



Browncroft Crier

NEWSLETTER OF THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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P.O. Box 10127, Rochester, New York 14610
<http://browncroftna.org>

Spring 2018

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Spring



Mark Your Calendars!

Famed local author and journalist Peter Lovenheim
is the featured speaker at the



Annual BNA Membership Meeting.

On Wednesday, May 30th, Browncroft has the pleasure to welcome Peter Lovenheim, speaking to us on one of his favorite topics: neighborliness. Peter had lived on the same quiet street in Brighton for his entire life; but after news reached him of a startling murder-suicide a few houses away, he was struck by the fact that no one on his street really knew each other! And so began Peter Lovenheim's quest to get to know his neighbors – one sleepover at a time.

Yes, you read correctly: sleepover. This admittedly outrageous premise for connecting with neighbors, and Peter's ultimate discovery of why neighborhoods matter, led to his nationally acclaimed book, "In the Neighborhood: The Search for Community on an American Street, One Sleepover at a Time."

Plan to join your neighbors on

Wednesday, May 30th, 7:00pm

**Christ the Good Shephard Church,
1000 Winton Rd North**

at what will prove to be a fascinating evening, as Peter Lovenheim shares his insights and anecdotes on the real meaning of community.

See you there!

If you have Peter's book bring it along.

He will be happy to sign after the presentation.

Additional information can be found at <http://www.browncroftna.org>
or <http://peterlovenheim.com/author-bio/>

**Also, Election of Officers
Issue Updates
and
Refreshments
are on the agenda at the
Annual Meeting**



From the President...

Welcome to Spring. I was skeptical, but it has arrived and Browncroft never looks better than in the spring. Enjoy it.

Interestingly, last month residents participated in the "Comprehensive Plan Presentation" put on by the City of Rochester's Planning Department. As part of the presentation, residents provided a list of attributes for our neighborhood and then prioritized the list.

Our Browncroft neighbors like the:

Landscaping, Park Like Setting,
Trees: - 35%
Single Family Homes: - 30%
Location: - 20%
Friendliness of Neighbors:
- 15%

As again we witnessed the devastation from a windstorm that took more of our beloved trees, remember the Chinese proverb:

"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."

We need to preserve the character of our neighborhood for future generations.

For me personally, friendliness of neighbors outweighs all the other positive attributes of the Browncroft Neighborhood. Peter Lovenheim, our speaker at the May membership meeting, will have much to say about this.

We are indeed fortunate to live in such a great neighborhood. We can keep it that way- one rose, one tree, one garden, and one neighbor at a time.

The Browncroft Neighborhood Association needs some help. We need help with the delivery of the Crier. The Crier comes out four

times per year and is delivered to every home in our Browncroft Neighborhood.

Our Rose Garden needs special love several times a year. It requires weeding, pruning, and cultivating. Roses are a lot of work.

Most organizations ask for help but really want money. We don't need money...just kidding, but we really need some volunteers.

If you are interested in making a larger commitment to BNA,

we have two positions opening up this year, treasurer and secretary. Both of these positions are on the executive committee and require attendance at approximately 10 meetings per year plus associated responsibilities.

You can sign up at our annual membership meeting held on the 30th of May. If that doesn't work go to our website <http://www.browncroftna.org>

James Seitz



2018 BROWNCROFT GARDEN WALK



Browncroft is graced with lovely homes, plantings and gardens. The Brown Brothers Nursery sent flowers and fruit trees around the country in the early 1900s, stressing the beautiful landscaping.

We are celebrating this legacy with a Garden Walk on **Sunday, June 24, from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. exclusively for Browncroft residents and friends.** Begin your tour in the Rose Garden at the corner of Browncroft Blvd. and Merchants Rd.

A flyer with map will be handed out; free-will donations are welcomed. Participating homes will be marked.

We are still looking for interesting gardens to view. You can specify if you want visitors to view the front, side, porch, back yard, or all of the above. If you would welcome visitors, please tell us about

your garden and any unusual plants there. Please sign up by Friday, June 15.

In addition, the hosts are invited to a post-garden tour on Wednesday, June 27, from 6 to 8 p.m. Again, we start at the Rose Garden, and end up at a Browncroft home where light refreshments will be provided. This is just for the hosts, as they will be entertaining the other visitors on Sunday and will be too busy to tour the other gardens then.

Also, if you know of any garden that should be on the tour, please contact one of the Garden Walk committee members:

Sharon Bloemendaal, 288-6359,
jbloem@rochester.rr.com;

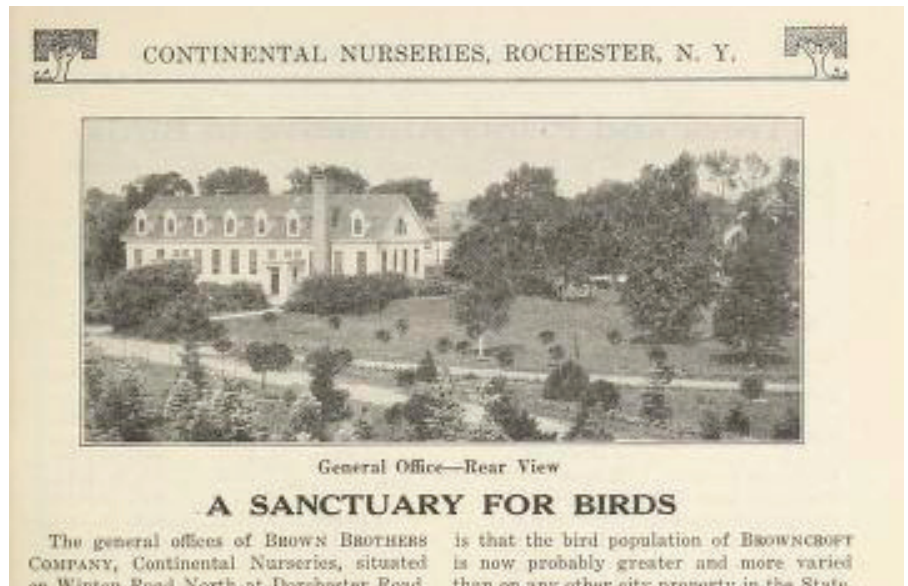
Jim Nicholson, 482-1084,
jrn1884@frontier.com;

Beth Tannous, 260-2063,
tannousbeth@yahoo.com;

Andrea Zawieski,
andrea@T65beyond.com

BROWN BROS. COMPANY Was For the Birds

Below is the text from a page of Brown Brothers Company nursery catalogue of 1925. This is more than a history snipit, as its message resonates today on many levels -- esthetic, environmental, and pest control -- all reasons we, as Browncroftonians, should perpetuate our special landscape.



Brown Brothers Company Nursery Catalogue of 1925 page 81

"The general offices of BROWN BROTHERS COMPANY, Continental Nurseries, situated on Winton Road North at Dorchester Road, Rochester, N.Y. with the adjacent residence of Mr. Charles J. Brown, are surrounded by a park of approximately eight acres in which are planted specimens of hundreds of varieties of ornamental trees, shrubs, roses, evergreens, vines and herbaceous perennials. In laying out this little park, Mr. Brown, who is a great lover of birds, has ever aimed to make it a bird sanctuary and has given special attention to the selection of plants which would be valuable in attracting birds as well as giving desirable landscape effects. To this end a shallow pond in the park has been made attractive for water fowl by the use of aquatic plants which provide food and shelter. Numerous bird houses, baths and nesting stations have been established, and the planting of food bearing shrubs has been constantly increased so that the need for grain feeding in the winter has

been practically eliminated except under unusual conditions.

Within the past nine years there has been developed on former nursery lands adjoining the park, a most interesting residential district known as BROWNCROFT, which now contains more than two hundred beautiful homes. The owners of these homes have been glad to follow the lead of Mr.

so that the need for grain feeding in the winter has been practically eliminated

Brown and to have their ornamental plantings designed in such a manner as to

include trees and shrubs attractive to birds. The result is that the bird population of BROWNCROFT is now probably greater and more varied than on any other city property in the state. It is attracting wide interest among nature lovers, and many birds, which formerly migrated, now make this their permanent home.

The house cat is "taboo" in BROWNCROFT and the section is protected by hedges of Barberry Thunbergii probably the most beautiful of all ornamental hedges

and one which not only feeds the birds in the winter months, when other food is scarce and hard to find, but also protects them from their enemies and provides natural nesting sites and shelter for many species.

A partial list of plants that will help to solve the problem of food and shelter for our wild birds is given on the following pages and further information may be had on application to BROWN BROTHERS COMPANY Continental Nurseries, Rochester, N.Y. This company will be glad at all times to assist you in laying out your grounds, large or small, in an attractive manner and at the same time to arrange the planting so as to provide for the birds and attract them to your grounds.

Orders may be entered direct for any plants named in the list (all of which are hardy) ... All stock is guaranteed to be true to name and description, free from disease or pest and of highest quality."

[See their extensive plant list for bird feeding on the BNA website, Browncroftna.org.]

RODENT ISSUE CONTINUES CITYWIDE

The city-wide rat infestation continues. Below is a reprint of the October 2016 article based on Linda Siple's summarization of her discussion with the Monroe County Department of Public Health about rodent issues, in general, in city neighborhoods:

There are rats living in our neighborhood – just like other non domestic animals such as squirrels, chipmunks, mice, raccoons, opossums, etc. We rarely see them because they are nocturnal animals that avoid open spaces. However, when the population dramatically increases in a community, as it has in Rochester in the last few years, their presence is noticeable and we become alarmed because we equate them with disease.

Rat populations dramatically increase due to the availability of food, water, shelter, and other factors such as shifting numbers due to demolition disturbance and general cyclical changes. They live and thrive where there is an ample food supply; therefore, the only way to control their numbers is to remove the food source and to exterminate.

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.

If squirrels have chewed a hole in your garbage totter, have the totter replaced by calling 311.

Bird seed, corn and/or peanuts will attract any animal including birds, chipmunks, squirrels, and mice. However, rats love bird seed, too, as well as the left over shells. 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. The worse case scenario is 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.

One other important note about bird seed: Avoid attracting rats to your feeder area by daily sweeping the seed liter that falls to the ground, because 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. 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. Additionally, brush and leaf piles are a welcome mat to rats to use as a den.

The presence of rats is difficult to determine since they live in ground burrows. However, a rat burrow differs from 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.

NOTE: An alternative to feeding birds with feeders filled with grain and seed is to plant trees, shrubs and flowers that feed the birds naturally, as outlined by Brown Brothers Company, the subdivider of our neighborhood. See the history article on page 3. This eliminates the accumulation of liter below a feeder -- a factor for attracting rats.

- • • • •
- **Movie In The Park** •
- Saturday, August 18th •
- "Movie in the Park" returns •
- to the Browncroft Rose •
- Garden at the corner of •
- Browncroft Boulevard and •
- Merchants Road upon night- •
- fall. •
- Stay tuned to see what •
- movie has been selected. •
- The summer Crier and BNA •
- Announce will post this •
- information. •
- • • • •

CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

On March 22 three members of the city's Planning Department, Kevin Kelly, Elizabeth Murphy, and Scott Thompson, came to a BNA Board meeting to discuss the city's work in developing a new comprehensive plan.

The city is redoing its comprehensive plan, which they are calling "Rochester 2034 Vision". A comprehensive plan is a tool municipalities must develop as a blueprint for land use planning and zoning code rational, as well as for allocation of resources from taxes and granting authorities such as the state and federal governments.

The city, to fulfill its responsibility to include citizen participation in the process, has been collecting data from city residents since May of 2017 via quadrant meetings last fall and an online survey that residents had been encouraged to take before May 2018. A committee of City Planning staff and "designated stakeholders" -- government staff from departments such as Economic Development, Transportation, Environmental Services, Social Services, education, Code Enforcement, Housing, and Law, as well as some not-for-profit and business development entities related to city living -- will utilize the data collected, as well as their professional expertise, to devise the plan, which will need to be accepted by the Mayor and then ratified by City Council this year, before it can be used to amend the City Zoning Code in May 2019.

The final Comprehensive Plan will be a multimedia document heavy on photos, plan drawings and maps, with some explanatory text using the ESRI platform that

the city currently uses on its property information web site, and that other cities have used for their master plans. Bergmann Associates has been hired to do the mapping. The development projects the city is currently involved with are already included on the maps.

Mr. Kelly stated that because Rochester is a city of neighborhoods, they want to focus on customizing what makes sense in given neighborhoods, to make them a showplace rather than focusing on bureaucratic codes. The emphasis will turn to form based zoning -- how a property looks, rather than how it is used. In various district types design standards would be drawn up and adhered to so as to ensure any proposed change matched its surrounding neighborhood. This sparked much discussion regarding the impact on the future of single family (Residential 1) zoning. The response was that it needs to be worked out as to whether this style of code should be used in all areas, or solely in commercial ones.

The planned changes to the current zoning code will happen in order to clean up "inconsistencies" in the terminology and the zoning map to fit the new master plan, once it is approved. These changes will apply to neighborhood wide areas, not individual properties. There will likely be a trend toward increased density, and less restriction on the uses permitted in defined districts. Also, more use of overlay districts, which can impose unique standards, and/or allow additional uses.

Historic preservation and National Register designation, or

eligibility for designation, will have a component, which makes sense if the city intends to focus on form over function, and wants to continue to foster the positive impact on stable property values realized by historic preservation designations in areas around the city, including Browncroft.

The attendees were asked what the boundaries of the neighborhood are to help the city to sort out what organizations represent whom, what defines the neighborhood identity, and what values and characteristics are most important to that neighborhood.

Then we were asked to state what we liked and wished to preserve about Browncroft, and our responses were posted on a white board. Attendees were given colored dots to place on their favorite things as a method of voting to help the city prioritize our values. Points expressed were: lack of negative change through the years

continued on page 6

City Plants two new trees in rose garden

On May 7th, a City Forestry crew planted two trees in the Browncroft Rose Garden to replace two trees lost last year.

As promised, an oak tree was planted in the center of the park where a stunted memorial beech tree had died from a girdling root problem. And a crab apple tree was replaced in the line of crab apples that defines the Merchants Road park boundary.

Thank you, City of Rochester!



Is A Good Time To ...

Enjoy the Beauty and Scents All Around. The magnolias on Corwin, Dorchester, Croydon and throughout the neighborhood, as well as the flowering dogwood, cherry trees (Don't miss them in the Gazebo Park on Merchants Road.) crab apples in the Browncroft Rose Garden, wisteria, and the fresh green flowers budding on the maple trees.

Stop and Listen to the Bird Song. It is a symphony all around, as they sing to attract mates.

Plant Trees. The value of trees on a property, in a neighborhood, in a city and on the planet cannot be overstated. They add oxygen, assist energy efficiency by cooling the temperature in summer and blocking cold in winter, reduce the carbon in the atmosphere that is negatively affecting our climate, provide habitat for birds, provide esthetic pleasure, give us privacy, and increase the value of our property by \$1000 to \$10,000 depending on their size, health and variety. And planting to replace the Browncroft historic landscape is a contribution to neighborhood preservation. This is done by planting shade trees (sugar maple, red maple, English oak, linden) within six feet of the public sidewalk to shade the public right-of-way, leaving the tree lawn between the sidewalk and curb for flowering trees (magnolia, dogwood) and shrubs in short clusters of three or five (viburnum, spirea, kerria, forsythia).

Clean Up Litter. The snow has melted leaving accumulated human debris from passers-by and garbage truck escapees exposed and blowing around, particularly on Browncroft Boulevard. Remove it quickly before it damages our neighborhood appearance and reputation.

Volunteer. There are ongoing clean-up and planting projects in the city, generally and in the Browncroft Rose Garden. While you are helping the environment, you will meet neighbors and know you are working together to maintain the quality of life of the area.

Plant Flowers That Feed Birds and Pollinators. Perennials such as milkweed, bee balm, columbine, native honeysuckle, cone flowers and black eyed Susan will attract butterflies and help the bees.



City Plan

from page 5

(i.e. owner occupied single family zoning); beautiful homes; trees and landscape, park-like setting, and convenient location.

This, along with the online survey data, is the sum total of our input into the draft Rochester 2034 Vision Plan and what the future should look like for Rochester and its neighborhoods. At some point in the near future, neighborhood organizations' representatives need to impress their desire to take a greater part in the plan development.

Cassy Petsos

SAVE THE DATE

May 16 - BNA Board 7:00

May 30 - Annual Meeting,
7:00, Christ the Good
Shepherd Church

July 21 - Red Wing Night,
6:05, Frontier Field, Red
Wings v. Norfolk Tide

August 18- Movie in the Park,
Browncroft Rose Garden, at
dark

September - Clambake, date
and location TBD