



# Browncroft Crier

NEWSLETTER OF THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SINCE 1973 - Volume # 189

P.O. Box 10127, Rochester, New York 14610

Fall 2016

<http://browncroftna.org>

## **BNA Executive Committee**

### **Officers:**

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Linda Siple

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### **District Reps**

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Corwin

Holly Petsos

Croydon

David D. Kaiser

### **BNA Voicemail:**

270-0890

### **Be On Your Way With**

**BNA:** 733-4386

### **Inside This Issue**

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## **Fall General Meeting**

**October 26th, 2016**

**7:00 to 8:30 p.m.**

**at**

**Christ The Good Shepherd  
Lutheran Church**

**1000 North Winton Road.**

**Feature presentation by  
Broccolo Tree and Lawn Care, Inc.  
on Fall gardening and putting our gardens to  
bed for the winter season.**

**Neighborhood Updates**

**Refreshments**



## **BNA FALL MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

It is time for our annual BNA Membership Drive. Your returned membership form and \$10 donation is a strong sign of support to BNA's 17 Street Representatives, 4 Officers, and 8 Committee Chairs who serve on the BNA Board of Directors. The Board advocates for the goals and objectives of the Browncroft Neighborhood Association on behalf of the

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## Membership Drive

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672 residential households of the Browncroft neighborhood.

Please fill out and mail the Household Membership Application envelope provided with this CRIER newsletter.

The Household Membership level entitles everyone in the residence to be a voting member of BNA and also entitles them to any member benefits offered during the year.

In addition to your phone number, BNA would also appreciate having your email address and your household demographics. There is space provided for both with the additional option to sign up for our subscriber BNA-Announce emailing list. A great way to stay connected with BNA between newsletters and meetings.

The annual dues of \$10 per household go directly to supporting the activities of the BNA such as: publishing this newsletter (our largest expense); maintaining the Rose Garden at Browncroft Blvd. and Merchants Rd.; printing flyer notices; holding general meetings; and hosting our Winter Gathering Party and the BNA Family Summer Picnic.

Dues, unfortunately as with many organizations, only cover the basics and do not cover everything BNA wants or is asked to do. As you submit your dues, please take the time to consider any additional financial support that you can make to help us further our neighborhood work.

Thank you to all of our members!! Now is the time to renew or join and keep the traditions alive.

BNA Board of Directors

## RODENTS IN THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD

I recently spoke to a representative from the Monroe County Department of Public Health about rodent issues, in general, in City neighborhoods. The conversation was very enlightening. Below is a summation.

There are rats living in our neighborhood – just like we have squirrels, chipmunks, mice, raccoons, opossums, etc. It is difficult for us to accept this reality because we equate rats with diseases and unsanitary conditions. What makes this fact even more difficult to accept is that we rarely see them. Rats are nocturnal and avoid open spaces by moving along fences, buildings or under ground cover. But rats are in the general Browncroft neighborhood and will continue living in our neighborhood.

The presences of rats become a problem when their population dramatically increases due the availability of food. Rats live and thrive where there is an ample food supply. The only way to control their numbers is to exterminate and remove the food source.

Effective extermination can involve hiring a professional or putting out rat bait or snap-traps. Rats are highly intelligent animals and they learn very quickly. The best way to use a snap-trap is to continue to bait the trap but not set it for 1-2 weeks. Then bait and set the trap once the rats recognize it as a source of food.

Removing the food supply can involve several different approaches.

1. If squirrels have chewed a hole in your garbage totter, have

the totter replaced by calling 311.

2. Bird seed, corn and/or peanuts will attract any animal including birds, chipmunks, squirrels, and mice. However, rats love bird seed, too. It is an excellent source of protein. In fact, rat bait is often a solid brick of bird seed laced with poison. This is a very difficult issue to accept because we greatly enjoy watching birds come to our feeders and seeing chipmunks fill their cheeks. In addition, a serious problem occurs when neighbors “bulk feed”. That is spreading large quantities of bird seed in a yard area. This practice WILL attract rats and other larger animals such as fox, raccoons, opossum, deer and /or coyotes either looking to feed on the seed or feed on the animals eating the seed.

3. One other important note about bird seed: If it is found that birdseed or other feed is contributing to an increase in wild animal activity, it is a violation of Monroe County’s sanitary code.

4. Leaving out cat food for outdoor cats or stays attracts rats as well as other undesirable animals e.g. raccoons, coyotes, etc. Simply moving the food to a higher location just means the rat will climb up to get at it. A better approach would be to place the food out at the same time each day. Very quickly the cat will be conditioned to come for the food. Once the cat has eaten, remove the food dish.

5. Compost piles must be contained in a plastic barrel with a screw-on or latched lid; open compost piles are a health code violation

The presence of rats is difficult

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# TREES AND THE URBAN STREETSCAPE

After a summer season of over twenty five days of 90+ degrees, if anyone doubted the value of shade trees before, they would not underestimate them now. The importance of trees in the urban environment for shade and decoration has been understood by planners, municipal authorities, developers, real estate agents, and urban dwellers. Yet sadly many towns and villages do not have forestry departments that plant and maintain trees, to ensure an esthetic public streetscape that picturesquely frames the homes. Fortunately, our city forefathers through the auspices of the City Parks Commission recognized in 1894 the need to maintain existing street trees planted by homeowners and developers; and by 1899 the commission expanded its work to include planting trees<sup>1</sup>. Today, this responsibility falls upon the Forestry Division of the Department of Engineering.

In 1914 the Browncroft Realty Corporation, born out of the Brown Brothers nurseries, planned and developed all aspects of their new upscale subdivision. They planted a professionally landscaped public



Dorchester Magnolias looking east

realm to ensure that it would be graced with a dense green canopy of shade trees and an understory of flowering magnolia, dogwood trees and shrubs. This public realm consisted of the street, curb,

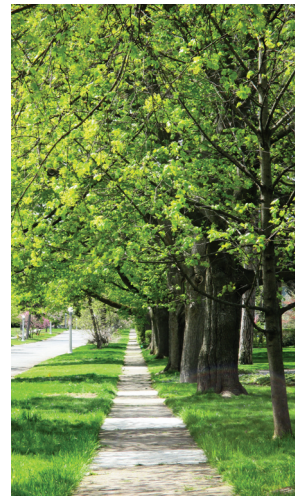
tree lawn, sidewalk, and 3-5 foot planted strip along the sidewalk on the private property side. The Browncroft Subdivision promotional brochure of c.1914 states "...as all grading, planting and landscaping has been done by the Browncroft Realty Corporation, a much finer effect has been obtained than one usually gets, each house seeming to 'belong' and being beautifully placed in a big park."

As a lifelong resident of Browncroft, this writer has experienced this park-like residential piece of heaven at its full florescence and beauty, and always appreciated being sheltered from the hot summer sun by the line of shade trees whose dense canopy also afforded protection from rain long enough to get home without getting too wet. Such was the legacy of a neighborhood born out of the vision of Charles Brown, a nurseryman and civic leader of his day.

Emulating Browncroft, when the Sheil family subdivided its farmland located north of Merchants Road, they named it Elmcroft, and specified that an elm tree should be planted in front of each house.

A century has passed and old age, Dutch elm disease, gypsy moths, ice storms and human destruction have depleted the Browncroft and Elmcroft canopies. The city Forestry Department replanted Elmcroft in the 1960s, and

Dorchester Road\* in the 1970s replacing the lost elm trees with a diversity of tree varieties in order to avoid in the future the loss of entire



Corwin Rd looking west from Newcastle - still good

streetscapes to one plague. But the unique Browncroft landscape, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004, requires the devotion of the private property owners within the subdivision to ensure that the park-like vision of Charles Brown

remains true. This is because the line of shade trees is on the private property side of the sidewalk, and not in the jurisdiction of the city.

In the past few years, the shade canopy over the sidewalks of some of the streets in the



Dorchester looking west (treed but lacking shade)

Browncroft neighborhood, most notably Corwin, Windemere and parts of Newcastle roads, has dwindled to less than 50%. A stroll in the public right-of-way on Dorchester Road is equally lacking in shade even though the newer shade trees that were generously planted on the tree lawns by the City of Rochester in the 1970s are mature now. This is due to the city having in recent years zealously over pruned away the lower

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# Trees

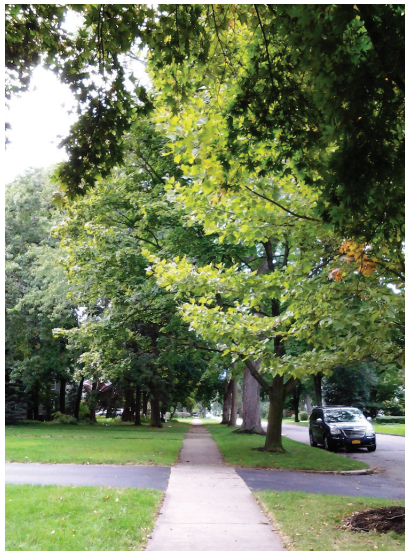
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branches, leaving the canopies of the trees so high above the sidewalk that there is no cooling shade value at the height of summer.

What can Browncroftonians do to preserve a gracious streetscape? There are two choices:

1. Do nothing, and as the large, 100 year old maples die one by one wait for the city to replant a city tree on the tree lawn (if there is no Browncroft magnolia tree taking up that space). The disadvantage of this is the obliteration of the historic landscape that makes Browncroft different from any other neighborhood in the City of Rochester, and nullifies the historic significance that qualified it for National Register status. This option could take more time to re-establish the neighborhood canopy. However, it costs less for homeowners.

2. Replace the lost shade trees as they expire, where space is opened up in the line, by planting a new tree within 6 feet of the sidewalk of a variety that has the same visual qualities of the Norway maples, but that is indigenous such



as sugar maple, tulip trees, oak or linden. The Browncroft shade trees were spaced 30 feet apart. Any open areas lacking a tree within 30 feet of one of the large maples indicates a lost tree that needs to be replaced. (See diagram of Browncroft landscape layout and rational below.)

Plant a magnolia tree on an empty tree lawn, or a cluster of ornamental shrubs such as viburnum, spirea, or lilac. Clusters usually consisted of 3 to 5 bushes planted close together in a bedding fashion. It should be noted that straight lines of shrubs are inappropriate; as are



Windemere Rd.,  
Left -looking west from house #259 to Newcastle Rd.

Right - looking west from Fairhaven Road in Brighton toward #259. City/ Brighton boundary marks end of tree plantings, as Browncroft Realty Corp. went bankrupt and had not planted.

singular herbaceous plants such as ornamental grasses, roses or peonies dotted in the grass.

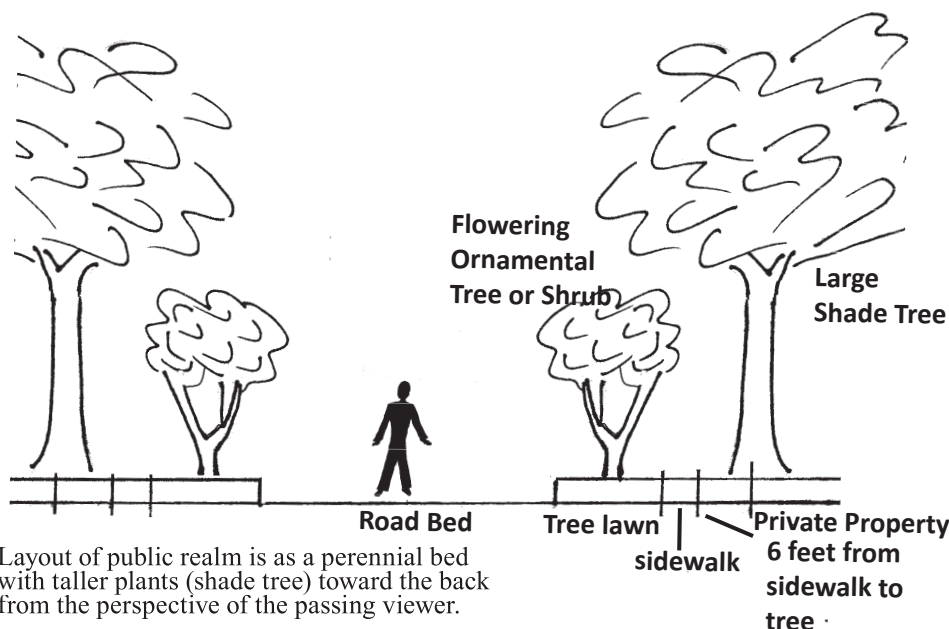
Many community minded property owners have already invested in the preservation of the Browncroft landscape in these ways. As these young trees mature they will provide beauty and shade again for the benefit of the entire neighborhood community.

By replacing the aging-out Browncroft trees as they come down, the neighborhood's historic park-like landscape will be perpetuated into the future, and a gracious streetscape of trees and ornamentals will continue to delight walkers and visitors.

*\*Dorchester Road was originally landscaped with elm trees inside the sidewalk. When they were taken by Dutch elm disease the city replanted on the city tree lawns, which is why one sees today the Browncroft magnolias and spruces along with city large street trees all on the tree lawn strip along the curb.*

*Browncroft Boulevard was also uniquely planted by Brown Brothers in that there were alternating sycamores and elms on the tree lawns.*

<sup>1</sup> "How Rochester Became a City in the Forest" City of Rochester web site <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589936651>



## “BE ON YOUR WAY” DRIVERS NEEDED

Want to be a good neighbor? Join a cadre of wonderful drivers who volunteer to drive Browncroft residents to medical appointments and necessary errands in Monroe County. Most rides are in the city or in nearby towns.

Drivers commit to take riders to appointments Monday through Friday between 9:00 a. m. 4:00 p.m.

To begin, just call Sr. Anne Guerin at Lifespan, 244-8400x142 or e-mail her at [aguerin@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:aguerin@lifespan-roch.org)

She will get you vetted and enrolled in a three hour training class for best practices in transporting a variety of riders

If there are other questions you would like answered before you call Sr. Ann feel free to call Ann D. Weintraub, Dispatcher, at 482-8662.

Ann D. Weintraub

## RATS

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to determine since they live in burrows in the ground. However, a rat borrow differs from that of other underground dwelling animals. A rat hole is about the size of a tennis ball; a chipmunk's hole is ping-pong ball size. A rat's hole has a pile of dirt outside similar to a groundhog's hole; ground squirrels and chipmunks have flush holes with no outside dirt.

A sad reality is that rats will always live in the Browncroft neighborhood. They cannot be totally eliminated but their numbers can be controlled by using common sense and following the above suggestions.

Linda Siple

## BOOKS FOR SCHOOL 46



We are pleased to report that during the course of the summer BNA collected over 80 books which were distributed to the kindergarten students at #46 School. Thank you to everyone who participated with generous contributions of books and financial support. We had a wonderful assortment of books appropriate for kindergarten students. Each student received a paperback and hard-cover book which were wrapped together and included a note which read: “Welcome to No 46 School - Celebrate the Joy of Reading. We hope you enjoy this gift from the neighbors of No 46 School.” We have requested feedback from Mrs. Perkins, the kindergarten teacher, so that we can determine whether this should become an annual project.

BNA received the following thank you note from the principal:

*“Thank you! Thank You! On behalf of Charles Carroll School #46, we would like to thank the Browncroft Neighborhood Association for their generous gift of books. Each Kindergarten child received a hard cover and a soft cover book to take home as a welcome gift. Each gift was beautifully wrapped and included a lovely letter welcoming them to the neighborhood. We thank you so much for such a warm welcome and helping to encourage the joy of reading.”*

*Principal T'Hani Pantoja*

Ann Kanthor  
Project Coordinator

## STREET CURBS

This is an update on the “curb” question presented to the City of Rochester Engineering Dept. subsequent to the issue having been raised by a BNA Board member.

The city has recently done an extensive investigation of all of the streets and curbs throughout the city limits. Using a laser, measurements have been taken that show the height of all the existing curbs in relationship to the road surfaces.

This information is currently being added to a master program. At the point that all the data is input to the program there will be priorities assigned for curb replacement.

The purpose of the curbs is not to protect the sidewalks or adjacent tree lines. It is in fact to hold the road bed in place. Hence, when a curb is replaced some of the road bed must be removed to give access to the footing of the curbs.

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## THE COFFEE CONNECTION\* AT THE GREENHOUSE CAFE

The Greenhouse Café, at 2271 East Main Street, is operated in the historic former Phelps Florist building and greenhouses. The adaptive reuse of a neighborhood landmark from a business of yesteryear to a cafe has been an opportunity for many long time residents to continue to visit the nostalgic buildings; and for newer residents to experience them by stopping in for great coffee, desserts, or light lunches of quiche and home-made soup, paninis, salads, and more.

It has also provided an opportunity to empower women in recovery from drug addiction, trauma, and homelessness, by providing important skills for employment and education while supporting long term sustainable recovery. According to Joy Bergfalk, the program director, "Our newest goal is job creation which benefits both our women and the local economy. We provide high quality coffee freshly roasted on site, available by the cup, whole or ground by the pound, and in larger quantities at wholesale prices."

Another mission is more global. They are a fair trade business that supports organically grown, sustainably farmed coffee. This enables farmers around the world to grow COFFEE instead of drug crops! Fair prices ensure education and health care for coffee farmers' children and protect the environment as well!

\*The Coffee Connection is a partnership with Project Empower  
Cassy Petsos

### Calendar of Events

**Oct - Dec. 20 - Membership Drive**

**Oct. 19, Wed. - Board Meeting,**  
Faith on Fire Church 7:00-8:30

**Oct. 22, Sat. - Fall Clean-up in**  
Rose Garden 10 - 2 pm

**Oct. 26, Wed. - General Membership Meeting,** Church of  
the Good Shepherd 7:00-8:30

**Nov. 16, Wed. - Executive Committee Meeting,** Faith on Fire  
Church 7:00-8:30

**Dec. 21, Wed. - Board Meeting,**  
Faith on Fire Church 7:00-8:30

**Jan. 20, Fri. - 2017 Winter Gathering at Glendoveers**

**May 6 & 7, 2017 BNA Garage Sale.**

### Fall Clean Up in the Browncroft Rose Garden

**Saturday, October 22  
9:30 A.M.  
(rain date set for  
October 29)**

Come and check out the new circle bed perennial garden while you help to prepare the rose beds for the winter.

Many volunteers are needed to quickly prune the rose bushes, weed, and rake out the beds.

Bring thick work gloves, pruners and/or loppers, rake, and wear water repellent shoes.

## ALDI PROJECT UPDATE

Blossom and Winton Roads -

As reported in the summer Crier, Supreme Court Judge Thomas Stander dismissed the case filed by Tops and Rochester Eastside Residents for Appropriate Development (RERAD). The petitioners filed a Notice of Appeal in the Appellate Division of Supreme Court, and had 60 days from the filing of their appeal on June 14th to file a brief of record. They failed to file within that time frame; however, they requested an extension, which was granted.

Information from the City of Rochester indicates that Aldi will start to demolish and break ground to build, despite the pending appeal. Asbestos removal from the houses on Winton Road must be done before demolition, and ground contamination from the former garage at the back of the site will require remediation.

Holly Petsos

### Curbs

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Browncroft has been part of the study and when the mapping program is complete we can obtain more specific information on any plans to replace curbs in our neighborhood. The replacement will be done at the expense of the City of Rochester if the program shows there is a necessity.

Jane Zimmet

