

# Browncroft Crier

NEWSLETTER OF THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SINCE 1973 - Volume #192

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

Summer 2017

## BNA Executive Committee

### Officers:

President

James Seitz

Vice-President

Robert Scheidt

Secretary

Jennifer Sahrle

Treasurer

Robert McLoughlin

### District Reps

Elm

James Nicholson

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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Neighborhood Events



**Wednesday, July 19**

**starting at 5:30 PM**

**Sycamore Shelter in Ellison Park.**

**(Entrance is on the south side of Blossom Road,  
go over the bridge, take 1st right, keep left.)**

**BNA will provide** grilled hot dogs, rolls, condiments,  
cold lemonade and cookies/brownies

**Bring** a dish to pass, your own plates and silverware,  
and your favorite outdoor game -  
frisbees, bocce ball, croquet



Picnic tables provided -  
bring a lawn chair if you want more comfort



**Prize for the best hat  
in adult and child categories!!!!**

**Bring a book for School 46 children  
(see page 3)**

**Let's fill up Sycamore Shelter with good fellowship,  
good fun, and good food (as always).**

## *From the President.....* **James Seitz**

I was asked to write a piece on why I volunteered for the presidency of the Browncroft Neighborhood Association. I continually ask myself the same question: "Why did you do this? What were you thinking?"

Kidding aside...I considered volunteering as an opportunity to give back to the neighborhood that I've called home for the past 43 years.

The Browncroft was built at the end of the horse and buggy era at a time when horses were yielding to streetcars, and automobiles were in the future.

Some homes had maid quarters and milk boxes for daily milk delivery. Many of our homes were plumbed for gas lamps, later wired for electric lights, wired for telephones, televisions, cable networks and computers. We who have chosen to live and stay in Browncroft value City living.

When people explain why they move here, they mention trees, sidewalks, gardens, value of real estate, walkability and convenience of public services. They explain why they have come...but they stay because of the neighbors. Browncroft boasts a rich and diverse population. It is the human element that gives the word "neighborhood" its true meaning.

From what I learn daily on my neighborhood walks, we are pretty good at being neighborly. We look after each other and we care about our neighbors. What I have come to realize is: the "hood" part of "neighborhood" does not just flow effortlessly from "neighbor". It

takes many engaged and involved neighbors to underpin what we take for granted and enjoy every day. To be blunt, a vibrant "hood" doesn't just happen.

The Browncroft Neighborhood Association works on streetlights, curbs, street signs, trees, shrubs, roses, zoning, newsletters, sidewalks, crime, beautification, and neighbors. We are even concerned about noise.

We have committees - eleven to be precise. We have street reps. We deliver the Crier. We have gardens to tend. All these things get completed because of volunteers. We need help.

We have only 44% membership in BNA. I would like to see us increase this substantially. Ideally, everyone's voice should be heard. Hopefully, there is a role for on-line communication to increase participation efficiently and include more people in the discussions.

It is my hope BNA can continue to help us keep a strong NEIGHBOR in the hood, preserving the essential character of our community while sensibly adapting to the realities of the 21st century.

**Lets keep that neighbor bond strong.**



## **BNA OFFICERS FOR 2017-2018**

The BNA Annual Meeting on May 18th kicked off the new BNA year with two new officers taking over for President and Secretary, and two officers to serve for Vice-President and Treasurer.

**President: James Seitz.** Jim has lived on Dorchester Road since 1973. He had served as a street rep for Dorchester in the early years of the BNA. His neighborhood activism was rekindled when he spearheaded the group of neighbors who successfully opposed the proposed Aldi development at Winton Road and Blossom Rd. He is currently retired.

**Vice-President: Robert Scheidt.** Bob has served as vice-president for the last two years. He is a resident of Windemere Road. Despite his demanding schedule as a small business owner he has been a very active VP working to get historic streetlights on the Brighton ends of the Browncroft Streets, and following up on expressway noise abatement initiatives.

**Treasurer: Robert McLoughlin.** Robert has been BNA Treasurer since 2012. He is a resident of Beresford Road. As treasurer he not only has accounting duties that include budget preparation, he also takes on a number of additional hats, such as membership record keeping and post office box errands. He also is a Rose Garden volunteer.

**Secretary: Jennifer Sahrle.** Jennifer has lived on Elmcroft Road for seven years, and is the new BNA Street Representative as well. Her considerable computer skills will be very helpful in her role as secretary and as a member

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## 2017 BNA GARAGE SALE RECAP

Despite record rainfall, the 2017 BNA Garage sale attracted many enthusiastic buyers and sellers. A total of 162 households registered, and most registrants chose to have their sales posted on the BNA Web site. Total revenue to BNA came to \$830, with expenses of \$627.77, for a net surplus of \$202.23. This surplus will help to offset the cost of the durable Garage Sale signs that were purchased last year, and will be re-usable for future sales.

The 4/13/17 BNA Facebook post announcing the Garage Sale reported a “reach” of approximately 4600, showing the increasing value of the Internet and social media for publicizing our news and events.

We received numerous inquiries as to whether there would be a “rain date” (which there was not), as well as questions as to why the sale was not postponed. Major reasons for having firm rain-or-shine dates include:

1. Unlike an individual sale, the BNA sale is simply too large, with too many advance arrangements, to reschedule, particularly on short notice.

2. Many individuals and families, buyers and sellers alike, plan schedules around a set date. Some travel a significant distance to participate.

3. Expenses such as porta-johns and paid newspaper ads are tied to specific dates and not refundable if the sale is postponed.

4. Flyers, signs and Internet postings are in place well before the sale.

5. Even if an official “rain date” were scheduled, many individuals would be likely, due to their own personal plans, to sell on the original dates. This would result in two sale dates, severely diluting the Garage Sale’s impact and increasing neighborhood disruption.

Even though there was no official “rain date”, a number of residents decided to hold their own “round 2” or “encore” sale on June 17. Although this was not a BNA event, most participants were pleased with their results.

Many thanks to all who volunteered their time and effort for the



2017 BNA Garage Sale! Plans are already being developed for our 2019 sale - please share your ideas (or availability to volunteer) with the BNA Board.

David D. Kaiser  
2017 Garage Sale Coordinator

## MOVIE IN THE PARK

### August 19th

Coming again this year is the movie in the park. It will be in the Rose Garden Park on Saturday, August 19th, beginning at sunset.

The movie this year will be **Return of the Jedi**. This is Star Wars Episode 6 (but actually the third in the series to be made.)

This is a free event and popcorn will be provided. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets and settle in for a great movie under the stars. The rain date is Saturday August 27th.

September 8 at 175 Dorchester Rd.

Thank you for your continued support. Any questions please call Ann Kanthor at 482-0704.

## Celebrate the Joy of Reading with Students at #46 School

The summer recess has just begun but it is time to start collecting children’s books for new students entering #46 School in September. Last year this was such a successful project and we hope to make it an annual event. Every kindergarten student received two books as a Welcome Gift from the school’s Browncroft neighbors.

This year we hope to expand the collection to students new to the school in all grades. The collection kickoff is at the BNA Picnic on July 19th. Please consider donating new books either paperback or hardcover or cash donations which will be used to purchase additional books.

Books can be dropped off any time between July 19 and

# APPELLATE DECISION RULES AGAINST ALDI AND CITY OF ROCHESTER

As previously reported, the Supreme Court of Monroe County dismissed the petition of IGATOPFY (Tops) and Rochester Eastside Residents for Appropriate Development, Inc. (RERAD) versus the City of Rochester Zoning Board of Appeals and Aldi, Inc. That decision was appealed to the Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department of Supreme Court.

The five judges of the Appellate Division, by order entered May 5, 2017, reversed the decision of the Supreme Court judge and granted the petition. In their decision they established that RERAD did have standing to bring the action with Tops, and they annulled the City of Rochester's negative declaration (a reference to the State Environmental Quality Review

Act's process whether to require an Environmental Impact Statement) and vacated the variances and special use permit granted to Aldi to build near the northwest corner of Blossom and Winton Roads. The judges did not make a ruling on any of the other arguments in the petition or the Supreme Court Judge's findings relative to them.

Any future proposals to build at this site will likely require a full Environmental Impact Statement especially referencing the specifics of the contamination found and the mitigation measures that will be taken to clean it up without causing hazards to neighboring properties. Or at the very least, the negative declaration claiming that one is not necessary must set out the reasons for that finding.

Cassy Petsos

## YARMOUTH ROAD VARIANCE DENIED

On May 25th the City of Rochester Zoning Board of Appeals heard the application for a variance of a Yarmouth Road property. The application requested approval to construct a two story addition to the existing home that included an attached three car garage. The existing detached garage would be demolished.

A variance was required because the new construction did not meet the rear yard setback requirement of 20 feet. The rear walls would extend to 10 feet from the lot line.

The architectural drawings showed the first story included a three car garage, a foyer with door exiting to the north side, a 2nd

staircase to the new second story of the house and an outside deck. The second story had 4 rooms and upper hall. The addition would have extended the back wall of the house at least 45 feet, doubling the size of the original house. Paving would be added to most of the former back yard along the northern side of the house to serve the 3 car garage and new entrance. The property owner did not show a pressing need to double the size of the living area of the house, as he was a single occupant. He did express that he needed a space for a third car.

Although the front façade of the house would change very little, all other facades were substantially

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## ZONING 101

A request for a variance to the zoning code is a flag that the property owner wants to do something out of the ordinary with their property. An example of a "use variance" would be a change from single family to multiple family or commercial use of a property. An "area variance" applies to a physical change to the exterior of the property that would violate the normal allowable height, setback, paved area, building to open space proportion, fencing and other similar issues of a given district.

It is important to note that once a variance is granted, it runs with the property, meaning future owners will be allowed to continue to take advantage of the change to the property. Also, a precedent is established making it easier for future applications for the same type of variance to be granted. This can create a domino affect.

Generally, a property owner must show a reason or need to deviate from the district rules and their neighbors' property types. The assumption is that the code has been designed to ensure a beneficial neighborhood environment for the whole, so each request to be allowed to have something different must go before the seven volunteer members of the Zoning Board of Appeals, who must decide whether the request would be detrimental to the nearby neighbors or the character of the neighborhood.

In cases relating to Browncroft it could be said that variances are not a good thing because the residents love the neighborhood the way it is – single family detached houses used as such, most

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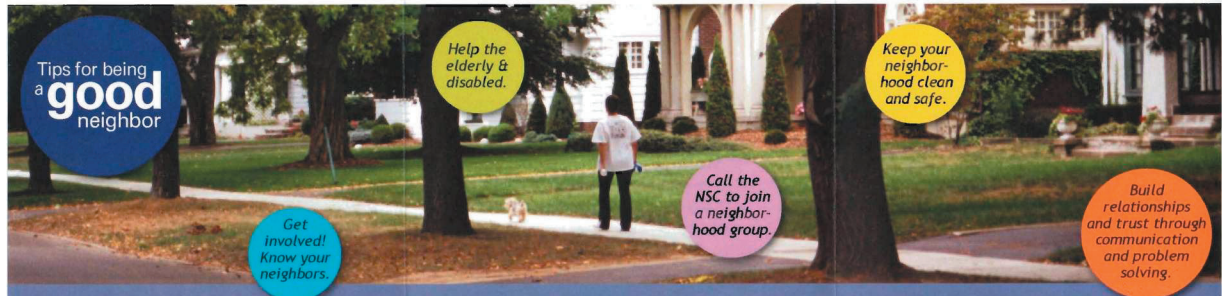
# "Be a Good Neighbor" (from the City of Rochester)

The City of Rochester in their "How to Be a Good Neighbor" brochure encourages citizens to "Keep your neighborhood clean ... Get involved and know your neighbors... Help the elderly and disabled." By observing good neighbor actions, an all for one, and one for all culture will live.

## Keep Clean

It lists some rules of refuse that are part of the city code, such as do not put toters and debris out until the evening before your neighborhood pick up date. In Browncroft pick up is on Wednesday, which makes Tuesday the day to take toters and properly bundled yard debris or discarded large household items to the curb. Also important is to take toters in after pickup on Wednesday. If you will be away, ask a neighbor to take it to the back. In this way it will not alert burglars that no one is home.

Violators of this protocol will receive a notice for a first offense, and chronic violators will be fined if the city cleans up after them. However, the prospect of being fined should not be the motivation for observing this etiquette. A good neighbor does not litter the public right-of-way with debris and spoil the neighborhood appearance for the other five days of the week when there will be no city crews picking up. It is particularly egregious to place garbage bags, remodeling debris, and old furni-



Note: Dorchester Road was used for the brochure illustration photo

ture at the curb on holidays when all should be tidy for neighbors and any of their friends and family visiting the neighborhood.

Another act of consideration is for pet owners to observe their responsibility "for disposing of their animals' feces from any sidewalk, yard, park or tree lawn (the area between the sidewalk and the curb)."

"Property owners are responsible for the maintenance of their property, including the right of way (the street, sidewalk and the tree lawn)." This means keeping the sidewalks free of snow and ice in the winter, and clippings and mud buildup in the summer. Slippery sidewalks can cause injuries to occur to neighbors – not to mention subject the negligent property owners to lawsuits.

## Prevent Crime

Good neighbors look out for each other by observing suspicious activity on each other's property and calling 911 to prevent or stop crime.

Rochester's Crime Prevention Officers will conduct a security survey for your property. To schedule, call the Neighborhood Service Center (NSC). Browncroft is served by the Southeast Quadrant NSC, whose administrator is Nancy Johns-Price at 428-7640.

Keep your property lighted.

Keep your porch lights on, and use timers when you are away. A dark house is a magnet for criminals. LED and compact fluorescent lights cost pennies to run, and could save you thousands of dollars.

The city reminds us to check out Police and Citizens Together Against Crime (PAC-TAC), a program in which volunteer citizens work with the Rochester Police Department to patrol the neighborhood and report anything that could need police attention. Browncroft's PAC-TAC is currently defunct. Bob Genthner spearheaded it for many years. If there is anyone interested in reviving it or working with another area's existing PAC-TAC, contact BNA from the website [browncroftna.org](http://browncroftna.org), and someone will advise how to do so.

## Be Helpful

Elderly or disabled neighbors may need a hand sometime to shovel sidewalks so that emergency services can access their home, or to take in toters. Browncroft's Home for a Lifetime Committee provides rides to doctors appointments or the store. Get involved as a volunteer driver or coordinator. To request a ride from Be On Your Way With BNA, or to volunteer call 733-4386. If we want this

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## BROWNCROFT ROSE GARDEN

Beautification work for Spring Clean up on April 18th did not have the necessary number of volunteers to complete the pruning and weeding of the six rose beds, and circle bed. Three workers, Kay Rust from Elmcroft Road, Cassy Petsos of Browncroft Boulevard, and Don Hilliard from Ramsey Park were able to prune and weed four of the rose beds.

Annual bed weeding and planting, BNA's other spring ritual in May, was accomplished by Linda Siple and Tom Gibbons, of Ramsey Park, on May 26th. The annuals were provided by the city and BNA. As you can see from the above photo, it looks great. The perennials (hosta, Shasta daisy,

caryopteris, echinacea and rudbeckia) and hinoki cypress that were planted last fall are doing well and starting to bloom, providing a picturesque foundation for the annuals that Tom and Linda planted.

The city of Rochester has arranged for volunteers from the Webster United Church of Christ to work in the Browncroft Rose Garden on July 24th. Linda Siple will be supervising their work.

Browncroft neighbors who



can devote some time to gardening chores in the Rose Garden may contact Linda Siple, 288-6744.

Many thanks to the volunteers who help ensure that the Browncroft Rose Garden provides a lovely passive recreational space for residents, and a good impression of the neighborhood to anyone passing through.

## SIDEWALK REPAIR

This spring/summer season the southeast quadrant of the city, which includes Browncroft, was scheduled for hazardous sidewalk repair. There is a fee on the property tax bills that covers this periodic work.

After the hazardous sidewalks were marked with white paint, the work proceeded to remove the bad sections, excavate and level the area, pour the new concrete, grade and reseed.

A problem arose when our neighborhood trees along the sidewalks were in danger of having their roots damaged by the excavation. Although the city's contractors are admonished to not cut any roots greater than one inch in diameter, in some instances this occurred.

The City Engineer, James McIntosh, was contacted and was provided with a written report by email with the photos, when it appeared the contractors had not followed the guidelines and had damaged some main roots. A walk



through with the city's liaison and the contractor was arranged. In some of the cases -- not all -- the damage was more superficial than it looked. A follow up report was sent acknowledging where there was less damage than previously

thought.

The meeting was helpful in preventing further damage from occurring at locations not yet excavated. The contractor proceeded with care being aware that we are protective of our trees. We are always hopeful that the city respects our private tree line along the inside of the sidewalk as much as their own street trees on the tree lawns.

Our trees are 100 years old now and struggling as it is. Cutting their feeder roots, which causes die back in the crown, will hasten their demise and create hazards. The city is aware of this.

Browncroft must hope to keep the remaining mature trees with their protective shade for as long as possible while we replant with young, native species trees that

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## Zoning

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of a similar size and architecturally significant design.

Often, neighbors will allow their personal friendship with an applicant for a variance to close their eyes to the ramifications it may have on the specific property, its next door neighbor and the precedent it sets in the neighborhood. This is short sighted and it takes community education and stimulation to stay on top of any and all applications that come before the planning and zoning boards that affect Browncroft from within and without, and to review proposed amendments to the City of Rochester Zoning Code.

Cassy Petsos

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## Sidewalks

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will one day provide the continuum of gracious and historic tree lined streetscapes.

***Note: Residents will hopefully keep the newly seeded areas watered to ensure germination. Although it may seem that we have plenty of rain to do the job these days, it is the surface soil that must be kept damp. Throwing additional seed, of good quality, couldn't hurt, too.***

Cassy Petsos

## Yarmouth

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altered and imposing.

The BNA Board of Directors submitted a letter requesting that the variance be denied citing that the amount of building mass – height and length – close to the next door neighbors to the south could dramatically affect their views and yard esthetics, as this would not have been a modest addition, and emphasizing that it was not in scale with any of the other houses on single lots in Browncroft. Therefore, it was out of character with the neighborhood.

Four Browncroft neighbors spoke in opposition to the variance, one of whom read the BNA letter. One neighbor, who resides in the adjacent property to the north, spoke in favor. There were many letters sent in and made part of the file expressing the inappropriateness of the proposed construction. The Zoning Board agreed with these Browncroft neighbors' well made points.

Cassy Petsos

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## Officers

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of the Board of Directors. She is employed at Trillium Health.

**Thank you** to our new and continuing officers for accepting the respective duties of their important offices, and to the Board of Directors of the Browncroft Neighborhood Association, who keep the neighborhood strong.

## Good Neighbors

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wonderful service to continue it should be kept active and used.

## Noise

The city code provides these rules concerning noise: It "should not be audible beyond your property line between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m." It "should not be audible beyond 50 feet from your property between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m." That seems almost impossible when lots are only 50 to 75 feet wide in this neighborhood. Suffice it to say everyone should do their best to use good judgment and be considerate of their neighbors on all sides.

## Parking

When parking on the street there must be at least a five foot space away from a driveway to enable a resident to enter or exist.

Parking on the front lawn is a violation and also gives a neighborhood a seedy appearance, which can lower property values.

## Take Action

For many years, including this one, BNA has fielded complaints and comments on many of the above referenced city codes. No one wants to call authorities to complain about their neighbors, so they often turn to BNA to do it for them. But BNA cannot be the neighborhood police. Citizens can call the Neighborhood Service Center at 428-7640 with their problems or complaints. Ultimately, everyone must be involved in keeping the neighborhood safe, clean, quiet and beautiful by being a good neighbor.

Cassy Petsos

*Browncroft Home for a Lifetime*



**Need a ride?  
A friendly visit?  
Meals?**

**Info on "Aging in Place"?**

**CALL: 585-733-4386**



## North Winton Village Festival of the Arts

**September 16th**

**In the Linear Garden  
on Main Street**

**10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

The NWV Festival of the Arts returns this year and the BNA will again join the area merchants, banks, City of Rochester, public service not-for-profits and local government elected officials (individually) as a sponsor of this community event.

Arts and crafts, live music, and food will insure that this day in the neighborhood is a fun one. In addition to the art booths, many civic organizations will be on hand to showcase their services.

Stroll over. Whether or not you find that interesting art object or photograph, artisan tee shirt, piece of jewelry, pottery or craft work – always at reasonable prices-- you will be sure to enjoy the music, the food, and bumping into other neighbors and catching up.

## Mercy Bridges Field of Honor®

**September 7 to 10**

**Mercy Center**

**1437 Blossom Road**

Tribute flags will fly for 72 consecutive hours to honor military, law enforcement personnel, fire department personnel, and first responders. All are invited to the Field over this Patriots Weekend.

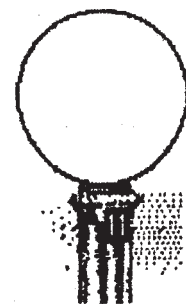
The Opening Ceremony will be held at 10:00 am, September 8; and the Closing Ceremony will be held September 10 at 2:00 p.m.. A Mass for First Responders will be held in the chapel at 7:00 p.m. on September 7.

To honor someone with a tribute flag, contact Natalie at Mercy Bridges, 288-2710 extension 121. (Mercy Bridges, the host, is an Adult Literacy Service providing free tutoring to eligible individuals throughout Monroe County.)

Volunteers are also welcome to help assemble flags, put up flags, or provide hospitality to visitors. Volunteer shifts are two hours each. To volunteer or seek further information, call Natalie at 288-2710 extension 121.

## BRIGHTON STREET LIGHT ASSESSMENT APPROVED

The Brighton Town Board on May 24th voted to approve the creation of a special assessment district to cover one hundred percent of the costs of installing on the Brighton sections of Corwin and Windemere Roads the same reproduction streetlights that are found in the Browncroft Subdivision section of the city.



Congratulations to Bob Scheidt of Windemere Road, and his neighbors who voted to add a fee to their Brighton tax bills in order to make this possible.

Upon gaining the approval of the State of New York, the work will begin to develop the system and the historic look of the concrete and globe streetlights will one day continue all the way to Fairhaven Road on Corwin and Windemere Roads.

### **SAVE THE DATE**

**July 19th** - BNA Picnic at Ellison Park, Sycamore Shelter starting at 5:30

**August 16th** - BNA Executive Committee Meeting

**August 19th** - Movie in the Park, Browncroft Rose Garden at dark. Rain date August 20th

**September 7-10** - Mercy Bridges Field of Honor, 1437 Blossom Road

**September 16th** - NWV Festival of the Arts, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Linear Garden on Main Street

**September 20th** - BNA BOARD of Directors Meeting