



DGNA NEWSLETTER

Issue 115 August, 2007

*The next DGNA meeting will be on Thursday
September 6th at 7 PM at 603 E. Grove.
Melanie Hunter, hostess*

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OSCAR MANDEL HOUSE

RESTORATION

Anything is Possible

A trip up to Madison, this past weekend, kind of brought things full circle for me regarding our "little" house restoration project. Dawn and I joined 60 – 70 other people, from across the country, which were, through the power of the World Wide Web, brought together for a weekend of training at the Ironman Wisconsin venues. You may or may not know that the term "ironman" is used to define a triathlon with cumulative distances of a 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike and 26.2 mile run. I'm currently training for Ironman Wisconsin 2007, which will be held in September. Many of the people who were brought together for this weekend of training, in Madison, were strangers—strangers with a common purpose—to become Ironman Wisconsin finishers. At dinner on Friday night, the topic of "the house" came up, and the usual questions ensued. It was at this moment, in this place, with these people, that one particular question—one I'd been asked hundreds of times before—had special meaning, and unexpected impact. "Why did you move the house?" Without hesitation I explained that the house had a date with a wrecking ball etc. etc. As conversation turned to other topics I continued to think about that question and the layers of meaning within it. Obviously the house was moved to preserve it, but why did I move the house?—Of all of the people in the world Dawn and I did not seem likely candidates to undertake such a "project"—2 women, no construction/restoration experience to speak of between us, limited financial resources, no fantastic network of building, governmental or banking resources to

Continued on page 4

Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association Officers:

Terri Clemens President
Melanie Hunter Vice-President
Julia Sutherland Secretary
John Elterich Treasurer

Board Members at large:

Seth Klessig
Pamala Eaton
Jerica Etheridge

Committee chairs:

Safety Brad William
Block captains Pamala Eaton
Newsletter Don and Lisa Texeira

NEIGHORLY NEIGHBORS

Lets all be neighborly neighbors and respectful when it comes to loud music and barking dogs. Many neighbors have their windows open day and night and sleep during the day for evening shifts. Loud music and barking dogs keep third shift workers and babies from getting the sleep they need.

We also need to remember to clean up after our dogs when out for a walk or in our own yards. The smell has registered some complaints and it is a health hazard. Neighbors do not want to call the police, so lets be good neighbors and avoid the problem.

Pamala Eaton


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Parks and Recreation 434-2260
Miller Park Zoo 434-2250
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SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM ALERT

Here is an important warning about a problem we should be watchful for. Humans and pets are susceptible. It's important to be aware of it because the problem is often misdiagnosed. Please read:

Our dog Max recently was diagnosed with blastomycosis caused by the fungus *Blastomyces dermatitidis*. From everything I've read he is lucky to only have lost an eye.

While I suggest you do your own research, I learned that the fungus is naturally found in the soil, but typically near waterways, river valleys and beaver dams. It can also be present, however, in construction sites, potting or other gardening soils. Once the fungus is released from the ground the microscopic spores are usually inhaled settling deep into the lungs. Once in the blood stream it can cause many health problems. We learned from the veterinary team at the U of I that Max probably stepped on the fungus and rubbed his mucous membranes causing infection. We were told it can be transmitted by directly touching the spores then contact with any mucous membranes, however, it cannot be transmitted from a person or animal to another. From what I read the health conditions associated with blastomycosis can be fatal if the fungus is not detected as the cause which commonly happens. Max was misdiagnosed twice with his eye so it deteriorated to the point it had to be removed. Blastomycosis is most often misdiagnosed as pneumonia or severe flu. Look for signs of coughing, difficulty breathing, listlessness or skin lesions in either pet or human.

We are concerned because other than our own yard, Max only goes for walks in the neighborhood so we still don't know where he picked this up from. The fungal infection can be easily treated with an antifungal medication that is expensive. We were quoted \$300-\$400 per month for Max, but did some research and found it for \$50 at a pharmacy in Arizona for animals. We hope no one has to endure what we have.

The Steeles, 511 E Front

A NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH SUCCESS STORY, PART 1

Some of our neighbors have been actively watching and reporting drug and prostitution activity on their block. Several concerned neighbors banded together to report to the police license plate numbers, personal descriptions, and vehicle information. They called 820.8888 and helped the officers, over a couple months time, to make two arrests at one address. Barb Atkins at city hall stepped in and communicated with the landlord, making him aware of the consequences he faces when his house has been declared a nuisance. (Two arrests for serious crimes makes the house eligible for nuisance abatement by the city, which can make the house unrentable for 6 months.)

The criminal activity at the house is much slower now, but the vigilant neighbors keep watching, the police keep responding, the landlord seems to be making an effort. They will not give up and they will win back their peaceful neighborhood. They have also forged bonds of friendship between them. Congratulations, neighbors. Keep it up, you'll win. We can all learn from your experience.

Terri Clemens

*Your Representative To Bloomington City
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Karen Schmidt

Alderman, Ward 6

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OSCAR MANDEL HOUSE, *from page 1*

draw upon.. So why did we move the house? The answer came to me with unbelievable clarity——Because we thought we could.

I thought we could move the house, because just a few months prior (September of 2003), I had crossed the finish line at Ironman Wisconsin. That accomplishment was so empowering that I didn't think that any challenge was too great or any obstacle insurmountable. Dawn was with me in Madison, that September day, living the Ironman experience with me, as she had for several months leading up to Ironman day. Truth be told, I wouldn't have made it to the Ironman starting line, let alone the finish line, had it not been for her. She managed my training schedule, handled travel logistics for races, and did tremendous amounts of research on everything related to triathlon. She gave me endless support that summer, along with heavy doses of much needed tough love on days that I lacked the motivation to get out the door to swim, bike or run. She believed in me and made the fulfillment of my Ironman dream her quest. When I crossed that finish line in Madison we were both left believing that anything was possible——even moving a house.

Ironman Wisconsin 2003 was the last triathlon that I would participate in for 3 ½ years, as I focused my energy on an entirely different endurance activity——moving and restoring a house. Ironically, it is “that house” that has brought me back to triathlon and pursuit of another Ironman finish. Dawn and I have gradually been reclaiming our pre-house move lives, making time for activities that we enjoyed before “the house” consumed all of our time and energy. We started going to the gym again; we com-

mitted to a marathon/1/2 marathon and started running again. When I began riding the bike again, last summer, with a friend who was pursuing her Ironman dream, I realized how much I missed triathlon. It wasn't just triathlon that I missed; it was the challenge of the Ironman——the mental and physical challenges encountered not only on Ironman day, but during months of training in preparation for the event. Most of all, I missed that feeling of accomplishment that I had when I crossed the finish line in Madison. Our house project, while full of mental and physical challenges, was not hitting the mark in terms of accomplishment, for either Dawn or myself. After 2 years of “housework”, we seemed miles away from any perceived finish line with our restoration project——we needed to find a way to recharge——rebuild momentum for the next surge of restoration work. And, the answer seemed to be the Ironman.

You might find it surprising, but Ironman events are extremely popular, with event registration generally closing within 2-3 hours of opening——with registration occurring 12 months prior to the event. So, early last September I committed mentally and financially to Ironman Wisconsin. With a definitive event date goal and knowing the time commitment involved with training, come spring, Dawn and I knew that we'd have to make the most of our time during the Fall/Winter, where the house was concerned, and we did——momentum regained. Tackling an Ironman while in the midst of such a huge project might seem like an extreme way to find rejuvenation... but its not... when you think that anything is possible.

Ironman training and related activities have consumed a lot of our time this summer, but that doesn't mean that work at the house has stalled. Since our last update several small exterior projects have been



completed: installation of screening over front porch windows, installation of a temporary floor and ceiling on the front porch, installation of chimney caps, installation of drip edges and shingles on the back-door overhang, installation of finial on front porch, and replacement of a couple of window sills. On the interior of the house we are continuing to work on plaster repairs (entry, pantry, 1/2 bath, pass-through bath) and restoration of light fixtures. The bench seats that were removed from the parlor and dining room, prior to the house move, are currently undergoing extensive restoration. In addition, maintenance of the existing landscape (lawn, perennial beds, parterre/ornamental vegetable garden) currently takes several hours a week to maintain.

As the September 9th Ironman Wisconsin date nears we expect the pace of restoration activities, at the house, to decrease significantly, as the time involved in, and intensity of, training activities increases. But come September 10th (okay, realistically maybe the 11th or 12th) we'll both be focusing on another finish line.

Diana and Dawn

ARE YOU NEW TO DIMMITT'S GROVE?

Welcome to our wonderful neighborhood! We would like to drop off a *Welcome Packet* to help you get to know our neighborhood better. The packet includes: name of your DGNA block captain and officers, a historic walking tour guide, City and garbage pickup information, and more. If interested, please call Pamala Eaton at 829-3424 for your Welcome Packet.

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“JUST TURN ON THE TAP”

Today, we go into the kitchen and turn on the hot or cold water, as needed. And, because most sinks today have a ‘spout’ between the hot and cold handle, we can mix the water to whatever temperature we want. It seems to be an endless supply, ever notice? (Unless you have a teenager who takes endless showers)

Before the turn of the 20th Century, things were not so ‘easy’ for most of our Victorian forefathers. In fact, just getting water ready for use was a project in itself.

The house I live in was built in 1892. It was the paragon of ‘high tech’ when it was built. The house had combination gas & electric lights (electric was undependable and in its infancy). The electric company was beginning to run wires all over town at that point. The house had a coal-fired steam boiler, making for lots of heat (and plenty of nasty coal dust). And, last but not least, it had a cistern, as many of the houses in Dimmitt’s Grove do or did.

The rainwater was collected from the large roof through a series of gutters and spouts and directed towards one common spot ‘the cistern’. These huge brick and cement holes in the ground usually could carry a careful household through any dry spell.

The water, as needed, was pumped, by hand up to the attic to a ‘gravity tank’. This was nothing more than a huge wooden box lined with galvanized metal. It was used to provide water pressure for the entire house. Pipes then came out of the tank to the various sinks, toilets etc.

This house had flush toilets (two of them) and the cistern water was used to flush them. It was also



used in the basement to wash clothing that was boiled in a huge caldron. This process puts a whole new meaning to “Monday is laundry day”. It was literally ‘all day’.

And, to heat the water...now comes the fun. There was almost always a coal or wood stove in the kitchen with a ‘side car’. This was an area of the stove that was filled with coal or wood and had pipes running through it. The water was heated by the burning coal or wood and then by gravity water was allowed to rise to a large riveted tank (normally high up on the wall above the stove) after being heated in the sidecar...it was stored there for use in the near future. There was not much in the way of insulation on these tanks.

This would provide water for a bath, washing dishes and cleaning. Unfortunately, if you wanted to use this device, it had to be started in the afternoon for use that evening. They were not fast nor did they replenish themselves quickly...but they worked. And in the warmer months...some how I do not think they were used much...talk about heating up the kitchen!

If you notice, many houses have the original kitchen (whenever possible) on the north end of the house. This was done because it is the coldest part of the house when the wind blows in the winter.

The water came out of a separate spout for hot and cold. They did not usually mix water except in the bathtub. Most homes did not have showers if they had indoor plumbing.

Then came a revolution “city water”. Have you ever been in an old house and seen 3 spouts in the kitchen or bath? One of them would say “City” on it. This was water that could be drunk without having to treat it (boiling or chemical).



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Sometime in the 1930's all of this was done away with and this 1892 house was 'modernized'. The gravity tank in the attic was abandoned, the cistern was allowed to empty and city water came from all the taps in the house. Heated water actually became available with the turn of a gas valve handle. Many homes became equipped with gas fired hot water heaters. They were a far cry from today's safe and trouble free models.

They had to be lit every time they were used and you had to remember to then turn them off, just like a gas stove. The temperature was not easily controlled but the water was hot and it was there rather quickly.

Electric water heaters came on the scene later in the century.


Today, we take our hot and cold water for granted. We grumble, at times about the water bill and how much it costs. A goodly part of the water bill goes for things other than the water usage itself (sewer etc). But, wouldn't you rather pay the amount of the bill every month than have to deal with cistern water, treating it, heating it and then once a year removing the large metal disk that covered the top of the cistern, climbing down in it to remove anything that 'accidentally' ended up in the water. And, no longer do you have to overheat your kitchen in the summer with a coal or wood stove to get hot water.

Of course, if you did not want to run the sidecar, you could always put a big pot of water on the stove and heat it for whatever you wanted...

I grew up knowing someone who still used the overhead reservoir and sidecar in the 1960s. I think I would rather pay the water bill.

Bob Rossano

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DIMMITT'S GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION:

July 5, 2007 Minutes

The July meeting of the Dimmitt's Grove Neighborhood Association was held at 7PM at Marie Litta Park. Thirteen neighbors were present for a question and answer session with Assistant Chief Randy McKlinley and patrolmen Pete Avery and Mark Blain. They discussed what we should do when we have disturbances in our neighborhood.

1. Call 820-8888. Plan to keep talking. Be patient, they may want you to talk to them until they reach the address you're reporting.
2. If there's a recurring problem, call every time it occurs. The squeaky wheel gets the grease.
3. Remember the police have to build a case based on evidence. They will use the information you provide to help them collect evidence, but it can take weeks or months of surveillance. Our surveillance helps them build that case.
4. Disrupt the criminals constantly by calling the police. Don't confront them yourself.

Neighbors noted excellent police response to their calls in the last months. We discussed a couple of problem areas in the neighborhood and were assured that the police are working hard on those problems, as has been noticed by neighbors.

Brenda Steele related the story of her dog contracting a fungal infection in the neighborhood. She will send the information to be printed in the newsletter. The infection is present in soil, and is often misdiagnosed. It is treatable if diagnosed quickly, so neighbors should be aware of the possibility. The fungus can be contracted by people or animals, but is not contagious.

Next year, the 2008 Day in Historic Dimmitt's Grove event will be held June 28. It will be based at the Vrooman Mansion. The Vrooman Mansion will be hosting a lunch for the event and vendors will be on their property. There will be house and garden tours, walking tours and possibly a pie baking contest. If you would like to volunteer to be on the house and garden tour please contact Sarah Hanzel or Jerica Etheridge. We will be looking for many volunteers as the event gets closer. We will be freezing \$3000 of our treasury to be sure we have adequate funds to do the event. This could

cause sidewalk grant money to be held back until after the event, which is our fund-raiser to provide sidewalk money. The grants are issued on a first come first serve basis. There are eleven people in line for them at this time. We have enough in the treasury to take care of most of these requests.

Pamala Eaton will be doing some new block captain assignments.

The park kiosk was vandalized. Neighbors reported drug and prostitution to our safety officer. Remember call 820-8888. Call, call, call. A neighbor's dog was attacked by an unleashed Grove St. pit bull and was badly hurt. Dogs must be leashed.

The next meeting will be Thursday Sept. 6 at 603 E. Grove at 7 PM. Our hostess will be Melanie Hunter.

Terri Clemens

DGNA SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT PROGRAM:

If you live in Dimmitt's Grove, you qualify for a grant from the neighborhood association to help with the cost of replacing your sidewalk. The city pays 50% if you use their approved program, and we will pay 40% of your share (20% of total).

If you're interested, please call the city engineering office and get your name on their list for next summer. Also, call or email Terri Clemens to get your name on the neighborhood list (oldstuff33@hotmail.com or 828-8848).

Funding is still healthy. The funds for this program come from our earnings from Day in Historic Dimmitt's Grove and from a Good Neighbor Grant from State Farm.