PORFEST: Let the music begin!

Thursday, June 16, 6 to 9 PM

So, last year KFNA tried this little thing called “Porch Fest.” It was a simple idea: All we had to do was encourage all the talented musicians in the neighborhood to sit on their front porches on the same evening and play music. It would be a great way, we thought, to hear music that you don’t normally listen to, to see other people hanging outside their houses and walking and biking the entire neighborhood, and for neighbors to discover each other’s secret talents. Boy, were we ever right! Porch Fest was met with overwhelming support by neighbors, whose only complaint was that it didn’t happen every week!

So this year we are bringing Kingfield Porch Fest back, bigger and bolder than before! Sites are spread out a bit more evenly over the neighborhood this year, and hosts—who are really excited for the event now that they have experienced it—are prepped to act as greeters and ambassadors to all the visitors and musicians. Visitors (and this is where You come in) know that they should pack a pocket full of cash to tip their neighborhood ministers, because this entire event operates completely free. Not a cent is exchanged to encourage these musicians to play, and so we encourage you to say thank you with a $5, $10, or whatever in your wallet at each stop you visit that night!

Kingfield Porch Fest 2016 will welcome back a number of groups who had much fun they cannot wait to do it again! Farewell Tenny, the St. Paul Mud Stirpers, Whale in the Thames, U Can Jug or Nots, The Firestorm Mountain Boys, and Calamity and the Owl are just some of the groups returning this year. Local solo acts returning include Ben Glarus, Edie Rae Baumgart, and Kevin Kane. Besides these, more than three dozen other acts will take the stage, so there will surely be something for everyone!

A couple of days before the event, a map will be published listing all the musicians, their performance times, and the best sites. You can be hard core about it: Follow the links to the musicians’ websites and listen to their tunes, then map out a path through the neighborhood based on what you like. Or Start thin leave it up to fate and simply bike around and see what strikes you as interesting!

Be sure to tag us on Instagram while you enjoy the Porch Fest this year. We are again looking forward to see the fun you have! We are again looking forward to seeing these, more than three dozen other acts that will take the stage, so there will surely be something for everyone!

National Night Out is almost here!

Host a block party and receive a visit from your KFNA Board delivering free ice cream!

Be sure to register your event with the City by July 19th at
www.minneapolismn.gov/nno/nno_register

LITTLE KIDS’ SOCCER REBOUNDS WITH GRASS ROOTS SUPPORT

“Sad news,” I said in my note to MLK Park Director Peter Jaeger back on March 21st. “We can’t find enough committed parent-coaches to make a go of the Little Kids’ Soccer Program this summer. We have to cancel for the first time in 15 years.”

Every Saturday morning since summer 2002, 50 to 60 kids had come to the lush green center field grass of baseball field #1 to chase balls, pretend to be alligators, play “Bass of the Ball,” dance the “Hokey-Pokey,” and run the valley while outnumbering the buffalo hunters.

Every year, we’ve needed a dozen parent coaches to commit to four or five Saturdays over the summer to assure we have enough game leaders each Saturday. It seemed we couldn’t get that commitment this year. Jerri and Mark Wagner, parents of 7-year-old Zoe, a veteran player, and 3-year-old Simon, an energetic rookie-to-be, had beaten the bushes in the neighborhood and found six committed volunteers, but it wasn’t enough.

That’s when parent Michelle Steffen tried to register her child for this summer’s program at King Park. When she was told that we had canceled for this summer due to lack of parent volunteers, she didn’t give up. She asked what she might do to help make it go.

I was in the yard working in the garden when Michelle came up one early evening, and asked if I was the fellow who worked on the little kids’ soccer program. After a brief discussion and an exchange of e-mail addresses, Michelle assured me that she would be in contact with Jerri with the second half of the 2016 parent coaches we needed. Within a week, I was back on the phone with Park Director Peter Jaeger asking if we could get playing space on Saturday mornings this summer.

Michelle told me, “I had this happy fantasy for a couple years of my 4-year-old running around kicking a soccer ball with the other kids at MLK Little Kickers Program. When he was finally ready, I was sad to see it canceled and decided to give soccer a try. In 2 days, with the power of social media (and convincing my husband to volunteer too), enough volunteers were secured.”

When there is chance to keep alive and kicking the opportunity for little kids in your neighborhood to run, laugh, and play silly games with joy, you have to go for it! When my own boys (now in their mid-30s with families and little ones of their own far away) were four and six, the Blaisdell YMCA had a kids’ program. In Farmstead Park playing silly games with soccer balls. Peter and Paul had a blast playing their games. It wasn’t a program aimed at making them great soccer players. It was a program aimed at having the kids run, laugh, and enjoy being out on the field together.

After later coaching and managing my boys’ soccer teams through their organized leagues for years, they both played well throughout their time at South High School. And the boys still enjoy playing as adults. But they never had as much fun as playing in that scruffy dirt of the YMCA little kids’ soccer program at Farmstead in the 1980s.

And so, Kingfielders, we are back on for the 15th season, on the lush grass of M.L. King Park! Jerri adds, “Game on! Kingfield Summer Soccer—here we come. And here’s to an enveloped future for many summers after this!”

– Michael Vanderford
From The KFNA President

I may be new to Kingfield and to South Minneapolis, but the 40th Street Greenway and pedestrian bridge are not. Over the last two decades, community members worked hard to create a bike lane from the lakes to the river. They were successful over the years in making the bike lane a reality, but the 40th Street bridge over 35W was another story.

This ecosysy of a bridge is narrow and encircled in fencing much like a cage. But it won’t be for long. It was brought about to the attention of the city of Minneapolis and Kingfield that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MDOT) planned to include this pedestrian bridge in their 35W reconstruction over the next four years. This reconstruction puts in a bus rapid transit line, adds a southbound Lake Street exit, and re-decks many of the bridges in South Minneapolis.

The city and surrounding neighborhoods jumped at the chance to turn this bridge into something great. Community members who had worked so hard to create the bike greenway decades before came forth to offer their perspective and expertise. The original grand plan was to have the bridge be an architectural icon like that of the Armajani or Shado bridges. Unfortunately, that was not going to be possible based on MDOT’s timeline and the City’s budget. So we pushed for the next best thing.

In April, local artist and cultural icon Seitu Jones was selected by the community to design the railing for the new 40th Street pedestrian bridge. The new bridge will be twice as wide as the current one, and Seitu’s rail design will incorporate community perspectives from either side of the freeway, a freeway that divided our community more than 30 years ago.

Seitu loved and played in this very community when the freeway as built, and he has expressed his dismay in being literally separated from his friends and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park he grew up with. A portion of the park, as well as many homes, were destroyed for a freeway that predominantly displaced the American community, and put up a barrier to an expanding and thriving African American community.

At the May KFNA board meeting, Seitu stated that he sees this project as a means to bring the neighborhoods on each side of the freeway closer together. He likened this bridge to a “giant hand shake,” or a long needed embrace. The KFNA board is very supportive of his vision and expressed how we would like Seitu go as big as possible with this project. We want everyone to know this bridge — those who go across it or under it. It will be symbolic to the division that occurred as well as to the desire to reignite communities.

—— David Fenley, KFNA President

Stroll our Blooming Boulevards during this year’s Garden Tour

Over the past seven years, we have been honored to receive sneak peeks into Kingfielders’ backyard gardens. This year, we are going to stroll down the boulevards and learn how people grow such beautiful gardens in such little strips of land.

Meet the gardeners and learn their secrets on Thursday, July 14th. Be sure to check the KFNA website for starting time and location, and directions for purchasing your tickets!

Have you seen a boulevard that makes passerby stop and stare? Let us know so we can contact the owners and add them to the tour! Nominations (both from gardeners and gawkers) can be sent to chrissy@kingfield.org.

Nicollet Open Streets is back on Sunday, Sept 18!

Nicollet Open Streets returns on Sunday, September 18th: From Lake Street to 44th street, from 11 AM to 5 PM, Nicollet Avenue will be closed to motorized transportation. It’s a celebration for our street, with activities, music, food, and more! Now our biggest annual festival, Nicollet Open Streets brought out over 100 businesses and more than 10,000 people in 2014, and increased that by over 10% in 2015. Contact KFNA for information on sponsorship and cool shirts after each other, we have neighbors that post suspicious information on Nextdoor Kingfield and Facebook, and we have a crime rate that is the envy of many other neighborhoods in Minneapolis.

Starting Wednesday, July 13th, MPD Crime Prevention Specialist Jennifer Waisen will make quarterly presentations at the beginning of the KFNA Board meetings. The KFNA staff will continue to monitor our social media for crime prevention information and alerts to help keep us safe. In the meantime, if you are experiencing any issues or concerns regarding crime, please also directly contact Cheryly@Kingfield.org.

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More than 120 volunteers will be needed to help with all aspects of the event—cops to set up, intersection monitors, info booth sitters neighborhood representatives, photographers, roving ambassadors (and cleaners), and volunteer leaders. It’s not too late to join us and help out! If you’re interested in volunteering, contact Aracvia at the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, who is coordinating volunteers for the day of the event. E-mail or call at aracvia@lyndale. org / 612-824-9402 x 14.

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**Meet Your KFNA Board Members**

**Whitney Emanuel:** I love the character of my house. It was built in 1910 like many other older homes in Kingfield. It also has a beautiful front porch and upstairs back patio—perfect for PorchFest!

**Anit Bhatia:** I have lived in Kingfield since 2001 and have loved every minute. I love that the character of my house directly correlates with the neighborhood: charming, cozy, and full of rich history.

**How do you like to make friends in your neighborhood?**

**Whitney:** Going to neighborhood events is the best way to make friends. Things like running club, Empty Bowls, Open Streets, and the garage sale are great opportunities. Being on the board also helps meet new people.

**Anit:** Those that know me know that I will talk to anyone. This outgoing trait has been very fruitful, as I have made close friendships with my neighbors and neighborhood brethren.

**What is something you would like to see happen in the neighborhood?**

**Whitney:** I would like to see people use the bread oven. It is a beautifully crafted oven and a wonderful resource to cook with no energy! I would also love more music at MLK park!!!

**Anit:** I would like to see unity and community participation of all the residents. Kingfield has such a diverse populace, and being able to hear every voice would be phenomenal.

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**BUILDING BREAD OVENS AND COMMUNITY:** BRICK BY BRICK

When you make bread, one of the most important elements is time. The dough needs to sit and be warm before the magic of the yeast can happen and make it rise. Possibly this is also true about the making of a bread oven! Our Kingfield Community Outdoor Oven was wrapped up tight in November and there it hibernated until late April, when the overnight temps held steady enough that the mortar wouldn’t freeze after the bricks were laid. Now that the days are warmer and longer, construction has started again with the hope of a roof-raising in June. Be sure to read the story, Empty Bowls (stop up at kingfield.org if you are not already on the list, and like our Facebook page, too!) so you can come weld a hammer or partake in a summer pizza or bread event! Interest in the oven has reached far, with this oven being one of nine mentored by our summer pizza or bread event!

Kingfield is also true about the making of a bread oven!

I represented Kingfield on a trial radio show this spring as well, the brainchild of Dan Chouinard, and hosted as part of Theatre Latté Da’s NEXT FESTIVAL. The focus of the shows was Urban Agriculture, and it brought together people leading the way in our Twin Cities in small ways including raising bees, baking bread, and choosing a bike over a car. While KFNA was honored to be included, the audience really responded to the idea that these small gestures are what is going to help correct the wrongs in our society, both environmentally but also socially.

Such a grand vision for a pile of bricks! The plans are ambitious for how KFNA, and each of our ovens could be used to build community both locally and across the cities that we each live in. We talked of a day where we all bake for a selected charity, or bike between our sites to meet the different communities, or share a progressive oven meal.

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MLK PARK SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

Summer is upon us at Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, and there are plenty of activities for everyone to enjoy. The best way to view all the activities offered is by visiting our website at www.minneapolisparks.org. Scroll to the bottom and click on Recreation Centers. Each center has an Activities section where you can browse and register for programs or download a PDF of the seasonal brochure. Hard copies of the brochure are also available at the front desk of the recreation center.

We are bringing back the free summer lunch program, available Monday through Friday, for youth 18 years and under. Friday, Nite Owlz is for kids (8 to 11 PM every Friday all summer) with a variety of activities to keep our older kids engaged while school is out. There are also several half- and full-day summer camps available for kids of all ages; we partner with outside organizations to bring week-long camps like Minecraft, Battlebots, Inspyre Creation Camp, Volleyball, Lacrosse, Fishing, and Tennis. We also offer weekly classes in Archery, Urban Farming, Ceramics, Basketball, T-ball and Art in the Park.

Everything’s Coming Up Roses (….well, not really, as roses don’t work in a rain garden!)

We are pleased to announce that the Kingfield Neighborhood Association, in partnership with Locus Architecture, was awarded a mini grant by the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization for the design and construction of a rain garden. The rain garden will reside on the Locus Architecture property at the northeast corner of 45th Street and Nicollet Avenue. Locus will be designing, constructing, hosting, and maintaining the rain garden under the auspices of KFNA.

Rain gardens are a desirable and attractive way to treat storm water in a sustainable way. Rain gardens are a desirable and attractive way to treat storm water in a sustainable way. The basic premise of a rain garden is that a shallow pond collects storm water, which is then filtered through engineered soils before being released to ground water. Silt, salt, particulates, and chemicals are filtered out of the storm water and captured in soil layers allowing cleaner water to flow down to the Mississippi Watershed—one of two critical watersheds in the metro area along with the Minnehaha Watershed. While the functionality of a rain garden is of vital importance, what makes a rain garden distinct from a utilitarian retention pond is the presence of plantings that have been carefully selected not only for their tolerance for inundation, but their beauty and capability as habitat for beneficial fauna.

The construction of the rain garden at Locus will begin in early June, with a July completion target. Locus Architecture looks forward to meeting more of our Kingfield neighborhood neighbors when the rain garden will be presented as the ultimate stop on the Kingfield Neighborhood Association Garden Tour scheduled for July 14th.

46th Street Re-Striping News

This fall, 46th Street (a street maintained by Hennepin County) between Cedar Avenue and Lyndale Avenue will receive a “mill and overlay” resurfacing treatment, which is similar to the treatment that was done on 38th street recently, where the existing surface is ground down and a new coat of asphalt is added on top. Not as extensive as a full street construction (a la Nicollet Avenue in 2014), this project will be completed along the length of the 2-mile corridor in a few short weeks, and traffic operations will continue throughout its duration.

Upon completion, the fresh smooth surface will be striped in a new traffic pattern to help resolve safety concerns at high traffic volume intersections and pedestrian crossing points along the entire corridor. From Cedar to just west of Nicollet, this new configuration—commonly referred to as a “4 to 3 lane conversion”—will help resolve unclear turning motions by introducing a dedicated left turn lane. From Nicollet Avenue to Lyndale Avenue, 46th Street will continue to have just two lanes of traffic, one going each direction.

Bicycle lanes are being introduced on each side of the street in many places along the corridor. This will also slightly narrow the effective crossing width of the street, which improves the safety of people trying to walk across the street at intersections without stoplights. On the Kingfield (north) side of 46th Street, all parking spaces will be maintained. There will be some removal of parking on the south side of the street only, and only on residential facing blocks where parking is little used, to open up room for the bicycle lanes. There will be no change to the parking configuration at the Grand Avenue business node, from Harriet Avenue to Pleasant Avenue.

Safely walking across 46th Street was a top concern mentioned during the public open houses and neighborhood technical committee meetings. Because 46th Street is the only place for bicyclists or pedestrians to cross the freeway from 42nd to 58th streets, any incremental improvements in safety that can be made in the approaches to the busy intersections at Nicollet and 35W interchange are a step in the right direction. While there was not enough room in the street’s right-of-way to accommodate all of the ideas and tactics to make the street safer for all users (motorists, pedestrians, bus riders, bicyclists, adjacent business owners, and residents), the proposed combination of many techniques stands to increase visibility, shorten crossing distances, and clarify car turning movements.

At the May KFNA meeting, the City Council pledged to stay involved in the project beyond completion to monitor how the lane changes affect traffic movement of all types, as well as to do a parking study this summer focused on the Nicollet and Grand nodes. Based upon this pledge, the Kingfield Board voted to support this project as presented, including the removal of a few parking spaces, since the results will continue to be studied and changed if needed. Additional information can be obtained on Hennepin County’s website at: www.hennepin.us/46street or by contacting Bob Byers (612) 596-0354 / robert.byers@hennepin.us or Allan Klugman (612) 673-2743 / allan.klugman@minneapolismn.gov.