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THE NORTHEAST NEWS

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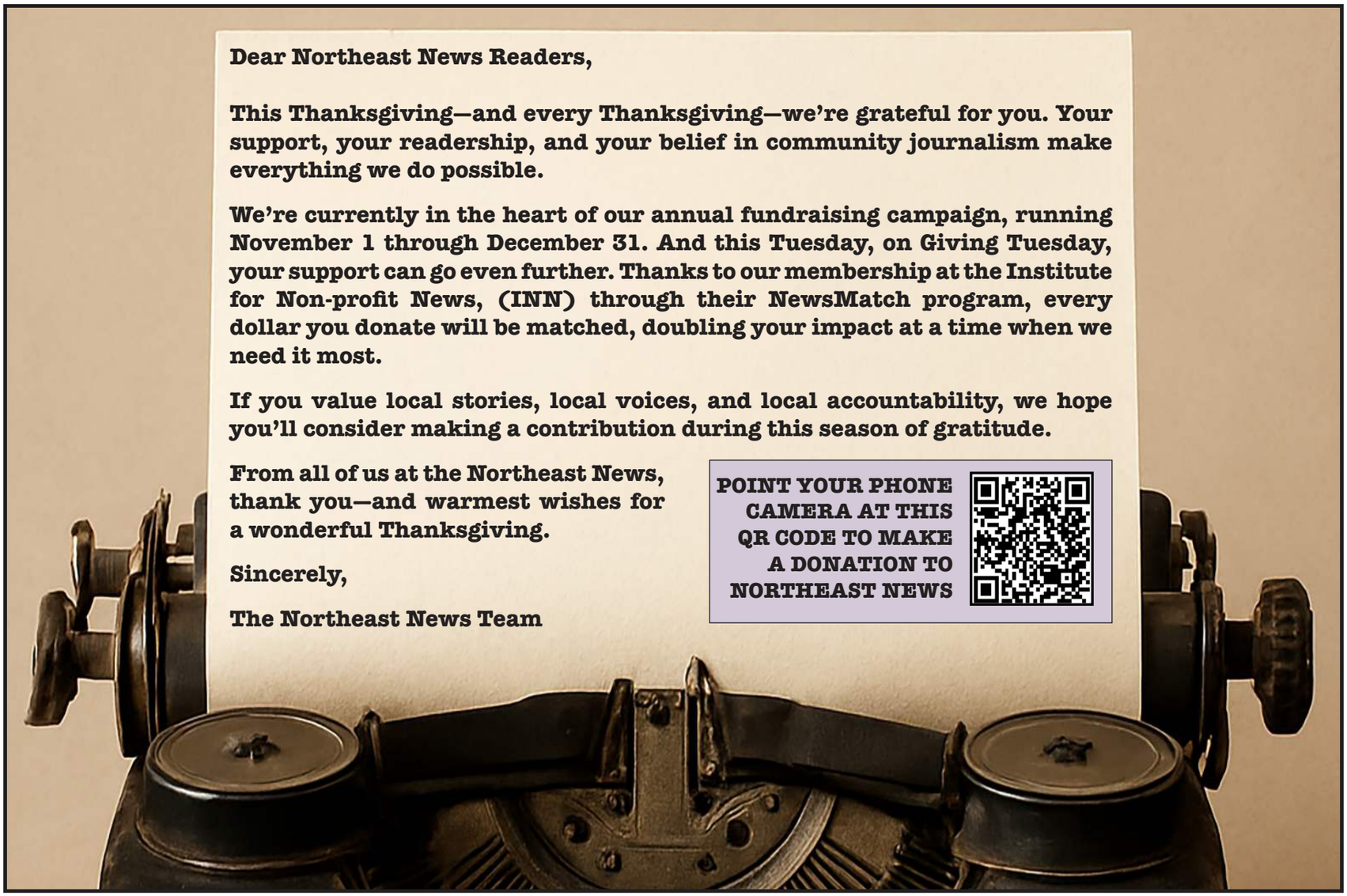

YOUR NORTHEAST NEWS TEAM

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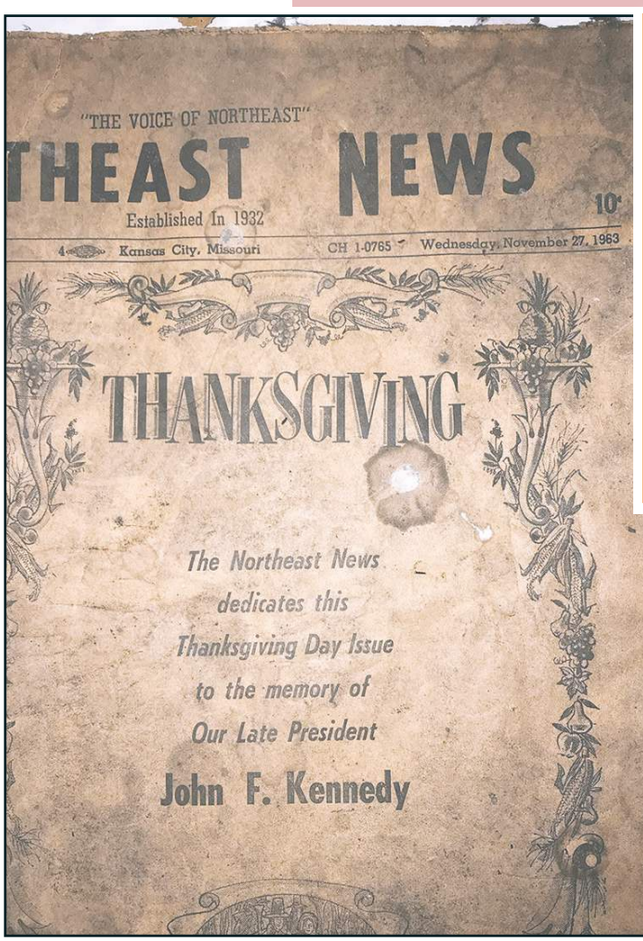
Healing House Hosts Annual Holiday Open House

Dorri Partain
Managing Editor

Festive tables, tasty nibbles and sweet treats awaited attendees during Healing House KC's annual Holiday Open House on Saturday, Nov. 22. Guests filled the Recovery Community Center at 112 N. Elmwood Ave, as staff manned tables featuring items for the silent auction, a raffle, and two Angel Trees, and offered tours of several Healing House facilities.

Angel Trees allowed guests to "adopt" Healing House program participants and provide specific gifts for Christmas. **Photo by Dorri Partain**

Founder and Healing House KC CEO Bobbi Jo Reed, dressed as Mrs. Claus, met with attendees during Saturday's Open House event. **Photo by Dorri Partain**



Former Managing Editor Abby Hoover found this 1963 issue of the Northeast News in her home on N. Chelsea Ave, which was published less than a week after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. Using newspapers to provide insulation was a fairly common practice. If you come across old newspapers or other interesting items in your attic, basement, or inside your walls, send pictures and a description of what you found to NortheastNewsKC@gmail.com. **Photo by Abby Hoover**

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Nov. 27- Happy Thanksgiving from the staff of The Northeast News.

Saturday, Nov. 29- Thanksgiving Train, 12 to 4 p.m. Kansas City Northern Miniature Railroad, Line Creek Park, 6060 N.W. Waukomis Drive. Take a break from holiday shopping and catch a ride with your favorite little turkeys. New extended track, all tickets $1. For more information visit http://kcnrr.com/

Thursday, Dec. 4- Sheffield Place Holiday Lunch & Gift Bazaar, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., 916 Newton Ave. Enjoy a light lunch and tour Sheffield Place's newest family home, The Aspen. Shop for holiday gifts, hand-crafted by the mothers and children at Sheffield Place.

Saturday, Dec. 6- Pendleton Heights Holiday Homes Tour, 12 to 5 p.m. Tour five historic homes decorated for the holidays in the Pendleton Heights Historic District. Purchase advance tickets at phkc.org or in person at 2221 Lexington Ave. on the tour date.

Saturday, Dec. 6 & Sunday, Dec. 7- Northeast Arts KC Open Studio Tour, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Sat.) 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Sun.) Pick up a tour map at the first stop, The Economic Growth Gallery (2659 Independence Blvd.). Meet local artists and view their unique creations available for purchase. Free, visit www.northeastartskc.org for more information.

Tuesday, Dec. 9- Public Meeting, Bi-State Sustainable Re-investment Corridor, 5 to 7 p.m. Don Bosco Senior Center, 580 Campbell Ave. Learn the latest developments with this new transit initiative, enjoy drinks, snacks and door prizes available. Spanish translation provided. For information visit https://www.marc.org/bi-state-sustainable-reinvestment-corridor

1932 Fun Fact

Thanksgiving dinner for 12,000 needy Kansas Citians took weeks of preparation prior to this holiday on November 24, 1932. This event was sponsored by the Jeffersonian Democratic Club, with additional financing from "Cas" Welch, Justice of the Peace and Chief Lieutenant for political boss Thomas Pendergast. In separate venues, "negroes" and "whites" from the Second, Third and Fourth Wards were invited to this meal prepared by seven cooks from the Chef's Union.

Supplies for this meal included 950 turkeys, six crates of celery, 385 lbs of of cranberries, 6000 lbs potatoes, 32r lbs of butter, 60 gallons of milk, 50 gallons of cream, 420 gallons of string beans, 240 lbs of coffee, 15 bushels of beets, 2725 loaves of bread, 14 barrels of dressing, 12,500 individual slices of ice cream and an equal number of cake slices.

This same organization fed 3000 in 1931.

Northeast Arts KC marks 30 years of art, music and neighborhood pride

Bryan Stalder
Contributor

For three decades, Northeast Arts KC has been one of the Historic Northeast's strongest creative threads — stitching together art, music, and community pride one project at a time. What began as a spark between neighbors and a handful of small experiments has grown into a nonprofit known for public art, open-studio tours, sidewalk-chalk festivals, and free summer concerts at the Concourse. Through it all, the goal has remained the same: to beautify the neighborhood and make the arts something every resident can touch, see, and enjoy.

Northeast Arts KC traces its roots back to an early incarnation known as the Historic Northeast Cultural Arts Commission, a 501(c)(3) founded within the warm, arts-nurturing community of Independence Boulevard Christian Church (IBCC). In those formative years, the church served as both home base and creative incubator. Longtime IBCC music director Jim Snyder and bell choir director Martha Lee Tranby launched what would become the organization's signature offering—the Northeast Concert Series. The series began modestly, with performances held in the church sanctuary and at a handful of neighborhood venues, but quickly grew into a beloved cultural tradition.

As the organization expanded its reach and capacity, it eventually moved operations from the church to its current location at 3922 St. John Avenue. With that transition came a new name—Northeast Arts KC—reflecting a broader, neighborhood-wide mission to support and celebrate arts of all disciplines. During this period, innovative programs continued to take shape, including Cultures Without Borders, a juried traveling exhibition that ran for two decades and introduced audiences across Kansas City to artists whose work crossed cultural, geographic, and stylistic boundaries.

While some of the organization's early champions—Jim, Martha, and other founding church members—are no longer with us, their legacy remains deeply woven into the fabric of Northeast Arts KC. Their vision, determination, and love for community arts helped build an institution that has now documented at least 140 concerts, with many more likely unrecorded from its earliest years. Through grant writing, volunteerism, and grassroots leadership, that original group laid the groundwork for a neighborhood arts organization that continues to elevate local talent and create shared cultural experiences for the Historic Northeast.

Longtime neighborhood arts champions Rebecca Koop and Marianne Rowse have shaped the organization's heartbeat for years. Koop — a Kansas City Art Institute alumna and owner of Back Door Pottery on St. John Avenue — has often been described as "a driving force" behind Northeast Arts' programming and beautification efforts. Rowse, whose fingerprints can be found on everything from Chalk Walk and the Summer Dusk Concert Series to the cultivation of St. John Gardens, has been just as essential.

With a rotating cast of volunteers, board members, and partner groups, Koop and Rowse helped transform Northeast Arts from a cluster of creative ideas into a fully formed nonprofit with a robust, year-round presence.

Projects like St. John Gardens, Window Dressing (painting artistic designs on boards covering vacant storefronts), and early neighborhood art gatherings didn't just decorate the neighborhood — they laid the foundation for a mission to "beautify and increase the viability of the Historic Northeast." These early efforts still define Northeast Arts' identity today.

Live music events are hosted at the Colonnade at the Concourse Park each summer as part of the Summer Dusk Concert series. **Photo by Bryan Stalder**

If there's one event that embodies Northeast Arts' spirit, it's Chalk Walk. Held mostly at the Concourse Fountain — though it has also popped up at the Kansas City Museum — this free, family-friendly festival turns sidewalks into canvases and neighbors into artists. Everyone from seasoned illustrators to toddlers with chalk-dusted hands is encouraged to claim a square and create.

When COVID forced people to stay home, the organization pivoted with characteristic creativity: volunteers delivered free chalk door-to-door so residents could decorate their own sidewalks, keeping the tradition alive across the entire neighborhood.

Continued on next page

Northeast Arts

Continued from previous page

In 2024, Chalk Walk partnered with the Ameri'Kana Music and Arts Festival, blending street art with live music and cultural celebration. Its mix of accessibility, color, and community energy has secured its place as a beloved Northeast summer hallmark.

Another seasonal favorite, the Summer Dusk Concert Series, has transformed the lawn north of the Concourse Fountain into one of the area's most charming open-air venues. Picnic blankets and lawn chairs scatter across the grass as local performers — from singer-songwriters to full ensembles — take the stage beneath the historic Colonnade.

Artists often remark on the warmth of Kansas City crowds, and Summer Dusk audiences certainly live up to that reputation. The series remains one of the Historic Northeast's most inviting family-friendly events, offering free music with a neighborhood feel.

Northeast Arts' programming stretches well beyond chalk and concerts. Its Open Studio Tours have offered rare glimpses into the creative spaces where local artists work — attics, basements, storefronts, and backyard studios which rarely open to the public. In fact, on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 7 from noon to 4:00 p.m., guests will have the opportunity to meet over twenty artists during this year's Open Studio Tours. The locations will be at Back Door Pottery (3922 St. John Ave.,) The EGG, (2659 Independence Blvd.,) PH Coffee (2200 Lexington Ave.,) and Core Coffee (546 Olive Ave.)

Events like Art in the Garden — conceived in part by Koop and owners of the Inn at 425 — transformed a neighborhood garden into a laid-back gallery, showing how art can thrive in unexpected places. Annual ARTy mixers, fall harvest gatherings, and special celebrations have further helped connect residents with local creators in a relaxed, inviting atmosphere.

Beautification has always been central to Northeast Arts' mission. Early Window Dressing projects brought color and personality to vacant commercial corridors long before murals became common on Independence Avenue. Some of those painted boards, rescued after building demolitions, now live on as art pieces in their own right.

The Window Dressing concept later inspired Kansas City Art Institute professor Hector Casanova, a Northeast resident, who partnered with Kansas City Public Schools to expand the idea. Today, artwork created by KCAI students adorns vacant school building windows and retaining walls — a living legacy of Northeast Arts' original vision.

Through mural collaborations, pop-up installations, and ongoing partnerships with artists, the organization continues to turn once-forgotten corners into vibrant points of neighborhood pride.

Now operating as a small-but-mighty 501(c)(3), Northeast Arts KC relies on volunteers, board leadership, and community support. Its website, NortheastArtsKC.org, lists events, board members, volunteer opportunities, and ways to donate.

The group also maintains a public phone line and mailing address, keeping its operations transparent and accessible — a reflection of its neighborhood-first ethos.

As Northeast Arts KC celebrates 30 years, its formula remains refreshingly simple: make art accessible, invite community participation, and brighten the Historic Northeast one creative act at a time.

For those eager to support the next 30 years — whether as a volunteer, donor, or chalk-wielding artist — event details and opportunities can be found at NortheastArtsKC.org.

Boards were painted by artists to be installed on vacant buildings as part of the "Window Dressing" program. **Photo by Bryan Stalder**

Artists created art with sidewalk chalk for the Historic Northeast Chalk Walk event. **Photo by Bryan Stalder**

St. John Gardens located in the lot west of Back Door Pottery, 3922 St. John Ave. **Photo by Bryan Stalder**

The Mysterious Case of a Continually Lost and Found Memorial

Dorri Partain
Managing Editor

Generations of Northeasters have been intrigued by a large mound located in Kessler Park, known only as the "Indian Mound". While this mound itself contains its own myths and mysteries, a small metal marker that seems to appear and disappear from its parkland location has provided a curious tale for the staff of The Northeast News.

A postcard-sized bronze marker placed decades ago, near a previous playground area, was once well-known but eventually eased into obscurity as time passed.

With the engraved inscription, "To commemorate the supreme sacrifice made by the Northeast boys in World War II, Northeast Chapter American War Mothers", this marker was discovered as missing by August 1999, as once reported in the pages of The Northeast News.

At that time, News staff member and local historian Brad Finch asked readers for help locating the missing marker and was contacted anonymously, with the end result of retrieving the metal plaque.

Replacing this marker to its rightful spot became an Eagle Scout project for fifteen-year-old Patrick Mauk, an Indian Mound resident and member of Troop 165 at Budd Park Christian Church. Mauk contacted Finch and the June 7, 2000 issue of The Northeast News announced his project.

"I want to put the memorial back," said Mauk. "It's part of Northeast history and it belongs in Northeast." Mauk was required to research the history of the marker but no information was located at that time. He also had to appear before the Parks and Recreation board for approval to replace the marker at the Indian Mound site.

Two years later, The Northeast News reported Mauk had completed the project in its July 10, 2002 issue. The plaque was mounted onto a larger piece of granite, and assisted by family and additional scouts, was cemented into place near the base of a tree on the east side of the Indian Mound.

"It seemed like a small thing to do, putting this back," Mauk said in 2002. "It still is, I guess, but I've put all the work into it now."

Fast forward about 15 years, when The Northeast News received a phone inquiry about the American War Mothers memorial marker. Patrick's family, since moved to Omaha, Nebraska, had looked for the marker during a visit to Kansas City and could not locate it, his mother Julie Mauk told us.

Two staff members familiar with the marker (myself included), who thought they knew where it was located, searched near every tree on the east side of the mound and couldn't find it either. Calls were made to the Parks & Recreation department- had it been moved? Was it placed in storage? Was the tree it was near cut down?

No one seemed to know - but a clue that explained the original purpose of this small plaque, which was placed following the long ago planting of a maple tree, was located.

Founded in Indianapolis in 1918, the American War Mothers had chapters in cities across America that planted trees and placed memorials in memory of their fallen sons. During a ceremony on Oct. 1, 1951, fifty persons attended the placing of this plaque at the base of a tree planted in April at the Indian Mound, according to a clipping from the Kansas City Star that was provided by a Parks department historian.

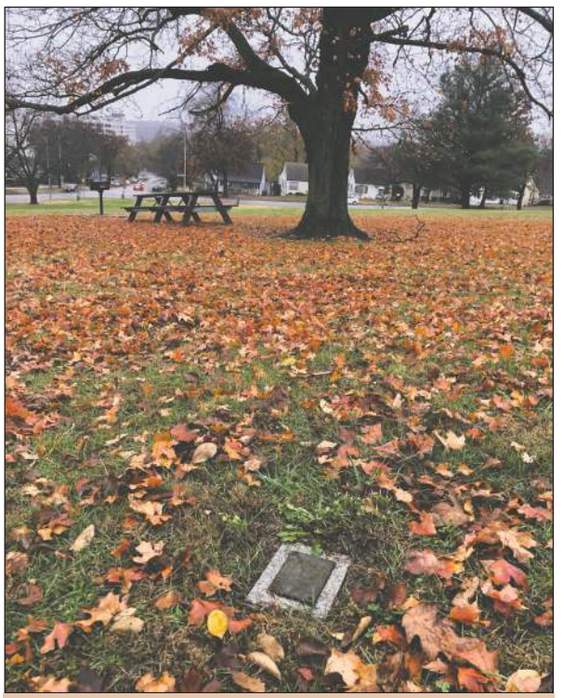
But with no other clues, News staffers made the assumption that for whatever reason, the marker had gone missing as it had once before.

Unless we were all looking in the wrong area of the mound.

Just as before, with no tree nearby, the placement of this marker becomes random and difficult to locate.

News staffer Bryan Stalder was wandering the mound grounds in October and came across the memorial marker, which he mentioned in his recent short story, "Last Call for the Living".

Stalder was not aware that other staff members thought it was missing, but luckily, he had taken a photo of it- and he remembered where he found it.



Marker located at Indian Mound. Visit NortheastNews.net to see a close up photo of the marker, as well as images from our archives about the mystery.
Photo by Dorri Partain

A visit to the mound on Friday, November 21 by both staff members verified that this marker, while in a very random location, was still where it had been cemented in place in 2002. A sunken area of ground nearby indicates where a tree once grew.

Contacted by phone, Julie Mauk was pleased to hear the news that the marker her son worked so hard to replace is safe, sound, and right where it should be- though not easy to locate. While Patrick is now married, father of three, and living in Florida, his parents Julie and Dick plan to be in Kansas City over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and plan to visit this small marker that became a two-year project in his and his family's lives.

Indian Mound Park is located at Gladstone and Belmont boulevards and is known to be associated with early Native American tribes.

Documenting Family & Business Traditions for the Holidays

Dr. Adrienne B. Haynes, Esq., Contributor

I consider myself one of my family's historians. I have spent countless hours on ancestry websites, watching family videos, going through pictures, and recording verbal history from my loved ones. I have traced my paternal and maternal family trees back several generations and have had some fun finds on the journey, like a pristine Collier's Magazine from 1945 that had a few page spread on my great-great-great grandmother Effie Husbands. These records are as special to me as the handwritten recipes from my mom.

I also have a few traditions in my business that I find are important to prioritize our mission and community. At SEED Law, we regularly host continuing education workshops for our clients and community members to help demystify business law and estate planning questions. For the ten year anniversary this year, we hosted a coffee social and relaunched the Community Office Hours program to continue providing mentoring to organizations like eFactory.

As we approach the holidays, I encourage you to reflect on and celebrate the history and traditions in your family and business.

For family traditions, consider the following:

Document your family's holiday traditions with photo, video, and digital memories. Which holidays do you celebrate, and how?

Write down your top five family recipes for safekeeping. Clearly mark if the recipes are trade secrets! If you don't yet have any family recipes, it's never too late to start.

Make a video sharing the key moments in your life story and the family memories that you can remember. These recordings are invaluable today and for future generations. The Midwest Geneolgy Center has "Tell Me a Story Oral History Kits" available for check out free of charge.

Preserve photos, writings, and mementos by digitizing or reviewing their storage for long term safe-keeping.

Update your personal estate plan. A long term generational wealth plan requires documentation and years of planning, contributing, and updating. Go through your key estate planning documents and make sure everything reflects your wishes.

Consider taking a genealogy class. The Black Archives of Mid-America and the Midwest Genealogy Center both host regular classes that offer resources and tools for individuals and families that want to expand their tools and research options.

For business traditions, it's a great time to reflect and give back:

Sponsor a holiday gathering to celebrate clients and stakeholders and highlight a local restaurant or event space. There are several businesses in the Northeast that would be great for a holiday party- Garozzo's, PH Coffee, and The Museum of Kansas City to name a few.

Review and update your business plan. A business plan should provide team members with a practical, up to date guide and strategic plan with a focus on the next 6-18 months. This plan should be reviewed quarterly and updated on an annual basis. Stop by The NEKC Chamber of Commerce if you're looking for business resources.

Host a meeting with your professional service providers and key vendors. Schedule a meeting with lawyers, accountants, bankers, insurance agents, lenders and others who help support the compliance and sustainability of your company. Share any updated goals or strategies that you're planning to incorporate to see how they can assist.

Consider your community contribution. It's a great time of year to sponsor a charitable event or cause and to get involved in giving back. Consider working with a Northeast based nonprofit organization, your neighborhood association, or a local school.

Developing traditions and taking a moment to celebrate with loved ones are important in building community. Happy Holidays from SEED Law!

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Thanks for reading! My name is Dr. Adrienne B. Haynes and I'm an entrepreneur and attorney based here in Kansas City. My law firm, SEED Law, has been partnering with business owners across the Northeast and the city for over 10 years. I loved living in the Northeast and I was fortunate to serve as an Entrepreneur in Residence for the Kauffman Foundation in 2017. Together with a dedicated group of Northeast residents and leaders, we explored a community designed innovation district pilot program. I was able to present this work during a TEDxUMKC Talk on Community Innovation Design in 2020.

Over the next few weeks, I'll be contributing articles and resources on small business and estate planning legal considerations. If you have any questions, please reach out to me directly at adrienne@seed.legal.

EXPLORE • DISCOV

Last minute items for your Thanksgiving Dinner are

Forgot something for Thanksgiving? Burned a pie? Realized you're out of foil, gravy, or even a turkey? Don't panic—eve missing tools, or an easy meal the night before is Just Around The Corner on Independence Avenue. Use this guide to on Thanksgiving Day to help you avoid a holiday crisis.

Forgotten Ingredients

Common items people realize they're missing mid-recipe:

- Sage & nutmeg
- Vanilla extract
- Brown sugar
- Marshmallows
- Pecans
- Whipped cream
- Pie crusts
- Gravy mixes
- Alcohol
- Peanut oil

Items featured at aldi.com. Availability subject to vary by location.

Missing Cooking Tools

Once-a-year essentials that tend to go missing:

- Meat thermometer
- Baster/heat bags
- Trays & platters
- Graters & peelers
- Cake pans & rolling pins
- Aluminum foil
- Measuring cups
- Can opener
- Kitchen knives
- Wood Pellets

Items featured at acehardware.com. Availability subject to vary by location.

This information is provided for you through the Independence Avenue CID (Community Improvement District) the Northeast Kansas City Chamber Of Co

ER • EXPERIENCE

Just Around The Corner!

rything you need for last-minute fixes, forgotten ingredients, find nearby stores and restaurants open the day before and

Emergency Replacements

Items people grab when something burns, breaks, or doesn't turn out:

- **Turkey legs**
- **Whole turkeys**
- **Gravy**
- **Bakery pies**
- **Ham**

Night-Before Meal Solutions

Nobody wants to cook the night before—popular grabs include:

- **Pizza Hut Express**
- **McDonald's**
- **Hardee's**
- **Subway**
- **Taco Bell**

FOUR CORNERS COMMUNITY CALL

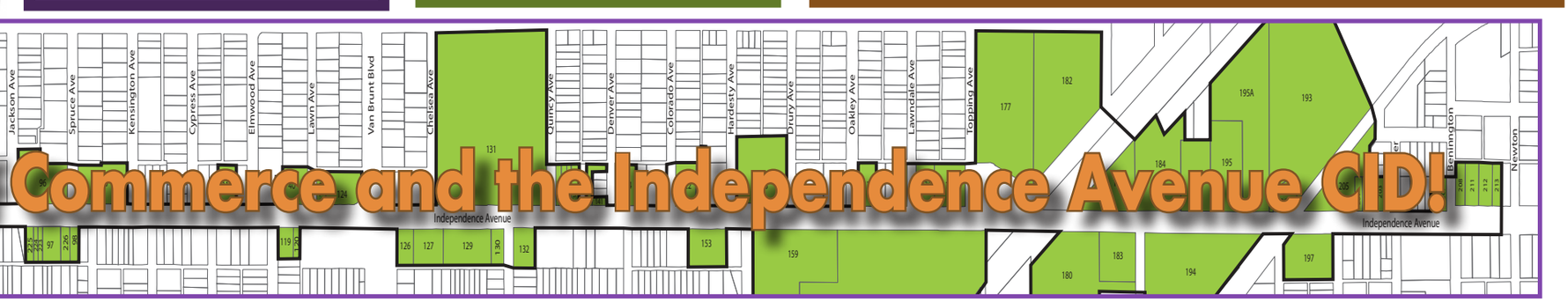
Last week's Independence Avenue Community Improvement District 4-Corners Community Call was at RideKC Bike Share Station located at Independence Blvd. & Woodland Ave, near the KCU Student Garden and Orchard.

JOIN US THIS FRIDAY AT 3PM FOR OUR 4 CORNERS COMMUNITY CALL

7/Eleven
1701 Independence Blvd.

Thanksgiving Day Store Hours

Cosentino's Price Chopper - 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
El Mercado Fresco - 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
San Antonio Market - 6:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Gringo Loco - 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
El Torito - 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Elvira's Bakery - 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Aldi - CLOSED
Walgreens - CLOSED
Westlake Ace Hardware - CLOSED



Commerce and the Independence Avenue CID!

It's All Northeast To Me

Jimmy Fitzner
Contributor

Growing up at 9th & Elmwood, my family never knew the neighborhood by any name other than "Northeast". I went to James Elementary, in the Northeast. I played baseball at Whatsoever Community Center, in the Northeast. My first job was at Westlake Ace Hardware on Independence Ave. When my wife and I bought our first home near Super Flea in 2004, we learned that we now lived in North Indian Mound; the hardware store is in Sheffield; Whatsoever sits on the border of Sheffield and East Blue Valley; as it turns out I had grown up in Lykins.

These separate identities make a lot of sense given our density, geographic size, and architectural diversity, but it always felt like one Northeast to me. My friends in Scarritt Renaissance, Independence Plaza, Columbus Park, and Pendleton Heights also feel that connection; they sense the difference when venturing out, and the feeling of coming back home. In any number of ways, it's just a little different here. A place with a palpable charm and an unmistakable grit. "Northeast" is a shared identity that is older than any of us and will outlive all of us.

After our second child arrived in 2019, I found myself asking: what does my family owe our community? What does my community owe my family? How can I help improve the things I can no longer accept or ignore? How do I let the rest of the world know that we deserve nice things too? Strangely, it was each individual neighborhood association, which established identities in their own right, that provided answers. In my area, the Indian Mound Neighborhood Association (IMNA) was fixing up abandoned homes on my block, putting on events at our parks, and protesting to save our elementary schools. I began attending our monthly meetings and eventually volunteered to sit on their board. As the current president, I see many challenges ahead but also the clear difference we can make by utilizing the tools available to us.

We meet neighbors, discuss housing, talk about what it feels like to bike at night on Cliff Drive or walk our kids to school in the morning. You might see us hosting a pumpkin patch or picking up trash. We try not to take ourselves so seriously, and yet City councilpeople want our opinion; nonprofits seek our letters of support; our projects win grant money worth tens of thousands of dollars; judges grant us temporary possession of abandoned homes while we match the home with a rehabber (who often becomes a new neighbor through Legal Aid's "Urban Homesteader" Program). Like it or not, there is a certain level of power held by your neighborhood group. My ask is that you step forward and seize it!

Speaking with other neighborhood leaders across Northeast, they are also concerned about how to involve more of their neighbors. Additionally, they agree on the importance of a shared identity and I'm proud of our growing relationship with other neighborhood associations across Northeast and beyond. There were times we worked in siloes but I believe that time has passed, at least for now. Northeast neighborhoods have each other's backs: either through amplifying our shared assets (like our beautiful parks) or by working together to solve our commonly held challenges (like reversing the trend of demolished homes and vacant buildings or being maligned as a dangerous "services district").

Multi-neighborhood solidarity with one another is only possible when we have the support of our greatest asset: the people who live here. All of our neighborhood organizations need more volunteers to give feedback, fill secretary or treasurer positions, or get their hands dirty at a clean up. You might not even realize how big an asset you are to your community. For instance, at IMNA meetings we have too few Spanish speakers, young people, or people that grew up here. That said, everyone has a skill and everyone is welcome! You don't have to know anything about being a "neighborhood leader" to jump in and help.

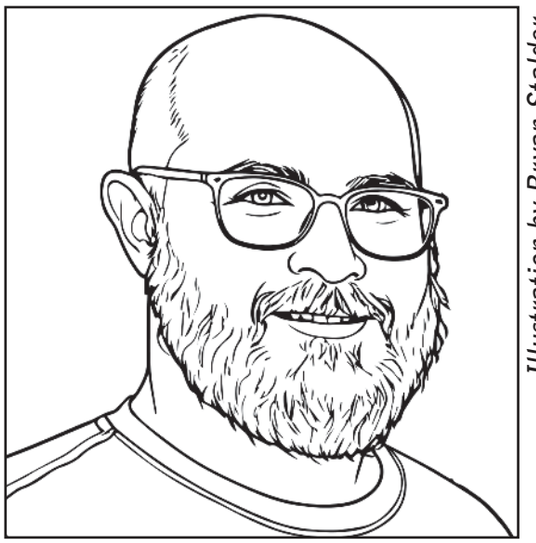


Illustration by Bryan Stalder

Jimmy Fitzner

My second term as president of IMNA will end in July of 2027 and I will voluntarily roll off our board; new neighbors will need to step up and take the reins. For my part, I will guide our current board to continue the good work of past volunteers, while planting some seeds of our own.

Our neighborhood organizations aren't the only way to create community, of course. Hosting a neighborhood potluck, attending a religious service, volunteering at your child's school, or just being that porch-sitting neighbor who says Hello are some of the many ways I see us maintaining community. However, important decisions are being made without many of you. Do you feel confident that these decisions are being made in your family's best interest?

Don't sell yourself short; find out which Northeast neighborhood you're in, attend the neighborhood meeting, and listen. You might like what you hear and think "I can help with that". Or maybe you won't like what you hear and think "we can do better". Either way, we could all use a hand maintaining this wonderful and unique group of neighborhoods we call Northeast.

Send us an email at president.imna@gmail.com if you're ready to tap in.

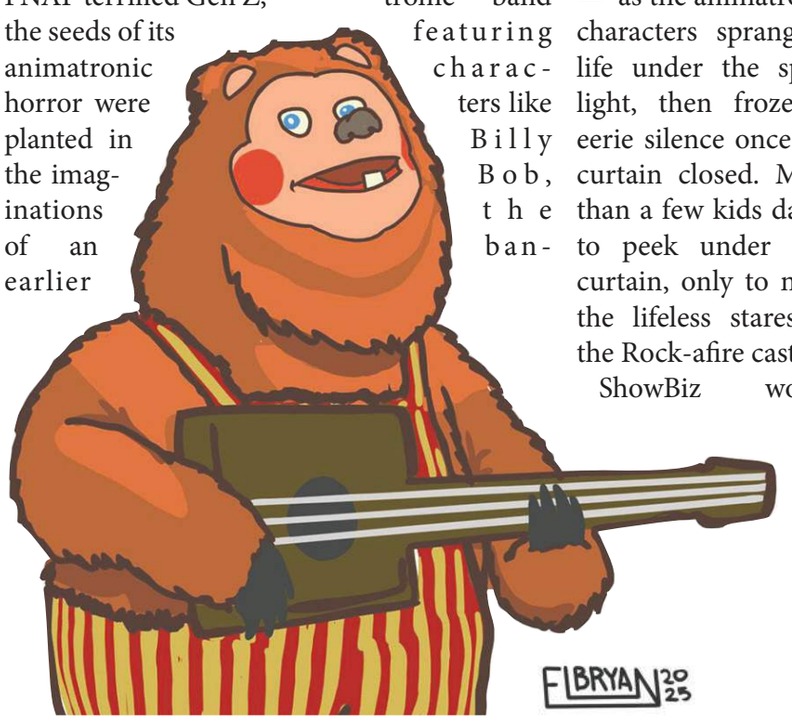
In Community,
Jimmy Fitzner
President,
Indian Mound
Neighborhood
Association

From ShowBiz Pizza to Five Nights at Freddy's: How Kansas City Helped Inspire a Horror Phenomenon

Bryan Stalder
Contributor

The Five Nights at Freddy's film franchise returns to theaters on December 5 with the highly anticipated sequel, Five Nights at Freddy's 2. The first movie was a massive box office success in 2023, grossing nearly $300 million worldwide despite mixed reviews. Based on the viral indie video game series created by Scott Cawthon, the films expand on a fan-favorite universe of haunted animatronics and sinister lore.

But long before FNAF terrified Gen Z, the seeds of its animatronic horror were planted in the imaginations of an earlier generation—thanks to a themed entertainment center named The ShowBiz Pizza Place.



In 1980, the first ShowBiz Pizza Place opened its doors right here in Kansas City at the Antioch Shopping Center (2726 NE Vivion Rd.). The restaurant was the brainchild of Robert L. Brock, a local Holiday Inn franchisee, who partnered with Aaron Fechter of Creative Engineering to compete with Chuck E. Cheese. What set ShowBiz apart was the Rock-afire Explosion, an elaborate animatronic band featuring characters like Billy Bob, the banjo-playing bear; Fatz Geronimo, the bedazzled jacket–wearing gorilla on keyboards; Mitzi Mozzarella, the mouse pop star; and even a giant spider named "Antioch," a nod to the mall where it all began.

For families living in Northeast Kansas City, ShowBiz Pizza was just a quick 15-minute drive over the old Chouteau Bridge. Many from the so-called Xennial generation (those born between 1977–1985) still remember celebrating birthdays there — equal parts thrilling and terrifying — as the animatronic characters sprang to life under the spotlight, then froze in eerie silence once the curtain closed. More than a few kids dared to peek under that curtain, only to meet the lifeless stares of the Rock-afire cast.

ShowBiz would eventually merge with Chuck E. Cheese in the late 1980s, phasing out the Rock-afire Explosion in a process called "Concept Unification." By the early 1990s, the ShowBiz brand was gone, but the uneasy charm of smiling animatronic animals never truly disappeared.

Kansas City briefly saw the Rock-afire Explosion make a comeback in 2018, when the short-lived Rockafire Bar opened at 334 E. 31st St. The venue featured the band performing updated songs for a new generation, but it closed just a year later. Today, the only publicly operating Rock-afire band can be found at Billy Bob's Wonderland in Barboursville, West Virginia, where fans gather each July for an event known as BillyCon.

Decades after Antioch Mall hosted the first ShowBiz Pizza, that same unnerving feeling would inspire Scott Cawthon's Five Nights at Freddy's, a video game that later spawned comic books, movies, and more. First released in 2014 on the digital platform Steam, this indie horror game transformed childhood nostalgia for pizza-party robots into one of the biggest video game franchises of the last decade, spawning sequels, books, merchandise, and now, blockbuster films.

So when you sit down in the movie theatre to watch Five Nights at Freddy's 2 this December, remember: it all (kind of) started right here in Kansas City—where Antioch Mall gave life to Billy Bob, Mitzi Mozzarella, Antioch the Spider, and a legacy that still creeps into pop culture today.

Haiku by Sam Crowley

Every day at eight
Hardee's is the place to be
Coffee with my friends

Listen To The Night
By Michael R. Partain

Listen to the night
Listen to the wolf as he begs to the moon
His long and lonely howl, searching
For a kindred soul.

Listen to the night
Listen to the owl who keeps asking who,
Who, what, when, how.

Listen to the night
Listen to the wind
As it blows through the trees
From a soft breeze to a stormy rage.

Listen to the night
Listen with your heart
Listen as it tells its story
Listen to the night.

Gas Meter Vandalism Concerns Blue Valley Neighbors

Dorri Partain
Managing Editor

An October gas meter incident brought Blue Valley neighbors together on Thursday, Nov. 20 to discuss a dangerous scenario with a representative from Spire Energy.

During their regular neighborhood association meeting at Guadalupe Center Elementary (5123 E. Truman Rd.), members learned details from the affected homeowner and nearby neighbor, who alerted the homeowner after encountering a heavy concentration of natural gas centered at that property.

The Northeast News is withholding the names and addresses of these individuals for their protection.

Spire technicians arrived at the address and discovered the gas meter had been tampered with —- a stick had been inserted into the meter's regulator — and determined this could only be caused by an individual as intentional vandalism.

Due to the nature of the incident and safety of the homeowner, Kansas City police were called to the scene. Due to call volume, no officers arrived and the homeowner and neighbor filed a report at the East Patrol Division office a week later. With no suspects, physical or recorded evidence, the police department has suspended this case pending further leads.

Carl Bowman, construction supervisor with Spire Energy, addressed neighbor's concerns about this type of incident, stating that he's never encountered a similar situation previously.

"It's not common knowledge, shared, about how a (meter) regulator would work," said Bowman.

"For someone to stick a stick in it, jam it wide open, I don't know how that could happen."

The neighbor who alerted the homeowner stated that the gas level was 29 parts per million in the home's basement when Spire arrived for the emergency shut-off.

Neither the homeowner or surrounding neighbors have any suspects in mind but spoke about gas pipe vandalism that occurred on their block, in which pipes were cut from a vacant home's crawl space but still had gas service, causing a similar situation with natural gas flowing through the home prior to an emergency shut-off call.

The homeowner asked Bowman what could be done to protect his neighbors since they have the same type meters outside their homes.

"What's protecting them is the system itself," replied Bowman. The regulator should be there for protecting against the gas pressure. If somebody vandalized it, if they have the knowledge about it, how to do it, I can't say there's a lot of protection that we put in place to protect against vandalism. Vandalism is what it is- vandalism."

Spire Energy- a natural gas service provider that operates across Missouri - began switching in 2024 to ultrasonic gas meters that are enclosed and have the technology to automatically shut off if gas pressure rises.

Spire media representative John Mink, during a phone interview, stated that meters older than ten years are being replaced. While these ultrasonic meters have the technology to be shut off remotely, Spire does not have the network capability to utilize this option in emergencies.

Carl Bowman with Spire Energy (center, with black hat) speaks with Blue Valley neighbors during their monthly meeting.
Photo by Dorri Partain

Bowman stated this new meter could be installed once the case filed with the police department was completely closed.

Since this gas meter incident, the homeowner has been without gas service. Spire technicians replaced the gas adjustment on his current meter, the homeowner said, but pipes inside the house were damaged to the point that any gas entering the home would leak.

Natural gas is odorless but the distinctive smell of rotten eggs is added to alert homeowners of dangerous gas levels. If you suspect a gas leak, leave your home immediately and contact Spire at its emergency line at 1-800-582-1234 or call 911.

CHRONICLES

Rusty A. Donovan, 42, of North Kansas City, passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, November 6, 2025.

Born April 10, 1983, in Silver City, New Mexico, he was the loving son of Scott and Tena Towler.

He is survived by his brothers, Justin Donovan and Cody (Wendy) Donovan; sister, Kathryn (Shawn) O'Donoghue; nieces, Leah Donovan (Tedrick Sears), Sidney Donovan, and Makenzie Donovan; great-niece, Aspyn Sears; uncle and aunt, Matt and Molly Wilburn; cousins, Katelyn and Liam Wilburn; and grandmother, Rae Hynson.

Rusty had a deep love for adventure, both in life and in imagination. He enjoyed reading fantasy novels, playing Dungeons & Dragons and Pathfinder with family, attending band gigs, and cheering on Sporting KC. Fearless, kind, and generous, Rusty would give you the shirt off his back and lived every day to the fullest. He loved sunsets, bonfires, and time outdoors—but most of all, he cherished his family and friends.

Memorial contributions may be made to the donor's choice, c/o Cody & Wendy Donovan, 16215 Rudd Road, Lawson, MO 64062. A private celebration of life will be held. Arrangements by Thurman Funeral Home, Richmond, Mo.

Nadine's Northeast

At 12th & Baltimore

Historical fiction written by Betsy Cochran

June 8, 1921 - continued
Kansas City, MO

Dorothy headed from the apartment on Park Avenue down to Independence Avenue to catch the 53 Streetcar Line, westbound toward downtown Kansas City. Even at just six years old, she was already an experienced rider. When Ma was home with only Dorothy and baby Regina, she often sent Dorothy on errands. Quick on her feet and careful with money, Dorothy loved the role.

Ma taught her to sit just behind the driver. "Keep your eyes open and your head down, and be good" she'd say.

Dorothy liked to imagine herself one of the ladies bound for work downtown—hair pinned, handbag tucked, perfume trailing. She planned to be one of them someday, a fancy lady with gloves of her own.

That morning she got off near 12th and Baltimore, by the grand Hotel Baltimore, in the heart of the hotel and theater district. Her sister Marie, eighteen, worked breakfast and lunch shifts in the hotel restaurant. Dorothy stepped down, smoothed her skirt, and lifted her chin like Marie had taught her.

She passed the Hotel Baltimore's entrance and slipped into the alley between it and the Kansas City Club. Laughter floated down from open windows above, bouncing between the brick walls. Dorothy paused near the kitchen door until Marie appeared, her uniform neat but her face worried.

"The Sisters from St. Aloysius came after you left," Dorothy blurted. "They took Ma to St. Mary's. She didn't look good."

Marie's brow furrowed. "I'll get Anna to cover me," she decided quickly. "Stay near Charlie out front."

Dorothy darted toward the corner of 12th and Baltimore where Charlie O'Malley worked one of his family's pretzel and popcorn carts. His hair was flaming red, his sleeves rolled up, a towel at his belt. "Hey kid! What's shakin'?" he teased, slipping into a mix of Irish lilt and Kansas City twang.

"Ma had the baby last night," Dorothy said. "But she got real sick. So I'm waiting for Marie."

Charlie took it in quietly. He had been smitten with Marie for months. Being the eldest daughter left at home, he understood Marie carried much of the family's burden, especially since their mother's health had begun to fail after during her last pregnancy.

Charlie's parents, Irish immigrants who had arrived in Kansas City after years of hardship, had built a modest livelihood with their food carts. Charlie now worked downtown, proud to help. He remembered one winter when Marie came out from her double shift, pale and tired. He couldn't leave her sitting on the stoop, so he handed her a warm pretzel. That simple kindness became the start of something steady between them.

photo from Missouri Valley Special Collections

Now, as Dorothy spoke, Charlie decided: someday he would marry Marie. He didn't yet know how, but his mother had a Claddagh ring tucked in her jewelry box—two hands clasping a crowned heart—that might serve as a start.

Soon Marie emerged from the hotel, her urgency giving way to relief at seeing Charlie. Dorothy munched happily on a paper cone of popcorn. "Thanks for watching her," Marie told Charlie softly. "We'll take the Main Street line to St. Mary's."

Charlie offered to check on the younger children at home. Marie, touched by his kindness, agreed. For the first time in days she felt a flicker of hope.

She and Dorothy boarded the streetcar, standing shoulder to shoulder among the midday crowd. When they arrived at St. Mary's, the marble staircase was crowded with anxious families, cigarette smoke curling out the windows. Upstairs, Sister Agnes met them with a grave face.

Their mother lay behind thin partitions, pale and still. "She's alive," the Sister said gently, "but very weak. It will take time."

Marie steadied herself. In that instant, she understood she was now responsible for everything. Their father had been gone for months—more a burden than a help even when he was there. She drew a slow breath, swallowed the weight of it, and offered a silent prayer while Dorothy fidgeted at her side.

Later, as they walked home in the heat of the afternoon, Marie's mind swirled with the burden before her. When they climbed the creaking stairs to the Park Avenue apartment, a glow met them—every votive candle lit like some kind of shrine.

Continued on next page

At 12th & Baltimore

Continued from previous page

Inside, Charlie O'Malley knelt, hair combed, wearing his best shirt. In his hand was the Claddagh ring. "If you wear it with the heart outward, it means we're engaged," he said gently. "When we're married, it turns inward. But first, you have to say yes."

Marie glanced at her sisters standing around our cramped apartment on Park Avenue, all wide-eyed. For the first time that day, she smiled.

Marie turned back to Charlie, raising a brow. "You sure you know what you're signing up for?"

"Absolutely," Charlie said, nodding with all the certainty he could muster.

"Well, okay then," Marie replied, smiling.

Nadine's Northeast follows the life of Nadine Burnett (née Pulliam), who was born in 1921 and spent most of her life in Northeast Kansas City, where she raised ten children amid the city's rapid changes in the 20th century. Written by her granddaughter, Betsy Cochran, these historical fiction stories draw from Nadine's lived experiences, local history, and a little family lore. Each installment stands alone while weaving into a larger portrait of Nadine's past. For a deeper dive, visit betsycochran.substack.com, where you can subscribe for free or choose a paid plan for extended content.

I've been prowling around the kitchen all week, sniffing out the scents of turkey, rolls, and pies… and it inspired me to cook up something special for you. This word is search stuffed with all sorts of seasonal favorites. The puzzle is perfectly seasoned for word-search fans of all ages. See how many Thanksgiving ingredients you can find. Send pictures of your completed puzzle to northeastnewskc@gmail.com.

H A N J E M A C A R O N I Y C
P U M P K I N S S I H G A N F
L T A N C S X R V Q A M F B Y
T I Q Z E Q T P F D S Q H D S
R O L L S X U P E C A N S C N
Y B P H A M R X U J F J N R Y
V P E T M G K D C A R R O T S
A C R A N B E R R Y A C V Z T
R I K O N O Y S T U F F I N G
G P I E S S T P O T A T O E S

ANSWERS

NOVEMBER 12 ANAGRAM: "PARKS AND RECREATION"

Solved by: Thaylia Smith

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602 Notices

OUR NEXT issues will be piblished December 10 and December 24. Northeast News offices will be closed on November 27 & 28.

CLASSIFIED AD RATES- $15.00 for 25 words, with 40 cents for each aditional word. Rates for Contractor & Builder ads are $3.00 per line. Call 816-241-0765 to schedule your ad- cash, check and credit cards accepted.

603 Wanted

ROOM- Basement or Garage Apartment wanted. Elderly gentleman, desn't drink, smoke or do drugs. Ron Zych, 816-405-3566

Mueller Oberkfell & Jones, LLC
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

MEMBERS OF MISSOURI SOCIETY OF CPA'S AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CPA'S

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors
Scuola Vita Nuova

We have audited the accompanying statement of assets, liabilities and net assets - modified cash basis of Scuola Vita Nuova. (a non-profit corporation) as of June 30, 2025 and the related statement of support, revenue and expenses - modified cash basis for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the School's administration. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

The accompanying financial statement was prepared on the modified cash basis, which is a comprehensive basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the net assets of Scuola Vita Nuova as of June 30, 2025 and the change in its net assets for the year then ended, on the modified cash basis of accounting described above.

This report and the accompanying financial statement are in summary form. Our complete report and the School's financial statements are available for public viewing at the School's administrative office.

Mueller Oberkfell & Jones, LLC

Mueller Oberkfell & Jones, LLC
Certified Public Accountants
Arnold, Missouri

November 17, 2025

SCUOLA VITA NUOVA
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - MODIFIED CASH BASIS - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND	TOTALS
REVENUES:				
Local	$ 788,923	$ 317,384	$ 143,430	$ 1,249,737
State	5,440,252	2,073,676	-	7,513,928
Federal	569,667	-	-	569,667
Total Revenues	6,798,842	2,391,060	143,430	9,333,332
EXPENDITURES:				
Instruction	1,744,736	1,861,966	88,604	3,695,306
Student activities	41,308	-	-	41,308
Student services	297,088	-	-	297,088
Intructional staff support	166,787	168,607	-	335,394
General administration and central services	381,376	196,039	-	577,415
Building administration	299,603	157,144	-	456,747
Operation of plant	737,998	-	206,504	944,502
Transportation	19,626	-	-	19,626
Food service	375,089	-	16,434	391,523
Community services	85,034	7,304	-	92,338
Building acquisition and improvements	-	-	934,725	934,725
Debt service:				
Principal	-	-	197,295	197,295
Interest and fees	-	-	296,820	296,820
Total Expenditures	4,148,645	2,391,060	1,740,382	8,280,087
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	2,650,197	-	(1,596,952)	1,053,245
Other Financing Sources (Uses):				
Transfers	(1,596,952)	-	1,596,952	-
Total other financing sources (uses)	(1,596,952)	-	1,596,952	-
Net change in fund balances	1,053,245	-	-	1,053,245
Fund balance, beginning	4,713,390	-	-	4,713,390
Fund balance, ending	$ 5,766,635	$ -	$ -	$ 5,766,635