Kingfield Local's Home to Build Businesses

Small businesses employ roughly half the workforce in the Twin Cities, and according to a recent report, ’90s small business have created 60-80% of the net new jobs, according to the Small Business Administration. The current economy may be in a recession, but that’s not stopping new businesses from getting their start — even right here in our neighborhood.

Divine Image Boutique, next door to Nicollet Ace Hardware at 38th and Nicollet, opened its doors in September. This trendy urban-wear shop features the latest and hottest urban styles straight from the couturier. Owner Trace Maxwell grew up in Kingfield, and he made a living in real estate before starting Divine Image Boutique. With a current ad in City Pages and a future online presence, his business plan calls for him to expand adjacent to his current location and eventually grow to add a mall outlet. "Right now, I’m looking for a web developer to build my website," he said. The space is decorated in stunning red and black, and the atmosphere exudes as much style as the merchandise the store features. Trace says he chose his location as a way to "give back to his community." Try Divine Image Boutique for your last-minute gift shopping.

Open since December 2007, Chelly’s Cafe on the north-west corner of 38th and Nicollet features all-American cuisine with a clear southerner influence for dine-in or take-out. Great food and very reasonable prices make this an excellent destination for families in our area.

Bienvienue to KFNA’s New Project Organizer

On October 8, 2008, the Kingfield Neighborhood Association board approved the hire of Sarah Gleason as their new Project Organizer. Gleason, a South Minneapolis native, is replacing Joanna Stahlie Hallstrom, KFNA Project Organizer since 2004, who resigned this fall.

Sarah Gleason has a long history of working in programs involving social justice, outreach, and community development. She has been involved in projects across the country and has been an advocate, organizer, and community leader. Gleason’s resume and cover letter stood out to the review team immediately. We were all impressed with her experience, both working with volunteers and being one. Having grown up in the area, she also has familiarity with the neighborhood. These factors have allowed her to hit the ground running," Linnens-Robbins said.

Gleason spent the latter part of the 1980s as a Peace Corps volunteer in Burundi, Africa, teaching farmers how to build ponds and raise fish. In the early 1990s she moved back to Minnesota, just long enough to earn a master’s degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota (She then lived in Scone), where she spent the latter part of the decade teaching Peace Corps volunteers in community development and creative arts education. While in the Peace Corps, Sarah learned to speak fluent Freneh.

In 1999, Gleason returned to the United States, accepting a position with the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation as director for their AmeriCorps Neighborhood Leadership Program, she focused on civic engagement, youth leadership, and diversity issues. Since 2005, she

The 411 on 311

On the third floor of the third precinct office of the Minneapolis police department, a group of approximately 17 operators awaits your phone call. Want to haul away that old stove behind the garage? Think about the 311 system, such as those related to snow or nuisance animals. Another goal of the design was to simplify citizen access to government resources and contacts. In short, 311 is designed to be simple, fast, and easy to use. People have been making use of 311. The top five issues from Kingfield residents have been making use of 311. During the month of August, the city reports 39,337 calls made to 311, which is 17 complaints related to Kingfield. The top five issues from Kingfield residents were exterior nuisances (19), graffiti (15), residential conditions (14), abandoned vehicles (10), and general animal complaints (6).

When you make a report to 311, you are given a tracking number and a target completion date. That tracking number can be used to track the progress of the issue you are calling about, either online or by phone, allowing you to monitor the city’s response to your complaint.

Operators handle only nuisance complaints and informational calls made to 311, and they can take police calls or refer those residents to official police reports over the phone. They can handle issues such as bicycle theft or vandalism, failure to pay, and restraining order violations — situations in which evidence is not an issue, and police officer presence is not required.

Minneapolis 311 director Don Steckley says, “A lot of times folks need these reports for their insurance companies.” He advises that residents can go online at any time of the day or night, fill out a report, and have a copy of the report immediately emailed back to them, saving the time and hassle of waiting for an officer report.

It is important to remember that 311 operators do not dispatch officers and cannot handle emergencies. If you are ever unsure about a crime you wish to report, always err on the side of caution and call 911.

Thank You 2008 Kingfield Business Sponsors!

Anodyne Coffeehouse @ 43rd • Butler Bakery Cafe Colonial Cleaners • Corner Table • DreamHost Fresenius Medical Care • Grand Cafe Hawkins Automotive • Nicollet Hardware Northrup Roofing and Remodeling Oddi n Endi • Rae • Bar & Bistro Photography Ungerman Construction • Victor’s 1959 Cafe

...and a special thanks to those super special Kingfield restaurants that donated a share of their profits through Eating for Art on October 2nd: Anodyne, Curran’s, Grand Cafe, and Victor’s; as well as Lyndale neighborhood’s Butter (but we all know Dan Lives in Kingfield), Champions, and El Farasoe!

Thank You 2008 Kingfield Business Sponsors!

CART CALLS FOR ARTISTS:

Redefine, Recreate, Reinvent: Materials for the creative soul are all around us. Local artists and community members are invited to create 2-dimensional or 3d art, reusing or rediscovering items and images in unexpected ways.

Registration Deadline: March 5, 2009
Event Dates: March 7 and 8, 2009
Location: Pills & Potpourri, 311 S. 41st Street (on the north side of the building)
Entry Fee: $30.00

Selected pieces hung for predisplay at Anodyne. All pieces sold by auction Saturday, March 21, 2009
To register, visit www.Kingfield.org or call 612.823.5980.

KINGFIELD COMMUNITY & ARTS FESTIVAL
A SILENT AUCTION
Green Grows on Wentworth

You may have noticed activity at 4307 Wentworth in recent weeks, but not thought much of the new house being built. The lack of vacant lots in desirable city areas has produced a recent trend in Southwest Minneapolis — to raze small houses to make way for new homes. However, the construction at 4307 Wentworth has a bit of a different story.

Last winter, Hennepin County took possession of 4307 Wentworth on tax forfeiture. The County has several options available for disposal of tax-forfeited properties. After consulting with the Kingfield Neighborhood Association (KFNA), the County chose to redevelop the property itself, with the expectation of selling the property upon completion of the project. This strategy has been used by the County a number of times in the past, but this project is in a class that funding was awarded by Hennepin County to utilize this house as a living lab to sell the land and sell the house to a qualified family to retain perpetual affordability.

As part of the new home’s design, green features were selected, with two goals in mind: reducing the home’s impact on the natural environment, and reducing expenses for the future homeowner. A geo-thermal heating and cooling system and increased insulation will reduce energy consumption. Cement siding will provide long-term durability and reduce maintenance needs, while the landscape will be complemented with rain gardens to reduce rainwater runoff as well as overall water consumption.

From the start, this project has been a cooperative partnership between KFNA and the City of Minneapolis. The property manager from Hennepin County met with the KFNA Board, Redevelopment Committee and a group of neighborhood residents to discuss the planning and design for this project. The result is a project that should meet the neighborhood’s stated goals of increasing opportunities for affordable housing, providing affordable housing options in Kingfield. Upon completion, the house will be sold to the City of Minneapolis. The KFNC maintains ownership of the land and sell to a qualified family to retain perpetual affordability.

Around the Block with Mrs. Garfield

When I was told of the group of people who live on the 4200 block of Garfield — how “they” have “the” newest tenants on their block by bestowing upon them the loan of a special piece of artwork to hang on their wall — I just knew these were my kind of people! And as I set out to find more about the “interesting people on Garfield” and all things that have come to pass, I discovered love affair and a woman on this block — just to love this magnificent woman, I learned about the spirit of this block, and bonds that run deep through this micro-community.

It’s a block with an impressive array of occupations: from professional clowns, a puzzlemaker and a handyman, to a playwright, award-winning chef and a fine art photographer. This is the type of block that holds a National Night Out party with a cop and people involved that somehow had to volunteer to be the audience. There are pecker with story telling, happy hours and Saturday afternoon doughnut gatherings.

Barb and Butch Stroud have hosted an annual 4th of July brunch for 13 years. Joe, Linda and Ralph Griebel have the best house to visit on Halloween. I heard a lot about Ralph while researching this piece; he seems it is always a suitable fun and find interesting ways to pass the time: from the “bumping bulldozer” to negotiations his dogs participate in at Christmas parades. What else? The block should must have been his body weight daily in milk to provide Halloween milk-carton luminaries for half the block. Another hot spot is Joe and Linda’s house at his backyard bonfire. This was especially a great time for the 10 adults who gathered to share eight bottles of wine after the kids had had their fun.

As interesting as all the neighbors are, I was still very interested in the woman who has lived the longest on Garfield. Who was she? How did she come to be? Has she always been hidden in a closet? Do people wonder if anyone will ever move from such a cool block as they can be of her?

According to resident Laurel Deloria, the story began with President Garfield. The block ran him in their own private election for president against Reagan, with the motto “We won by a majority of one — guess I will be a dead man.” The block had been throwing many “Garfield parties” for years, even putting on a play about the death of Garfield.

A portrait of President Garfield was made and served as a mascot at block parties. But one year when a family moved out (in 4224 Garfield, a new, very special portrait was discovered in the attic. It was a huge, life-size portrait of Alice who declared it to be “Mrs. Garfield,” and he decreed that the newest block residents would have to display it in their homes.

The painting is described by Greg as “unique — clearly completed by a novice, expressing a slightly off-balance facial structure with eyes that clearly don’t look at you.” A face that only a mother could love? Perhaps, but according to Leila and Joe Mathison, Mrs. G’s current housemates, it’s a face that comes with decades of amazing stories written on the back of the frame. Playwright Kevin Kling told me that when you are first given the painting at the block party, you are blown away — if it’s a joke. You have to take your cue from all the earnest neighbors hovering over you to appreciate the humor.

The extent to which these earnest neighbors care for one another is not limited to good times. Kevin was in a motorcycle accident and said that, while he recovered, his grass was always cut, the garbage was taken out, there was food on the porch, and nobody said a word — it was just done. He states, “This block has a way of celebrating loudly and quietly helping.”

This spirit of support was echoed by Greg Rogers: He moved to the block with his wife Emily, who at the time was fighting cancer. As Greg notes, the neighbors immediately took them in. They knew that something was wrong with Emily’s health, but seemed to manage a balance of welcoming but not encroaching. This overwhelming comfort and acceptance of families with children in the neighborhood is just simply to live there.

Grog received food, invitations for home cooked meals, comfort and hope both while Emily was still with him and after she had passed. He describes Mrs. G — beautiful, gentle, and quiet. Mr. G was in his living room for over 5 years — as a “unique gift,” and “the first gift of many that are given to you when you move on the block.”

Somehow I couldn’t help but believe that among the tangi- ble and intangible, the biggest gift of all that you give while living on this block, is just simply to live there.

– Joby Lynn Saully James

Stay Tuned...

In the next issue of Kingfield News, learn more about the effectiveness of geo-thermal heating from your Kingfield neighbors who are already using it. Rich and Martha Ingram!

From the KPNA President

It’s a strange time to be part of a neighborhood non-profit. The economy is wobbly, so non-profits are feeling the pinch everyone feels — people are cautious about letting go of disposable income, perhaps putting off any donations. The City of Minneapolis also has withdrawn some of the funding promised as part of phase 2 of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

In spite of these facts, I can honestly say that Kingfield, and by extension the Kingfield Neighborhood Association (KFNA), has bright days ahead. The City of Minneapolis has produced a recent trend in Southwest Minneapolis — to raze small houses to make way for new houses. However, the construction at 4307 Wentworth has a bit of a different story.

The Kingfield neighborhood runs from 35th to 46th Streets, between Lyndale Avenue and 3SW.

KFNA Office Location:
The Center for Performing Arts Room 101 • 3754 Pleasant Ave. S. Minneapolis, MN 55409
Phone: 612.823.5980 Fax: 612.823.0182 E-mail: kfnamail@kfna.org Website: www.kfna.org

The KFNA board meets the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at MLK Park, 4055 Nicollet Ave. S.

2008-09 KFNA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Mark Brunson ................. 612.306.0044
David Brazer ................. 612.822.8601
Chris DePatie ................. 612.823.0182
Arthur Knowes ............. 612.822.8600
Joe Mathison ................. 612.822.4690
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KFNA STAFF:
Executive Director:
Sarah Linnes-Robinson ....... 612.823.5980
Project Organizer:
Sarah Golen ................. 612.823.5980

KFINGIELD NEWS:
If you are interested in writing, editing, designing, or taking photographs for the Kingfield News, call KPNA at 612.823.5980.
In Need of Some Help This Holiday?

Although statistics show that people in Kingfield are largely weathering this financial crisis, KFNA is sure that some people in the neighborhood are struggling to stay afloat. While foreclosures in Kingfield are now near rivaling the foreclosure and vacancy rates of other neighborhoods in south central or north Minneapolis, they are not as prevalent as in any other southwest Minneapolis neighborhood. Although KFNA does not have the expertise to help you directly, we wanted to provide a list of resources to you in the event that you or a neighbor, are facing financial difficulties this year.

If you are a homeowner and are currently facing a foreclosure, or are falling behind on your mortgage, any of the following resources may be able to provide free and confidential counseling to help you avoid foreclosure, or help you create an action plan if foreclosure has begun:

- Minnesota Home Ownership Center: 651-653-9356, or toll free at 1-866-626-4666 or visit www.hocmn.org
- Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity: 612-331-4000 or visit www.tecbat.org
- Minneapolis 311 Foreclosure Helpline: Dial 311 (within Minneapolis) or 612-673-3000
- Prevención de Embargo de su Casa en Espanol, 3:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you are having trouble paying your utility bills, this winter remember that Minnesota has a “cold weather rule.” This rule states that eligible residential customers may not be disconnected for nonpayment during the winter season, which runs from Oct. 15 through April 15. To avoid disconnection, customers who are eligible for the cold weather rule must immediately contact the utility and commit to a payment plan. Payment plans take into account your household income and any extenuating circumstance, and are arranged between you and your energy provider. Please note that Excel requires you to miss a payment and receive a disconnect notice before they will set up a payment plan, whereas CenterPoint encourages you to contact them if you foresee trouble in paying your bill.

Upon calling your energy provider to discuss a payment plan, you will be referred to an Energy Assistance Program (EAP) representative who can provide information and services to low-income residents in our City. Originally started in 1976 under the authority of the Minneapolis City Council, they recognized that people fell behind in 1995 to bring together experts from the low-income, private and public arenas to make joint decisions on their programs, which focus on eliminating poverty in Minneapolis.

Community Action of Minneapolis offers a number of programs in weatherization and energy, including the Energy Assistance Program (EAP). Director Tony Spears encourages people facing financial trouble to call his agency at the same time you call your utility company. They will submit an EAP application directly to Community Action. (See the center box for contact information for Community Action.)

Approval for the EAP is based upon your household’s last three months of income. Spears stated that they have seen more applications this year due the market’s downturn, which has prevented many seniors from drawing their retirement income. Spears stressed that assets are not taken into account to qualify for this program; Community Action of Minneapolis would rather trust that those who ask are truly in need than have someone needing assistance fall victim to an unwarranted screening process.

If you or your family needs winter clothing, a number of local low-cost sources exist in our area. The Salvation Army has an excellent thrift store with clothing at several metro-area stores, including one at 39th and Nicollet. Profits from Salvation Army stores go to operate the Salvation Army Rehabilitation Center located downtown Minneapolis. Clarissa’s Clothing Closet (open the last year for Bryant neighborhood residents and great local advocate for children and families, Clarissa Walker) is a program at Sabathani Community Center. KFNA Executive Director Tammy Ortegon. She is a local artist and a stylist. Color Wheel has an “Artists Un- de’Art” show every year. I have a lot of artwork and I have an art piece there called “More Peace” that’s waiting to be purchased. If you like Baraka Obama, you definitely want to check out this gallery.

The Food Shelf is staffed by two regular staff members and several volunteers. Incarnation also has a staff parish with a social work background who has helped families find housing and other social service needs. Besides food, they also provide seasonally appropriate, gently used clothes and shoes through the St. Vincent de Paul Chapter of Incarnation.

In 2006, the Incarnation Chapter of St. Vincent de Paul helped 1,260 families with needs such as gas vouchers, bus passes, medical co-pays and prescriptions, and food vouchers. The food shelf served over 1,200 households in 2008 with a budget that is supported by Incarnation parishioners at about 75%.

If you are a renter caught up in foreclosure, you have rights too, including the right to stay in the property up to 6 months. For free counseling help, call Legal Aid of Minneapolis at 612-334-5970.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church and School, 3001 1st Avenue South, runs an independent food shelf. Although the school is private, the food shelf is open to anyone who needs food. Pilgrim does not require identification and works with all people on their word. It is small and currently serves only 10 visitors a week, but the food shelf has generous supporters (individually and church funded) that keep it supplied and stocked. The Pilgrim Food Shelf is open for the public from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Stop at the Pilgrim office for more information or call 612-825-5375.

It is not hard to figure out, but is difficult to resolve, that when peoples’ needs increase, their ability to make payments decreases. KFNA would like to provide some suggestions to help you or a neighbor take classes in how to manage your money.

The Salvation Army of Minneapolis, 3901 1st Avenue South, is open to anyone who lives on or between Nicollet and Lyndale Avenues, from 32nd Street to the north and 50th Street to the south. The Salvation Army serves by two food shelves that are part of the Twin Cities Emergency Food Shelf Network. This network status enables them to purchase food at a discount rate through Section 8 Housing and the Salvation Army.

The Incarnation Church Food Shelf, 3001 Pleasant Avenue South, is open to anyone who lives on or between Nicollet and Lyndale Avenues, from 32nd (not east) to the north and 50th Street to the south. The only criteria for utilizing the food shelf is that you reside within the boundaries; computer records are kept on each Food Shelf family and include identification, place of residence, and frequency of visits. KFNA Executive Director

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If you live on Stevans or 1st Avenue, you need to travel out of the neighborhood to access the appropriate food shelf. Look for two food shelves for two years. Right now, I have an art piece there called “More Peace” that’s waiting to be purchased. If you like Baraka Obama, you definitely want to check out this gallery.

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Public School Choice for Kingfielders: Not So Elementary

Many families reading this article already know that the Kingfield neighborhood does not have a designated elementary school. Instead, Kingfield is part of open area F2, as labeled by the Minneapolis Public Schools District. Many families reading this have struggled with the wide range of school choices offered to this open area, and have wished for one clear choice — a school that most kids from their immediate neighborhood would also attend. Let me be clear, this story is not directed at these families. This story is aimed at those just starting to think about school choices, to make sure that those families know that one, they don’t have any guaranteed community school for their new kindergartener to attend; and two, to make sure these families are aware of the special rules that apply within the public schools’ open areas.

Let me back up almost 10 years: A group of Kingfield families was upset by the city-wide move back to “community schools.” This change guaranteed attendance to incoming kindergarteners within a specific boundary area to a specific school — but Kingfield didn’t have one. Facilities close to Kingfield had been torn down years ago (both Louis Agassiz Elementary at 38th and Harriet and Margaret Fuller at 48th and Harriet), and Barton was already a successful open magnet program, whose program the District refused to modify to allow Kingfielders to attend; and two, to make sure these families are aware of the special rules that apply within the public schools’ open areas.

Fast forward to last spring. In May the Southwest Journal (Vol. 19, No. 10) wrote that two dozen Kingfield families hadn’t received any of their school choices. The article provided some insight into why this may have happened, but KFNA wanted to follow up directly with them. Turner did confirm, however, that the District does not anticipate any changes to the choices provided this time. And where does this leave the open area’s “glitch” to placing these open area kids last spring, according to Turner, was siblings, a school placement priority that ranks above open area children. This unexpected bubble of kindergarten-aged siblings filled almost two classrooms at both Burroughs and Lake Harriet. To avoid a similar issue this year, a survey is being sent out to all Barton, Burroughs, and Lake Harriet parents (often Kingfield families’ three top choices). The survey will ask whether they have an incoming kindergartner in 2009. Turner stressed that if you are in these schools and reading this article, please be sure to return to your survey to your school by the deadline.

I questioned Turner about whether the District was anticipating changing attendance boundary lines for these popular community schools, to value this attendance crunch. Turner said the District does not plan to change these community school boundaries at this time. And where does this leave the open area’s guarantee? Turner stated that although she did not anticipate any changes to the choices provided this year, the final outcomes will be based upon the results of the survey. Turner did confirm, however, that the District is continuing to look into open areas, and the need for them, as part of their ongoing work of evaluating boundaries, transportation, and school choice. The District is also working hard to market the strength of other school choices that are available to open area children. This according to Turner, was siblings, a school placement priority that ranks above open area children. This unexpected bubble of kindergarten-aged siblings filled almost two classrooms at both Burroughs and Lake Harriet. To avoid a similar issue this year, a survey is being sent out to all Barton, Burroughs, and Lake Harriet parents (often Kingfield families’ three top choices). The survey will ask whether they have an incoming kindergartner in 2009. Turner stressed that if you are in these schools and reading this article, please be sure to return to your survey to your school by the deadline.

I met with Jackie Turner of Student Placement in November 2008 to talk about the three-choice guarantee and any anticipated changes. Turner affirmed that the May Southwest Journal article was true, and that these families had not originally received their choices. She stressed, however, that the District worked with them directly and most found Minneapolis Public Schools that they are happy with. In fact, over half of the children were placed in their first-choice school this year. And two, to make sure these families are aware of the special rules that apply within the public schools’ open areas.

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As for the push for a Kingfield community school? Interestingly, the parents who fought for the three-choice guarantee 10 years ago are now starting their search for high schools at a time of reorganization for the District for these facilities. It turns out that Washburn High is actually now the only high school for the entire Kingfield neighborhood. I am hearing strong support from this group as they embrace this opportunity of having all the neighborhood kids together in one facility at last.

Sara Thomsen-Robinson KFNA Executive Director

DATES TO BE AWARE OF: SCHOOL INFORMATION FAIR For PreK thru Grade 8 January 10, 2009, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Hyatt Regency 1300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

HIGH SCHOOL APPLICATION DEADLINE January 31, 2009

PREK-8 SCHOOL REQUEST DEADLINE February 28, 2009

Information on school choice and all of the schools available to Kingfield residents can be found at: www.mpls.k12.mn.us/schools registration.html. You can also pick up Guide Booklets outside the Kingfield Neighborhood Association office starting in December. KFNA is in the Center for Performing Arts, Room 101, 3754 Pleasant Ave. S.