

Midtown Monitor

Serving Midtown Omaha neighborhoods

Published by Shurson Publishing

Volume 9, No 12 December 2013

Online... check out www.midtownmonitor.com

Holidays in Midtown

Shop Midtown... Support Our Businesses!

Midtown has nearly anything you could want for yourself or as a gift. With an ever growing list of restaurants, exciting new retailers, art studios and service providers. All of them offer gift certificates or prepayment options. These would make great gifts for anyone.

Midtown Crossing's Magic on Farnam

The displays will be available for viewing every day from 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. through New Year's Day. It is all free to the public, three hours of garage parking included.

In the Brandeis tradition, Midtown Crossing's Miracle on Farnam will showcase the artistry and imagination of at least 20 of Omaha's most respected arts and cultural organizations. The most miraculous display, determined by a public vote, will earn a \$3000 donation courtesy of the Baer Foundation, a philanthropic endeavor that generously supports various charities, including Nebraska arts and educational agencies.

Historic Holiday Home Tours

On December 6 and 7 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. view three of Midtown's significant homes - Joslyn Castle, Storz Mansion and the Barmettler House all beautifully decorated for the holidays. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased online at www.joslyncastle.com or at any of the homes on the tours days.

Inside this issue:

- New Life for Crossroads
- Distracted Driving Kills
- Omaha Parks Foundation
- Business Gives Back
- Christmas Tree Pickup and much more...

Dundee Lighting Ceremony

This year the Dundee merchants will host the lighting event at 6:30 on Thursday Dec 5 in the former Grandpa's parking lot. Similar to last year there will be pictures with Santa and his Elves taken by Rachel Nuncio Photography.

We will also have cookie decorating and hot cocoa and cider. And there will be music that will be fun for the whole family.

Aksarben Village

Lights of Aksarben December 6-20

Every Friday there will be holiday activities in Stinson Park. There will be a heated tent filled with cookies and cocoa for everyone! The children will be making a holiday ornament to take home as well as playing some of the new games from Learning HQ. Also, Learning HQ will be open until 9p that night and will be offering a 20% discount. We will celebrate every Friday night same time; same place until Friday, December 20 with something different each week! Aksarben Village...where there is always something fun going on.

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The Midtown Monitor is published monthly by Shurson Publishing. Direct all advertising inquiries to Ellen Shurson, Publisher at 402-714-1016.

The Midtown Monitor is distributed with the Dundee-Memorial Park Association Newsletter, AEPNA and select midtown businesses, online and through email subscriptions.

Send all articles for submission and press releases to (Preferred) e-mail to ellenshurson@gmail.com or mail Shurson Publishing, 131 N. 31 Ave, Omaha, NE 68131, to arrive by the 1st of the month preceding publication. Please send articles as Word documents with photo as separate TIFF or JPEG attachments. Content may be edited for clarity and space considerations. No warranties of the products or services printed herein are expressed or implied by Shurson Publishing. Shurson Publishing reserves the right to reject unsuitable advertising or articles.

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Distracted Driving Kills

UNMC study: Distracted driving killing more pedestrians, bicyclists

From texting and talking on cell phones to eating while driving, researchers say distracted driving is a serious public health threat. Though motor vehicle deaths have been declining nationally, a recent study by researchers at the University of Nebraska Medical Center found that deaths in pedestrians and cyclists are increasing.

From 2005 to 2010, the national number of pedestrians struck and killed by distracted drivers went up from 344 to 500 – an almost 50 percent increase. For cyclists, the numbers killed went from 56 to 73 — a 30 percent increase.

“We’re constantly exposed to distracted drivers. I don’t think there’s a day that I don’t see someone driving and using their cell phone, a lot of times they’re texting,” said Fernando Wilson, Ph.D., associate professor, UNMC College of Public Health. “It’s something that’s pervasive in society. That’s one of the reasons it’s so difficult to deal with.

“It’s not like seat belt usage and securing your child into a safety seat. If you don’t do these things, which now are the social norm – it’s viewed negatively. The laws are stricter. With cell phones, we don’t have that social stigma. Not to mention that distracted driving is more difficult to enforce than other driving safety laws.”

The report, published in Public Health Reports November-December issue, documents trends and characteristics of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other victim deaths caused by distracted drivers on U.S. public roads. The report does not document injuries.

Dr. Wilson believes statistics related to distracted driving may be underreported due to the difficulty of law enforcement proving distracted driving. That in turn makes it difficult to affect policies to curb distracted driving.

“The evidence on policies curbing distracted driving is very mixed and some research suggests policies

are just not working – that we’re not really making a dent on distracted driving,” he said. “If that’s the case, we need to think about marked crosswalks, bike paths – the environment that tries to create a separation between pedestrians and bicyclists with traffic.”

Researchers used data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System on crashes on public roads in the U.S. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration identifies distracted driving based on whether police investigators determined that a driver had been using a technological device, onboard navigation system, computer, fax machine, two-way radio, or head-up display, or had been engaged in inattentive or careless activities.

Dr. Wilson said the study also found that 65 percent of pedestrian victims of distracted driving crashes were male between the ages of 25 and 64 years old and Caucasian. The victims also were more likely to be struck outside of a marked crosswalk and be in a city.

Bicycling victims were mostly male -- 83 percent, between the ages of 25 to 64 years old and Caucasian.

About half of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities from distracted driving occurred during daytime hours.

“People have to be aware that this problem is not going away anytime soon,” Dr. Wilson said. “So when you’re crossing the street or cycling, you need to be cognizant about this new threat to roadway safety.”

UNMC faculty members, Jim Stimpson, Ph.D., and Robert Muelleman, M.D., also collaborated on the study. The study was funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Law Research program.

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New Life for Crossroads Mall

By Quinn Scahill

The recent talks of the newly opened Nebraska Crossing Outlet Mall in Gretna, has refocused the spotlight on development plans for Crossroads Mall as those same men are now planning this exciting new project.

Rod Yates, head of OTB Destination and Frank Krejci are now moving their development teams to 72nd and Dodge to mull over their plans, which include leveling the entire area except for the Target Store and parking garage. Krejci, who currently owns Crossroads, plans on making the area a modern, open-air shopping experience, and wants to install a park, a library, office space, and domestic living spaces.

After speaking briefly with Yates, he dispelled the rumors that the Crossroads development would be finished by Fall 2014, saying it looked more like a grand opening in Spring 2015 or 2016. He also said that it would be an urban, mixed-use project with 1,000 residential units, office space, a 150-room hotel, and 400,000 square feet of retail space, entertainment possibilities and a public park. When asked about what stores we might see, he was adamant that he could not be certain about any retail outlets, so we can let the IKEA rumors swirl for now. Yates did also mention that the shopping experience would be digitally driven, and that you could shop from home or from a mobile device without stepping foot in the mall.

City Councilman Pete Festersen says that the plan is a welcome development to the midtown area, and thinks people will see significant improvements in surrounding neighborhoods, calling the project a “win-win situation”.

Festersen also noted that while there is no city financing plan for the project, it does qualify for tax reimbursement. However, with the current state of Crossroads Mall, it’s likely that citizens would not mind a small hike to develop the area, which has been on the decline for a number of years.

This \$35 million dollar project will undoubtedly contribute to further investment and increased property values in the surrounding area.

Omaha Parks Foundation

Legacy for Omaha

Established as a nonprofit organization in 2010, the Omaha Parks Foundation’s mission is to bring together the resources necessary to enhance the quality of Omaha’s park system. The Foundation helps support parks and recreation facilities owned by the City of Omaha. Giving an unrestricted gift to the foundation allows for the greatest amount of flexibility to apply these funds where they are needed most.

The work of the Omaha Parks Foundation will impact the community in many positive ways. It will help provide destinations – some exciting, some peaceful - that encourage wellness and a healthy lifestyle. It will beautify the city, making it vibrant and attractive to potential residents and companies looking to relocate. It will improve facilities and expand programming to establish Omaha’s parks as a model for the rest of the country.

By encouraging philanthropic support and investment in a valued community resource, the Omaha Parks Foundation will facilitate the future of the city’s parks system, offering citizens the opportunity to leave a legacy for generations to come!

Opportunities for Giving

The Omaha Parks Foundation is supported by donations from individuals, other foundations, private businesses, groups, trusts, estates, and corporations. Donations to the Omaha Parks Foundation may include gifts of:

- Cash donations • Securities • Real estate • Life insurance
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All gifts are tax deductible in accordance with Federal and Nebraska state laws.

For more information about the Omaha Parks Foundation or how to contribute, please contact Amber Miller at 402-926-8299

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Renewing the Spirit of Giving

By Erin Luong

One new business is giving the homeless a healthier place to call home.

This time of year, many individuals give to those less fortunate. One new business owner in the Metro area has a new take on giving and challenges Omaha businesses to redefine how and who they donate to this holiday season.

Sing Luong, president of Futureclean, Inc., has recently donated his time and services to the Siena/Francis House, a homeless shelter for families and individuals, and Victory Apartments, housing for homeless and low income veterans. "The reason I chose to

"More companies need to step up and give back. What you put in is what you get out. If not now, then later." Sing Luong, Futureclean, Inc.

donate my carpet cleaning to these two groups is because I've been thinking a lot about what direction I want to take my business. I really want to help people have cleaner and healthier indoor environments. So I thought, "Who can really benefit?"... How about people that can't afford it?" he explains.

"Initially it was all about the 'feel good' effect, but it hit home during the walk thru. I saw strollers, toys... I've got two small boys and I realized how important this would be to the residents of the shelter. It became more personal."

Services that cater to the less fortunate face the perpetual shortfall of budget to actual need ratio every

week of the year, but the winter months inevitably put an added burden on an already strained resource. Every dollar these organizations receive is put into caring for people, families, and children who have no other option. There just isn't the luxury of having a general maintenance fund. It's better to feed and clothe a child than to pay out for building upkeep.

"I'd like to see more companies donate services because there's a definite need for it among non-profit agencies," Sing says. "More companies need to step up and give back. What you put in is what you get out. If not now, then later."

After many months of deciding what direction he wanted to take his commercial carpet cleaning company, Sing decided on an environmentally responsible method of carpet cleaning which uses 99% less water and sustainable, biodegradable products. "I started this company to pay the bills, yeah, but I also want to give back to the community. I want to do work that matters. To work with a purpose. That's the legacy I want to leave for my boys."

A complete list of Critical Needs for the Siena/Francis Homeless shelter can be found at www.sienafrancis.org. Blankets, pillows, twin sheets, long johns and winter items are just some of the much needed supplies.

For more information or to donate to the Victory Apartments, go to www.victoryveteranshousing.com.

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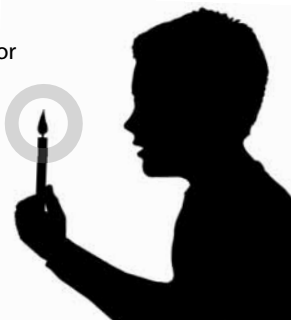
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SUNDAY SCHEDULE
Adult discussion group: 9:10 a.m.
Music & message for all ages: 10:30 a.m.



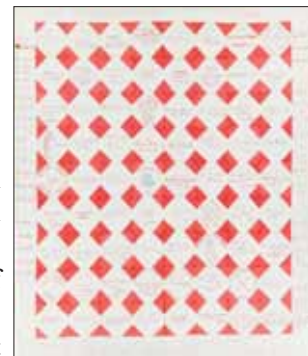
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Sometimes a Quilt Isn't Just a Bed Cover

An 1898 "commerce" quilt top which recently revealed itself in the archives of First Unitarian Church, 3114 Harney Street, offers these goods and services, and much more, to be had in downtown Omaha. Back then, when a dollar bought a whole lot more than it does today, you might have bought your groceries at the Buffett store rather than Wohlner's. At that time present-day Midtown was a good bit west of center.

In 1898, just as now, through good times and bad, through growth and recession, people's economic, social, religious, and technological lives were changing. First Unitarian Church was then located at 17th and Cass Streets, and as was frequently the case, in need of funds. A group of members, Ladies Circle #1, decided it would mount a money-raising project by soliciting donations, receipts for which were to appear on a quilt, done in then-popular "red work." Many of the white muslin and Turkey red snowball blocks advertised local businesses and their addresses, and even a four-digit telephone number or two, embroidered in red. Today, some of the names of individuals who bought blocks appear as street names or are recognizable in other ways.



The quilt, which has been restored, is a fascinating historical artifact of 1898 life in Omaha. On Saturday, December 7, from 10 AM to 2 PM, First Unitarian Church will welcome the public to see it. The following day, services will be a celebration of women's work, and quilts as history and art. Following the second service which starts at 11:15 AM, the quilt will be presented as a gift to the International Quilt Museum in Lincoln.

Come to see this fascinating bit from Omaha's past, and enjoy a peek into the life of the city 115 years ago.

Luther Memorial Church 61st and Western

8:45am and 11am Worship - 10am Sunday School

<http://lmlchurch.org> 402- 551-4488

Christmas Eve Services - 4:30 and 10:30pm

Festival of Lessons & Carols Dec 8 at 8:45 a.m. & 11 a.m.

"Night in Bethlehem," on December 15 at 2 p.m.

FREE children/family activity Enjoy activities and food.

Come experience Bethlehem.



We'd Like to Hear From You ... If you are located in midtown and have events, fundraisers or other news of interest to Midtown residents and businesses, please send it to midtownmonitor.omaha@gmail.com

Please try to send at least one month in advance of event whenever possible.

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Jan. 25 | 10 a.m. | \$65 Blacksmithing with Elmo Diaz
The Blacksmith Shop, 3031 Upland Pkwy.

Jan. 25 | 10 a.m. | \$65 Lampmaking with Kathy Diaz
The Blacksmith Shop, 3031 Upland Pkwy.

Information and Registration:

OmahaCreativeInstitute.org Questions:

Rebecca@OmahaCreativeInstitute.org or 785.218.3061

Cub Scout Pack 17 and Boy Scout Troop 42 Christmas Tree Collection Service Project

The Dundee neighborhood Scouts are again offering to pick your Christmas tree and deliver for recycling. Dates are:

- ♦ Saturday, December 28, 2013
- ♦ Saturday, January 4, 2014

Scouts will complete requirements toward their World Conservation Award. This project demonstrates renewable resources, solid waste reduction, and community service in our neighborhood. Cash donations accepted. Thank you!

To have your tree on our schedule

1. Return sign-up form
2. Remove decorations from your tree
3. Place tree on your curb by 9 a.m



Cub Scout Pack 17 & Boy Scout Troop 42 Christmas Tree Collection

Your Name: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

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\$97,000	5163 Pierce St	3	2	1	Ranch	1,560
\$102,000	6221 Pacific	2	2	1	Ranch	1,010
\$103,000	5228 REES St	3	2	1	R Ranch	1,390
\$112,100	1116 S 60th St	2	1	1	1.5 Story	952
\$113,000	818 S 49th Ave	3	2	2	1.5 Story	1,163
\$115,000	5145 Woolworth	2	2	1	R Ranch	1,932
\$130,000	603 S 67 Ave	3	2	2	R Ranch	1,300
\$132,500	2202 S 59th St.	3	2	2	1.5 Story	1,716
\$140,000	1413 S 64 Ave	3	2	1	1.5 Story	1,816
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\$330,000	6211 Underwood	3	4	2	2 Story	3,104
\$403,000	728 N 58 St	4	3	1	1.5 Story	2,819

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