

Mark Your Calendar ☑ West Plaza Neighborhood Meeting

A bi-monthly meeting for West Plaza residents and businesses

Tuesday, July 15, 7:00-8:00 p.m. Social half-hour begins at 6:30 p.m.

Guest Speaker: Big Brothers Big Sisters

Immanuel Lutheran Church 1701 Westport Road, KC MO 64111

or via Zoom @ https://us02web.zoom.us/ j/82850878576

~ Log on Early to Check Connection ~

Our guest speaker at this meeting will be a representative from Big Brothers Big Sisters, who will tell us about their "Putts Fore Kids" event, which will be held in November.

In addition, a KCPD Community Information Officer will update us on crime in West Plaza.

Visit our website, westplaza.org, for updated information about the meeting.

As always, light refreshments will be provided, and we will close with a raffle. Bring a neighbor with you who hasn't joined WPNA yet and get an extra ticket for the raffle drawing! See the article on page 6 to learn about our exciting, extra special raffle prizes this month! ■

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! 2025 MIDTOWN KC COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SURVEY Survey open through July 6 https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MKC2025 Results will be shared & discussed at our 7/17 Luncheon. Register @ midtownkcnow.org/events

2025 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

West Plaza Neighborhood Meetings Immanuel Lutheran Church 1701 Westport Road

Also via Zoom

Third Tuesday of odd-numbered months:

~ July 15 ~

~ September 16 ~ November 18 ~

BOARD MEETINGS

First Tuesday of each month

~ July 1 ~ August 5 ~

~ September 2 ~ ~ October 7 ~

~ November 4 ~ December 2 ~

NEWSLETTER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Monday following board meetings of evennumbered months

EVENTS

September 20: Art in the Park, Westwood Park, 11 am-4 pm (Saturday)

October 24: Litter Patrol, 5-6 pm (Friday)

October 25: Fall Cleanup, 8 am-12 pm (Saturday)

October 31: Trick or Treat Map (Friday)

November 29: Holiday Open House, 47th Street Corridor (Saturday)

The full version of the newsletter is available in newsletter parking boxes on the streets and in some of our WPNA business members' establishments. A full list of



locations can be found on the website at westplaza.org. Scan this QR code or visit westplaza.org to read the full WPNA newsletter online.

President's View

by Ken Williams

I hope everybody is having a great summer so far. I definitely am! My biggest complaint is that the foliage is growing faster in my yard than the neighborhood bunnies can eat it. Not a bad problem to have though, because I love the neighborhood bunnies, and they know my yard is a great place to graze.

When not tending to my yard, I've been spending time walking and driving through West Plaza on a daily basis. While enjoying the neighborhood and all of the great people and properties in West Plaza, I have also been keeping an eye out for any public safety issues and other serious problems. To that end, if you see any concerning issues such as abandoned or unmaintained properties, stolen vehicles, evidence of break-ins like broken windows or open doors, drug trafficking, or problematic short-term rentals, please feel free to reach out to me via email (jkwilliams@gmail.com) or on Facebook in the WPNA groups, and I will follow up with the city and/or KCPD so that we can resolve the problem.

You can also of course contact the city directly if you prefer. For emergencies dial 911, and for non-emergency police response, call 816-234-5111. For any other issue, such as potholes, illegal dumping, or any other issue you would like the city to look into, contact 311 at https://www.kcmo.gov/city-hall/311.

Just a friendly reminder that the WPNA is simply a collection of great neighbors, not a homeowners association, and I wouldn't have it any other way. I'm only concerned with the serious stuff. So, if you decide to paint your house Jayhawk crimson and blue, or leave your Halloween decorations up all year, that's your prerogative. If you have a basketball goal in the driveway though, I love to shoot hoops, and you may get flagged down for a game of HORSE.



Depressed? There Is Help

by Martha Childers, EdSpec, LPC, LCPC

Many of us experience depression. Here are tips on how to manage it.

- Talk therapy can help. Cognitive therapy will provide a way to look more closely at your thoughts. Sometimes we get into habitual thought spirals that can take us down dark alleys. Learning to identify the start of a spiral and replacing it with other thoughts can really help. A classic book on this technique is Feeling Good by David Burns.
- Exercise, omega-3's, and sunlight or vitamin D can help alleviate depressive symptoms.
- Before starting a medication, get a DNA test for psychotropics. Any medical doctor can arrange it. This takes the guesswork out of finding a medication that works for you.
- Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is easy to diagnose. If you feel more depressed on cloudy days or in the winter, you may have it. It tends to run in families. I use a sunlight-replacing light by Verlux called "Happy Light." The light needs to sit at a 45-degree angle so that it hits the eyes like sunlight would.
- St. John's Wort is a natural herb that is helpful when depressive symptoms occur. I do not find the tablet effective, but like the tea leaves. Like any herb, dosage must be monitored if used with other substances, such as marijuana.
- Treatment for traumas, recent and distant, can be useful. In Kansas City, we have MOCSA, a non-profit with skilled practitioners to help individuals process childhood sexual abuse. We also have a number of domestic violence shelters that offer free outpatient services.
- Grief can result in depressive symptoms.
 Crossroads Hospice is a good place to start to find help. Illnesses, like cancer, can cause depression. Gilda's Place would be the place to go for that. Other specialized organizations are around town for other diseases, like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's. Many have literature along with individual or group support.

If you or someone you know has symptoms of depression, reach out to any of the services mentioned above to get help.

Referrals Welcome. For more tips on living, visit: http://www.childerscounselingservice.com/ ■

FORKS & RAKES by Stephanie Murrell

Dirty Martini Deviled Eggs

Salty, briny, and boozy, these Dirty Martini Deviled Eggs are the perfect party bite—complete with a Castelvetrano olive for that classic martini flair. Prep the filling up to a day ahead and pipe just before serving for best results.



Yields: 24 deviled eggs Prep Time: 20 minutes Total Time: 30 minutes

Approved by: Delish Test Kitchen

Ingredients:

12 large eggs
½ cup mayonnaise
1 Tbsp vermouth
24 Castelvetrano olives, plus 1 Tbsp olive brine
1 tsp kosher salt

Instructions:

Boil the Eggs

Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil. Gently lower the eggs in one at a time. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer for 12 minutes.

Ice Bath

While eggs cook, fill a large bowl with ice and water. Once cooked, transfer eggs to the ice bath for 30 seconds.

Crack & Peel

Gently tap eggs all over with the back of a spoon to crack the shells. Return to the ice bath for 5 minutes; peel under cool running water.

Make the Filling

Slice eggs in half lengthwise. Remove yolks and place in a bowl. Add mayonnaise, vermouth, olive brine, and salt. Beat with a hand mixer until smooth.

Assemble

Pipe yolk mixture into egg white halves using a piping bag fitted with a star tip.

Garnish & Serve

Spear each olive with a toothpick and place one on each egg. Chill until ready to serve. ■

CityWise

For the latest Country Club Plaza news, visit:

https://plazakc.org/news-updates/

Summer Mowing? Don't Give Your Lawn a Buzz Cut!

When temperatures soar, giving your grass a super short trim might seem like a clean, tidy choice—but it's actually one of the worst things you can do for your lawn. Cutting too low weakens the grass by reducing its ability to photosynthesize (aka make energy), stunts root growth, dries out the soil faster, and opens the door for weeds to take over. Basically, it turns your once lush yard into a stressed, patchy mess. Instead, give your lawn a fighting chance in the heat:

- Raise your mowing height to 2.5 to 3 inches—or even higher during peak heat.
- Mow less often to reduce stress and let the grass grow stronger.
- **Time it right**—mow in the early morning or late afternoon when it's cooler.
- Keep blades sharp so you slice cleanly instead of tearing the grass.
- Consider "No Mow May"—letting grass grow for a few weeks not only helps it stay resilient but also supports pollinators like bees.

In short: taller grass equals deeper roots, more moisture, fewer weeds, and a much happier lawn. Give it a summer cut it can actually survive by keeping it longer. ■

Join WPNA or Renew Your Membership

As our membership year is January through December, we offer prorated renewal rates:

Join July through September: \$25 for the rest of year and next year

Join October through November: \$20 for the rest of year & next year

Join in December: \$15 for next year

To join or renew, visit westplaza.org and fill out an updated or new application. The link to pay is at the end of the application.

Membership Minute

by Julie Jennings, Membership Director

Our meeting on July 15 will be held as usual at Immanuel Lutheran Church. See the announcement on page 1 for details.

Attending meetings is a great way to get a snapshot of what is happening in West Plaza and for us to hear from you about events and programs you would like to see and get involved in. We are keeping our Bring a Neighbor incentive going! Bring a neighbor who hasn't joined WPNA yet to a meeting—not only will they get membership swag and be in the know, but you will get an extra raffle ticket for the drawings at the end of the meeting. I love it when we have the opportunity to meet our neighbors.

- I am reaching out to our members who checked volunteer opportunities on their application, such as the block parties, which are coming. To keep informed or to help organize yours, join or renew at westplaza.org. Check the block party option, and I will get your info to the appropriate volunteer. The board supports these events with information and visitors.
- We are refreshing our West Plaza street banners this summer, so I'm reaching out for helpers to help with traffic control while they get swapped out.
- We are looking for a helper to select and organize our membership happy hours this year.
 I've got a list of businesses, and I could use some help coordinating meetings with business owners to get to know them. Also, if you are a business member, give me a call or drop me an email, and I can give you my ideas for your very own happy hour.

If you haven't updated your household information in a while, we would love to have details of kids and pets as your household grows. We will be beefing up our pet database to help should a pet get out. With our database, we will have a reference to help get them home safely. It's a benefit of membership!

More hands and minds help get the work of the neighborhood done. We now have a board of eight and can always use some one-and-done assistance. If you are interested, feel free to give me a call (816-215-1388) or email me at wpnageneral@gmail.com, president@westplaza.org, or info@westplaza.org or reach out to any current board member with questions. ■

Help Keep West Plaza Safe

See Something, Say Something: If you observe suspicious activity, don't hesitate to report it to the KCMO Police:

911 Emergencies

816-234-5111 Non-emergency Number

816-474-8477 Anonymous Tip Line

You can also call City Services at 311.

Looking for an easy way to help WPNA? You can help people get to our meetings.

We have meeting reminder signs you can put in your yard the Friday before the Tuesday General Meeting (third Tuesday of oddnumbered months) and then bring it back inside after the meeting.

Next meeting: July 15, 2025

To claim your sign, call Julie Jennings, 816-215-1388 or email wpnageneral@gmail.com

Newsletter edited and formatted by:

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West Plaza Neighborhood Association Newsletter Edited by Julie A. Tenenbaum

Phone: 816-931-2276 Email: jatkc@aol.com

Submit suggestions for newsletter articles to Julie Tenenbaum at the email address above. You must include your name and your contact information for your suggestion to be considered. Articles may be edited for length, accuracy, and grammar.

Display Advertising Rates (WPNA members

only):

Business card \$35 Quarter page \$50

The Summer Solstice: The Happiest, Sad Day of the Year

by Len Jurden, Board Member

The summer solstice—the longest day of the year, when the sun seems to linger a little longer just to keep us company. It's the day when daylight stretches out, and evening feels endless. If you ask me, it's the best day of the year. And, strangely, also a little heartbreaking; it begins its retreat.

The summer solstice, typically around June 20-22 (this year, it's June 20, 2025, at 3:51 pm CDT), is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. For thousands of years, humans have felt the same tug of joy and melancholy on this day. Ancient cultures marked the summer solstice with bonfires, feasts, and festivals. The Druids gathered at Stonehenge to witness the sunrise perfectly frame its ancient stones. In Scandinavia, folks still celebrate Midsummer by dancing around maypoles and eating pickled fish.

And who can blame them? The summer solstice has always symbolized abundance, warmth, and the high point of the growing season. It's nature's annual victory lap, a reminder that life is good.

But here's the catch: while you're basking in that glorious, extra-long sunshine, a tiny voice in the back of your mind whispers, this is as good as it gets. Because after today, each evening grows a little shorter, the nights stretch a little longer, and before you know it, you're digging through closets for your winter coat.

That's why I greet the winter solstice—the shortest, darkest day of the year—with unexpected delight. Sure, it's cold, and the sun seems to clock out at 4:30 pm, but it marks the moment we turn back toward the light. Every day after gets a tiny bit brighter. It's hope in the form of a gradually lengthening afternoon.

I treat both solstices like old, eccentric friends. Summer's solstice is a giddy celebration of light with a bittersweet goodbye. Winter's is a somber gathering with the comforting knowledge that things will soon get better.

Both deserve a toast. How will you celebrate? (There's no shame in eating ice cream before noon this summer solstice). ■

A Thank You Note from Immanuel Lutheran

Thank you for your generosity! During the Lenten season, Immanuel members and our surrounding neighborhoods donated over 200 pounds of food to food pantries at three nearby universities. The Social Ministry committee split the collected food three ways on April 21 and then delivered it to the Dr. Raj Bala Agrawal Care Center at UMKC, Lutheran Campus Ministry Westwood House at KU, and the Thrive pantry at KUMC. All three food pantries were grateful for our donations, especially since supplies were running low at the end of the semester! Indeed, the food pantry manager at UMKC told us our donation would likely be gone by the end of the day. At Westwood House, Assistant Director Jamie's eyes lit up when we told him we were donating food.

Thank you so much for donating to our food drive. It made a difference to many of our community members. ■

Neighborhood Proud

by Jacob Gutierrez and Kevin Garner Board Members

Happy summer, neighbors! This is truly our favorite time of year. We plan to spend time out on our front porch every day watching life go by a little more slowly. Please say hello if you're walking by; it really makes our day!

June is Pride Month, but it's our reality every single day. As a gay couple, we live in continued states of joy, frustration, and fear for what lies ahead in the state of the union. Basic civil liberties dwell in limbo, and sometimes it feels like we don't even want to see the headlines to give our sanity a break.

We have been members of this community for only a year; but this is the happiest we've ever been. This neighborhood is so multi-faceted and expansive and yet at the same time cozy and comfortable. Most importantly, the people who live here are incredibly welcoming and accepting.

We'd like to make a plea for that to continue. Continue to say hello. Continue to care for one another, and continue to make the world seem a little safer and smaller.

The Cummings Creatures are Stirring — and a Chance to Win One!

With the help of our business member Henrik Andersen, his assistant, and a machine, we have finally moved the creatures Big John left us out of his garage and into the West Plaza Garden (formerly called the Floral Garden) at the intersection of 46th Street, Jarboe, and Roanoke Parkway.

Ed O'Donnell, our chief garden volunteer, says there are too many creatures, so we are working on moving one to the former ArtSpace concrete pad in Westwood Park.

Two smaller ones will be raffled off at the July 15 meeting. If you would like to be in the drawings, please be sure your membership is renewed for 2025 or join if you haven't, and let us know that you would like one for your yard by emailing wpnageneral@gmail.com. The condition is it must stay in West Plaza, so if you move, it stays!

A neighbor wrote the accompanying story about Big John and his creatures for her Master's thesis. Be sure to save the story so you can share the history of your piece with future West Plaza residents.

The West Plaza Welder

by Anna Toms (2011)

On any given day, a man in the West Plaza neighborhood of Kansas City, Mo. is apt to find curious onlookers stopped outside of his home. At 6-feet-10-inches tall, he designed his Cyprussided house to accommodate the needs of his large frame, and he built it himself in only two years after tearing down the condemned structure previously on the lot. The home is surrounded by gardens, growing thick with bamboo that stands over 10 feet high. "I like bamboo because you just can't kill it," says the nearly 70year-old man. But the custom-built home and the bamboo gardens, out of place in the Midwest, are not what attracts visitors. For twenty years, this welder has salvaged iron, steel, brass and other metal scraps: nuts, bolts, washers, gears, pipes, and rebar. A mine cart, heavy chains, wagon wheels, springs, wrenches and other tools decorate the walls and gardens that surround the home. The house is flanked by a silver tower of seven fire hydrants stacked end-to-end and reaching to the second story. Next to the tower, a star, welded out of washers laid side by side, hangs from a giant hook outside of wooden doors that enclose his workshop.

Although the collection itself is impressive, the sculptures this man designs and welds out of the materials are the highlight. "Some of the stuff out here is my first stuff," says the man, referring to bolts and washers welded into rusty, unidentifiable creations that protrude from a front wall. As he created more and more, his work began to catch the eye of passersby, and people started requesting his "flowers." From there, he began

designing animals and insects. Throughout the West Plaza Neighborhood, metal spiders, turtles, and even armadillos peek from gardens and backyards. "I don't consider it to be art. It's different. I like to be different. I like to make creative things," says the welder. "I like to make things that will last. Most of my things will last 50 to 100 years." He does not sell any of his creations to residents of the neighborhood. "I make them, and people take what I have," says the welder.

The welder's workshop takes up the entire basement level of his home. It is filled from floor to ceiling with tools and supplies. Bolts of different lengths are carefully organized in labeled bins, and tools hang from hooks on the walls. Having spent 38 years as a salesman for Contractors Supply in Kansas City and now as a salesman for Airgas, this welder has connections in the construction business from whom he buys the leftover metal materials that later become his creatures. "When I go out and get bolts, the guy might say, they're rusty," says the welder. "Well, that's what I want." He also visits salvage yards to collect metal. Although some of his work is painted silver, he lets other pieces rust naturally. Many of the works are a combination of both iron and steel, so some individual bolts or nuts might rust, while other pieces keep their clean, metal finish. A completed sculpture can weigh anywhere from 50 to 300 pounds.

The welder's most recent inspiration came while watching *The Wizard of Oz*: the Tin Man. These heads bobble on giant springs and stand around three to four feet high. Many have slanted, menacing eyes and mouths, but others grin like jovial jack-o-lanterns. "You can do more creative

(continued on p. 7)

The West Plaza Welder (continued from p. 6)

things with [the tin man] than you can with the others," explains the welder. Five tin men stand outside his garage door, each very different from its neighbor; some wear hats, while others don't; some look happy and others threatening. "I have an idea, wake up in the middle of the night, sketch it out, and go back to sleep" says the welder. A few days later when he finds the sketch, he plans out just how he can make his idea come to life from the pieces in his metal stockpile.

West Plaza residents are not the only ones who stop to admire this welder's work. News of his unique home and his art has spread throughout the country. His creatures have traveled as far as New York, Aspen, Colo., St. Louis and Rolla, Mo., Chicago, Cleveland and Lisbon, Ohio and even Russia and Saudi Arabia, but the welder responsible prefers to remain anonymous. He wants people to stumble upon his house by chance or hear about it by word of mouth. "Roadside Revelations wanted to do something, but I just said no," he says of KCPT's Rare Visions and Roadside Revelations. "I came out of the house, and they were filming. I took his camera and took the film out." In 2006 or 2007, he also chased a local reporter off his property who hadn't asked permission to explore or take pictures. "If you want to film, and you don't give my location then okay," says the welder. "But you have to ask permission."

Not only has he refused to be featured on television shows, but this man, who doesn't call himself an artist, also refuses to display his work in galleries or take part in art fairs. "I'm not here to sell stuff," says the welder. "It's a good hobby. It's not real expensive. You make people happy."

This man is happiest spending his free time welding in the basement of his home. Bringing a smile to the faces of the people who just happen upon his unusual sculptures and workspace is an added bonus. "It keeps me out of saloons and away from wild women," he says. ■



A New Chapter for West Plaza: A Story of Transformation

by Maria Moore, Board Member

Big changes are taking shape around our beloved West Plaza neighborhood, promising a future full of new opportunities and renewed community spirit. To the east of us, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art is embarking on a transformative \$170 million expansion, adding a two-tiered glass addition with a green roof that invites all of us to connect with art and each other. From a rooftop observation deck and amphitheater to new restaurants and performance spaces, the project is poised to turn the museum into an even more vibrant hub of culture and creativity.

Meanwhile, the Country Club Plaza is undergoing a long-awaited revitalization that focuses on local businesses and pedestrian-friendly design. Plans include wider sidewalks, pedestrian zones, new Spanish-inspired architecture, and a threestory dining complex at 47th and Pennsylvania. With 30% of retail spaces currently vacant, the new ownership group is working with city officials to attract local shops and restaurants, enhance security, and restore the Plaza's historic charm.

Tying it all together is the KC Streetcar Main Street Extension, a 3.5-mile expansion set to connect Union Station to UMKC and fully operational by fall 2025. Running through Midtown, Westport, the Art Museum District, and the Plaza, the streetcar promises to boost local businesses and make it easier for residents to enjoy everything our neighborhood has to offer. Together, these projects are weaving a dynamic new tapestry for West Plaza—one that celebrates art, culture, and local flavor while preserving the character and charm we all love.





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West Plaza Home of the Month

The March, April, and May Home of the Month winners are displayed on our website, westplaza.org. June's winner will also be awarded by time this newsletter is published.

The themes for the rest of the year are:

July – Best Dressed for the 4th August – Summer Beauty September – Fall Fresh October – Best Dressed for Halloween November – Ready for Winter December – Home for the Holidays

> West Plaza Home of the Month is sponsored by Veronica Jaster & Zachary Kelly of ReeceNichols Plaza Office



Conveniently located on the Country Club Plaza

Martha Childers Licensed Professional Counselor

www.ChildersCounselingService.com Martha@ChildersCounselingService.com 816-892-0803

Stay in Touch with WPNA

Website: www.westplaza.org

Email: wpnageneral@gmail.com

O Instagram: west_plaza_kcmo

YouTube: WPNA KCMO

Facebook:

@West Plaza Neighborhood
Association-Discussion Group

@West Plaza Watch
@West Plaza Buy/Sell/Trade

U.S. Mail: P. O. Box 32826 Kansas City, MO 64171-7826

Join Your Neighbors in the WPNA!

Join the WPNA online via our website, www.westplaza.org, or if you would like to mail in a check, fill out this form and mail it with payment to P O Box 32826, KCMO 64171-7826. Membership runs January through December each year and is prorated after July.

Household (\$15): New [] OR Renewal []	Business (\$25): New [] OR Renewal []
Member Name/s:	Business Name:
	Contact Name:
Kids:	West Plaza Address:
Pets:	Mailing Address:
	Zip
Zip: Phone:	Phone:
Email/s:	Email/s:
	Website:
TOTAL ENCLOSED: Dues + Dona	ation = \$

Volunteer Area(s) of Interest (use numbered list below):

- 1. Block Parties
- 2. Codes & Zoning
- 3. Kids Club Moms & Dads Club
- 4. Meeting Refreshments
- Membership Activities Events Happy Hours 13. Senior Outreach
- Membership Initiatives Survey

- 8. Neighborhood Cleanup
- 9. Neighborhood Improvement Projects
- 10. Neighborhood Watch
- 11. Newsletter Distribution
- 12. Pet Group
- 14. Yard Sales
- WPNA is a 501c3 organization. Donations over and above membership dues are tax deductible. via email. July-August 2025

New/Renewed Business Members 2025

Support the businesses that support our neighborhood! A complete listing of business members is at westplaza.org

AKC Yoga 816-769-7469 akcyoga.com

Bolveri Realty

1819 Wyandotte, Ste 200

816-994-7820

www.BoveriRealty.com

Kamba Fit

1409 Westport Road

913-269-4257 kambafit.com

Kyle Myrick Massage

West Plaza 617-953-8635

kylemyrickmassage.com

Liam Porter State Farm Insurance

816-753-4334

https://www.sfplazaagent.com/

Mike Kelly's Westsider 1515 Westport Road

816-931-9417

www.mikekellyswestsider.com

Vintner

4711 Rainbow Blvd 913-730-7169 wintnerkc.com

Yarn Social

1707 West 45th Street

816-867-0522 yarnsocialkc.com