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SPRING 2020

Photo by: Annick Sjobakken

WATERBURY NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

From the Waterbury Neighborhood Association



So many creative ways to keep building community have popped up around Waterbury and around the world this month as people figure out how to show solidarity and stay connected, even when apart. Please join in posting any of the following, and let us know over email or social media as you learn of more.

Going on a Bear Hunt

Place a teddy bear in a front window for kids of all ages to find on “bear hunt” walks. This activity is inspired by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury’s classic children’s book, which reminds a family, “we’ve got to go through it.”

Rainbow Connections

Inspired by children in Italy, kids all over the country have been painting rainbows to hang in their windows as a sign of hope in dark times, and a reminder that there will be light after the storm. Search “Rainbow Connection Map” on Google Maps to see tags all over the US. Italian children started the hashtag #tuttoandràbene, or “Everything’s Going to Be All Right.”

Chalk Your Walk

It’s been a rainy spring so far in Iowa, but people around the US are creating neighborhood museums to spread cheer, stay active, and create art. Grab your chalk and leave a message on a sunny day!

DMPL Virtual Storytimes

Visit Des Moines Public Library on Facebook for live-streaming storytimes, and dmpl.org for ongoing access to free digital resources including magazines, streaming movies, and eBooks.

Support for Families During School Closure

DMPS will offer meals to children 18 years and under from 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM weekdays at all middle school locations until the closure ends. The grab-and-go style meals will include a lunch and a breakfast for the next day. Additional food items will be available to students on Fridays, to take home for the weekend. Merrill Middle School is located at 5301 Grand Avenue. There is also a “Little Free Pantry” with neighborhood donations at Merrill.

DMPS has several resources available for families to support talking to children about COVID-19, available at <https://www.dmschools.org/coronavirus/family-support-district-closure/talking-children-covid-19/>

Help Maps on Nextdoor

Let neighbors know if you need help, or if you can offer help, for essential needs like picking up groceries by checking a Help Map on Nextdoor.com. Guidelines are changing daily, so check with local guidelines via the Iowa Department of Public Health, the CDC, and WHO for recommended practices.

Connecting Over COVID-19

I'm not sure what the new normal will be when you are reading this, but as I write this note we are all hunkered down at home with school cancelled and most everyone working from home.

Life has come to a standstill. My college sophomore's study-abroad semester in Europe abruptly ended and my Roosevelt senior will miss graduation and other special events long in the works. But there is also something lovely happening, in spite of it all.

We are slowing down. We are seeing how much health matters above everything else. And we are relying on each other a little more. We are texting friends to see if they need us to pick something up at the store and donating food to those less fortunate. I saw a man put a stack of leaf bags on a neighbor's porch with a cold beer on top. We are being good neighbors.

Fred Rogers, the country's most famous good neighbor, said that a lasting neighborly spirit requires making a habit out of kindness. You all are being very kind. On the Nextdoor community website (Nextdoor.com) one Waterbury resident needed hand sanitizer. More than 20 people replied with recipes on how to make his own or offers to drop off an extra bottle or two. Another Waterbury resident offered to help run errands for others.

Just a few days ago, Nextdoor added an interactive Help Map to help bring resources to neighbors at risk of leaving home and contacting coronavirus. It's on the Waterbury neighborhood page on the left side under "Neighborhood." If you can help a neighbor with an errand or some every-day activity, stick your neck out. Offer to get involved. Virus or no virus. We are all in this together.

What would Mr. Rogers do?

Martha



**Martha
Miller-Johnson
President**

Thank you to Waterbury photographer Annick Sjobakken for our cover portrait.

See more of Annick's work at

<http://www.annicksjobakken.com/>





2019 Luminaries

Thanks to all of the neighbors, block captains, and committee chairs who helped to organize Waterbury's Christmas Eve Luminaries. Hundreds of households participated and lit thousands of candles. As they have for several decades, luminaries flickered across our neighborhood. Cars, walkers, and bikers wound through the streets, as the lights created a festive path to celebrations and gatherings, reminding us of warmth and light in the dark of winter.

See our fall newsletter for more information about ordering luminaries for 2020.

Save the Dates

- Spring Garden Clean-Up Day- Date TBD, please check Facebook
- Garden planting day – Date TBD
- Drake Relays – Postponed, please check for updates at <https://www.drakeroadtraces.org/>
- April 18th: Neighborhood SCRUB Day (not postponed at time of printing, please check city website)
- June 11th: We are hopeful that Free Flicks will be hosted by WNA at the Art Center's Rose Garden at dusk. Check WNA's social media for details and our film selection!
- August 4th: National Night Out
- Oktoberfest this fall, Date TBD

2020 Board Meeting Dates

Please email or contact us on social media or if you would like to attend! All meetings are from 6-7 pm

- April 23
- May 21
- June 18
- July 16
- August 20
- September 17
- October 15
- November 19
- No meeting in December

2020 WNA Annual Meeting Report

WNA's annual meeting was held on Thursday, January 30th at the residence of Board president Martha Miller-Johnson. Neighbors who attended noshed on snacks and wine provided by the board. The agenda commenced with Miller-Johnson's welcome to attendees and an introduction of board members. Board member Tom McBride discussed the Association's plans to apply for a Prairie Meadows grant to fund a beautification project on Polk Boulevard.

Jennifer Fletcher, a representative from Des Moines Parks and Rec, presented on an array of initiatives that Parks and Rec are planning for 2020. Carlie Hamilton and Diane Graham from our neighboring Ingersoll Park Neighborhood Association presented their association's concern about Airbnb properties within their neighborhood. Hamilton and Graham informed attendees of upcoming Des Moines Planning & Zoning meetings concerning the topic.

City council members Connie Boesen and Josh Mandelbaum attended the meeting and mainly addressed members questions from the floor including Airbnb properties, vacant properties along Ingersoll, and other topics of interest to the group.

The evening included plenty of good conversation and resulted in many acquaintances being struck up. Many thanks to our gracious presenters who took time out of their busy schedules to make the evening informative as well as enjoyable.



Coyote Pups

Two coyote pups were spotted in the woods alongside Walnut Creek this winter! According to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, coyotes have lived in Iowa and throughout North America for millions of years, and are our most common large predator. Pups are often born in late winter, and stay with their parents through the following summer. Many thanks to Kim Ostwinkle for sharing photos of pups this winter. Kim mentioned that her family hears them often, but they are harder to spot when the snow melts. For more about coyotes in Iowa, see the Iowa DNR's 2015 post, "6 Cool Things You Should Know About Coyotes."

"Such Singing in the Wild Branches" by Mary Oliver (2003)

It was spring
and finally I heard him
among the first leaves—
then I saw him clutching the limb

in an island of shade
with his red-brown feathers
all trim and neat for the new year.
First, I stood still

and thought of nothing.
Then I began to listen.
Then I was filled with gladness—
and that's when it happened,

when I seemed to float,
to be, myself, a wing or a tree—
and I began to understand
what the bird was saying,

and the sands in the glass
stopped
for a pure white moment
while gravity sprinkled upward

like rain, rising,
and in fact
it became difficult to tell just what it was that was singing—
it was the thrush for sure, but it seemed

not a single thrush, but himself, and all his brothers,
and also the trees around them,
as well as the gliding, long-tailed clouds
in the perfectly blue sky— all, all of them



were singing.
And, of course, yes, so it seemed,
so was I.
Such soft and solemn and perfect music doesn't last

for more than a few moments.
It's one of those magical places wise people
like to talk about.
One of the things they say about it, that is true,

is that, once you've been there,
you're there forever.
Listen, everyone has a chance.
Is it spring, is it morning?

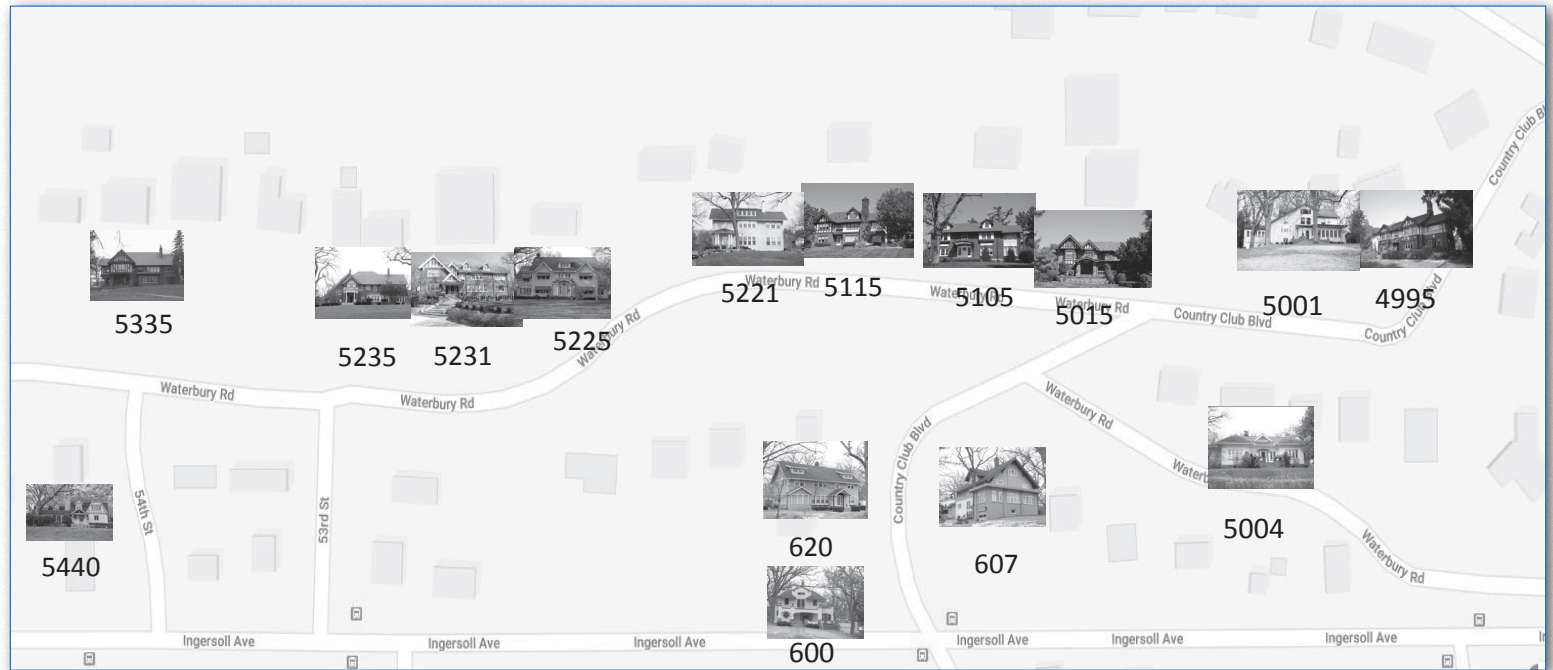
Are there trees near you,
and does your own soul need comforting?
Quick, then— open the door and fly on your heavy feet;
the song may already be drifting away.

— Owls and Other Fantasies: Poems and Essays,
Beacon Press, Boston, 2003, pp. 8-9

With thanks to neighbor Julie Powell-Mohr for this suggestion.

FROM THE PAST

In our Fall 2019 issue, “From the Past” described how Frank and Eugene Waterbury began planning Oak Lawn Place neighborhood, now part of Waterbury, in 1907. By 1918, 21 houses had been build as part of the Oak Lawn Place development, with the residences described as “the most beautiful and expensive homes in the city.” This map shows some of these homes – we hope you enjoy finding them on your walks. Homes in Oak Lawn Place were sited around existing mature oak trees, so many of the trees you see now would have been there in 1918, too.



1918 Oak Lawn Place Selected Residents

- 600 - John M. Jamieson was the state binder and Deputy Secretary of State. Owned John Jamieson Bindery.
- 607 - F.C. Waterbury was president of the Waterbury Chemical Company. He and his brother, Eugene, were the developers of Oak Lawn Place.
- 620 - Russell Pratt was president of the family business Pratt Paper Company. Upon his death in 1950 his wife, Ruth, operated the business until her death in 1961. She resided at the Country Club home until her death.
- 5004 - Paul Lessing was president of Lessing Advertising that he founded in 1907. Currently the firm is known as Lessing-Flynn Advertising.
- 4995 - B.S. Henry president of the Schmitt & Henry Manufacturing Company. The company provided comfortable home furnishings.
- 5001 - Frank M. Carrell executive with the Elaterite Paint Company. He also served as private secretary to former Governor Horace Boies.
- 5015 - Cheney Prouty who was president of Prouty-Bowler Soap Company. His family were early Des Moines settlers that ran a wholesale grocery business.
- 5105 & 5231 - Charles Weitz and Edward Weitz of Charles Weitz and Sons Contractors. Their company were the contractors for the Equitable Building.
- 5115 - E.F. Consigny owned grain elevators and was in the auto business with Governor Clyde Herring. He later moved to Los Angeles and killed himself while on trial for grand theft in a bond and loan scheme.
- 5221 - Charles Dau was vice president of Carpenter Paper and was known as a Des Moines civic leader.
- 5225 - Ralph Rollins member of the Rollins Hosiery Mill family. In 1925 he constructed the Rollins Mansion on Fleur Drive. The Rollins family were early Des Moines pioneers arriving in 1857.
- 5235 - George W. Seick president of Seick Tent and Awning Company. He lived at this house until his death in 1965.
- 5335 - Sam M. Shloss president of Lederer and Strauss Company. They were wholesalers of women's hats. His wife Gertrude was founder, charter member, and past president of the Des Moines Civic Music Association.
- 5440 - E.J. Donahoe president of Donahoe Investment Company. They were a business realty broker.



2020 Membership & Volunteer Form

Waterbury Neighborhood Association

Online Option: Join or renew at www.WaterburyNeighbors.org

Personal Information

First Name:	Last Name:	
First Name:	Last Name:	
Address:		
City:	State:	ZIP:
Email:		
Home Phone:	Cell Phone:	

Please Select

- ☐ \$30 Family/Household Membership
- ☐ \$25 Single/Senior Family Membership
- ☐ \$250 Sustaining Membership (10 years)
- ☐ \$500 Lifetime Membership
- ☐ \$20 Non-Resident Membership
- ☐ Gift to the Foundation* of \$_____

Please send checks to:

Waterbury Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 12054
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

Please make membership checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Association. Membership is voluntary and follows the calendar year.

*Foundation gifts are tax deductible; please make these checks payable to the Waterbury Neighborhood Foundation.

Volunteer Opportunities

I am also interested in the following (please check all that apply):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> One-time Project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardens | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors (it's easy!) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luminaries | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |





Waterbury Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 12054
Des Moines, IA 50312

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Are You New to Waterbury?

If you are new to our lovely neighborhood, we wish you a hearty welcome! If you are looking to get involved in the neighborhood, we always have a need for the following volunteers:

- Advertising
- Assisting at Events
- Fund Raising
- Gardening
- Special Projects
- Web Content Generator
- Welcome Committee



If any of these options sound interesting, please send us a note at news@waterburyneighbors.org

**Please be sure to check
Waterbury's Facebook and
other social media for
volunteering updates
this spring!**

**Be well, stay safe,
and we hope to
see you soon!**



Waterbury Neighborhood

waterburyneighbors.org



@WaterburyDSM