community. Last but not least, she's employing the internet. Recently, Sue played a major role to help ensure that downtown neighborhoods are a part of the city's exciting new website design.

Sue's telling a new story because she gets it, there's more to South Bend than just industry! South Bend also offers wonderful places to live. She's talking about our city's existing housing; houses adorned with treasured architectural features, houses with great front porches, situated along streets paved in brick and lined with beautiful oak trees. Add our remarkable neighbors to this mix and you've combined the perfect ingredients that help make the near northwest neighborhood an attractive place to live, work and play.

That Saturday morning I witnessed a room full of energized neighbors asking Sue how they could help, a room full of neighbors eager to get involved. Sue's answer was simple but empowering - just get involved. Neighbors can be most helpful by connecting with other neighbors. She suggested that neighbors should find a committee of interest and sign on. "NNN is ahead of most neighborhoods," she said, "you are organized." You have a website, you have a listserv, you have a meeting room, you have committees, and most importantly, you have a Community Development Corporation with a strategic plan to revitalize the neighborhood. So get involved and help promote your neighborhood.

So I'm encouraging you to join us at our monthly committee meetings - get involved. Start the New Year with a renewed spirit of responsibility. The following committees hold ongoing monthly meetings and need your support to help build sustainable neighborhoods: Safety Committee, Environmental Committee, Membership Committee, and the newly formed Vacant and Abandoned Property Committee. Membership is free, so if you would like to learn more or sign-on, please contact Marilyn Gachaw at (574) 232-9182.

With all we are hearing in the press...is it still possible for me to get a home loan?

While there is no denying that credit standards have tightened, there are still many options for those of you looking into homeownership.

FHA loans are a wonderful option for a lot of home buyers. FHA only requires 3% down from the buyer & it can be a gift from a close relative, or a charitable organization or public entity that provides a home ownership assistance program for low and moderate income borrowers and first time homebuyers. FHA loans also allow the seller to help the buyer with their closing costs and pre-pays up to 6% of the sales price.

There are still great options with VA and Conventional mortgage loans. VA loans offer a zero down program and conventional mortgages can be obtained with 5% down, but the 5% does have to be verifiable funds provided from the buyer.

Indiana Housing loans are also available at local banks, offering first time homebuyers a lower interest rate if they meet the low-to-moderate income guidelines. Indiana Housing additionally has programs available that offer qualified applicants down payment assistance.

If a buyer uses a government program, like FHA, VA or the Indiana Housing down payment assistance programs, the homes being purchased need to be in good condition. "Handyman Specials" would not be recommended for any of these programs, but any of the NNN refurbished homes would be ideal for these loan options. Check with your local bank for more mortgage information. For more information on homes currently for sale by the NNN call Karen Ainsley at 232-9182.

**Human Rights Commission Survey
Regarding Renters Rights**

Please only complete if you are currently a renter.

In an effort to help tenants resolve their problems, the *South Bend Human Rights Commission* would like you to take a moment to fill-out and submit the following survey.

1. **How is your relationship with your Landlord or Property Manager?** _____
2. **Have you encountered any problems as a renter? Yes No**
If so, what was it? _____
3. **How did you resolve the problem?** _____
4. **Have you ever been a victim of housing discrimination because of:**
 - Race or Color
 - National origin
 - Religion
 - Sex
 - Family status (including children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18)
 - Handicap (Disability)

Yes No
5. **Would you like to learn more about rental rights? Yes No**
If yes, is there something specific you would like to learn about? _____

Can the Human Rights Commission contact you? Yes No
If yes, please provide your contact information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Please return your completed survey to:
Fred Harris c/o South Bend Human Rights Commission, 301 S. St. Louis Blvd, South Bend, IN 46617 or
Drop off to Marilyn Gachaw at the NNN office, 1007 Portage Ave.

Have questions? Contact Fred Harris, Human Rights Commission Investigator, at (574) 235-9355 or Marilyn Gachaw, NNN Community Organizer, at (574)232-9182.