The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. Chili Supper is a longstanding neighborhood tradition. No one is ever quite certain exactly what year it started or where the first one was held, although you do hear stories of various church basements being used over the years, Betty Nissley bringing huge pans of cornbread or Scott McKibbin in the background at most events with a pot of his killer chili. As neighbors reflect on the many years which have gone by since that first gathering, I am certain a lot has changed in some respects, but then in other ways not much of anything has changed. The evening still consists of some good homemade food among neighbors banding together with other residents and committing to regular monthly clean-ups, neighbors can take the ownership for the overall appearance and upkeep of their block.

It is always incredible to me how each chili supper takes on a life of its own. This year I was amazed, as always, to watch the donations pour in. I do not know what aspect puts me more in awe, the sheer generosity of our neighbors, or that we really have some awesome cooks.

The City’s Department of Code Enforcement and Division of Environmental Services will help by providing trash bags and gloves as well as assistance with pick-up of debris and trash. On kick-off day, Environmental Services will have two trucks in the neighborhood for four hours and their crews will begin picking up trash at 11:00 am. On that day our goal is to dramatically change the appearance of the neighborhood. Additionally, every registered Adopt-a-Block group will have a stake with a flag at their designated refuse site. City crews will collect trash and debris only at flagged locations. The program was very efficient last year and we hope for the same success in 2012.

Since a record number of 176 blocks were adopted last year, the Environmental Committee wants this year’s Adopt-a-Block to be even bigger - but in order to do that, we need your help! Consider being a Block Captain and adopting the street in front of your house. Is your street already looking good? If so, you can adopt your alley or there are other blocks in the neighborhood that are in need of a little love and attention, eagerly waiting for you to adopt.

If you would like to find out more about being a block captain or how you can participate please contact NNN offices at 232-9182. Don’t forget to mark your calendars for Saturday, April 21st at 8:00 am at the NNN offices. Together we can make our neighborhood a cleaner place!

Chili Supper Tradition

By Karen Ainsley

The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. Chili Supper is a longstanding neighborhood tradition. No one is ever quite certain exactly what year it started or where the first one was held, although you do hear stories of various church basements being used over the years, Betty Nissley bringing huge pans of cornbread or Scott McKibbin in the background at most events with a pot of his killer chili. As neighbors reflect on the many years which have gone by since that first gathering, I am certain a lot has changed in some respects, but then in other ways not much of anything has changed. The evening still consists of some good homemade food among neighbors and a guarantee of friendly faces and good conversation to share your meal with.

This year I cannot even count on one hand the number of neighbors that could not make the event, (you know we were competing with some pretty impressive Notre Dame in the background at most events with a pot of his killer chili. As neighbors reflect on the many years which have gone by since that first gathering, I am certain a lot has changed in some respects, but then in other ways not much of anything has changed. The evening still consists of some good homemade food among neighbors and a guarantee of friendly faces and good conversation to share your meal with.

This year I cannot even count on one hand the number of neighbors that could not make the event, (you know we were competing with some pretty impressive Notre Dame.
Dame Women’s Basketball and weather), but still sent chili, dessert or cornbread. How lucky are we to have neighbors that are that invested and generous. Folks, this is not the norm, we are very lucky in this neighborhood.

I think some of the moments that mean the most to me are when the room is at capacity and abuzz with conversation. You look around and see someone hugging an old friend or another person shaking hands with someone new. Then in another corner there are wonderful neighbors, like Holly Robinson, organizing some games for the kids to play. In yet another section of the gym a couple neighbors are gathered around a television to watch the South Bend Police Departments video showcasing a boxing program run in the neighborhood. Father Mike is sharing his birthday with us and greeting neighbors in this wonderful facility Holy Cross generously shares with us. Then the backdrop of all of this is volunteers racing with more desserts or chili, putting out additional plates, filling drink containers or even joking with one another as they start digging into the dishes of the evening in the kitchen.

The NNN Chili Supper represents to me all that makes this neighborhood so special. A big thanks to everyone that volunteered in so many different capacities and all those neighbors that joined us for supper and brought a friend. We look forward to the next time we are together.

Tackling Vacant and Abandoned Properties

In late February Mayor Pete Buttigieg announced the formation of a Vacant and Abandoned Properties Task Force. The group has been assembled to address the burgeoning problem of vacant and abandoned properties across the City of South Bend. The formation of the task force is designed to create more options to combat the problem affecting neighborhoods throughout the city.

The task force will work to create a comprehensive strategy to address the problem of vacant and abandoned properties in the city. The task force is co-chaired by Mayor Buttigieg and Jim Kelly, a clinical professor of law at the University of Notre Dame. Kelly joined the law school faculty in 2011, both teaching and researching community development law. Before his teaching career, Kelly worked as the executive director of Save A Neighborhood, Inc. and as legal consultant for the city of Baltimore’s Project 5000, which assisted the municipal government and community groups to acquire and clear vacant houses and lots. Kelly also started and operates the Community Development Project at the Notre Dame Legal Aid Clinic. Additional goals of the task force are to maximize input and participation throughout the community to promote safety, prevent crime, restore our neighborhoods, and improve the livability of our city.

The task force will feature public meetings in affected neighborhoods in order to maximize residential input. Information on the public meetings will be shared with local media as soon as it is available and on the neighborhood listserv.

The Near Northwest Neighborhood, Inc. feels fortunate to have been asked to join this important taskforce and feels the neighborhood is well represented in these conversations, as our First District City Councilman is also part of this newly formed group.

Ahhhh.....Spring is in the Air

By Jeff Stanifer

Time to clean up the yard, clean out the garage and get rid of all those items that have been piling up in the basement, attic and closets. If you’re like me, this annual ritual means some very fine local organizations get a decent donation of all sorts of gently used items. It also means I end up with a pile of broken, unwanted and un_usable “rubbish” that is left over. If I happen to have a large item (ie: washer, dryer, couch, old mattress, TV, stove, etc…) I know that I can call Solid Waste at 277-8823 to schedule a pick-up, since I get one large item pick-up for free, per month. Heck even if I have a couple of large items, I know that with the free large item pick-up per month, I can be rid of those couple items by the time the family reunion is scheduled in July! What a great service.

When it comes to this trash pile, who can I call to pick it up? How do I know that who I call is really going to haul my trash away and take it to the appropriate dump site / landfill instead of just dumping it on some vacant lot? The city has been cleaning up vacant lots for the past several months and it’s really making a difference. But, we want to be proactive to be certain vacant lots don’t begin to fill back up with trash. Just because you paid some guy in a truck to haul away your trash doesn’t guarantee that your trash is actually going to the appropriate place. It’s pretty evident that these “trash haulers” are not taking trash to a legal dumpsite when vacant lots throughout the neighborhood continually have trash appearing. It’s also a good bet that if one of these “trash haulers” is “cutting you a deal” on the price…..the trash isn’t getting disposed of in the correct and proper manner.

So here’s some information that you can use to assure that your trash doesn’t end up on a vacant lot and become someone else’s problem.

• All trash haulers are to be licensed with the City of South Bend. They are required to carry this license in the vehicle they are using to haul the trash. Simply ask them to show you their license. If you have any doubts you can call Michelle in the City Licensing Department at 235-5912. Trash haulers are required to have their business name, address and telephone number clearly printed in 2 inch or larger letters on the driver’s side door of the vehicle they use for hauling.

• Do not pay until after a trash hauler presents you with a copy of the dump receipt. They are required to keep these receipts and they must be made available to the City (stipulation of the license) upon request. So, it’s really no extra work to provide proof to you that they used a legal dump site.

• The dump fee at Green Tech, a local landfill, is $40.00 for a pick-up truck load.

• Ask the hauler where they will be disposing of the waste? Green Tech does not accept any chemicals or tires.

• Be very observant. If something does not add up, trust your instincts.

• If you see someone dumping trash on a vacant lot, get a good description of the vehicle and person, as well as the license plate number if possible and call the Police at 235-9361.

Let’s make sure to keep our neighborhood clean, safe and vibrant. Let’s continue to show the community through our actions why the near northwest neighborhood is the neighborhood of choice.

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