



President's Letter

Fall 2024

Taking Stock of the Rockhill Times

Is *The Rockhill Times* valued?

Is *The Rockhill Times* actually read?

These questions have undoubtedly been asked by nearly everyone who has ever been involved in producing *The Rockhill Times* over its many, many decades. The newsletter is produced and then broadcasted into dark space without a mechanism in place to assess its success, such as being able to follow its number of subscriptions or hits on an article. One previous editor told me that only very seldom, perhaps once a year, would a resident comment on any article that had been published. During my own short experience as editor several residents complained to me about not having been informed about a policy that had, in fact, been covered in great detail in a previous newsletter.

There are several corollary questions to the initial two above. For example, is the newsletter's content even relevant to what Rockhill residents need or desire? Is the format of the newsletter hopelessly antiquated, noting that it cannot be easily read on a cell phone? Would residents prefer the convenience of having a paper copy of the newsletter delivered to their doors, or the opposite, prefer having the latest issue directly posted on the Rockhill website? Should we stop producing a newsletter altogether and simply broadcast notices to residents as they become pertinent. Some of these questions were briefly discussed at recent Board meetings, but with variable endpoints.

So, here is an invitation to all you Rockhill residents. Let the new and current editor of *The Rockhill Times*, Susan Carlson (scarlson@kumc.edu) hear directly from you regarding your desires for this newsletter and its future.

Gerry Carlson
carlsongmc@gmail.com

Fall Picnic on October 6

Erika Vento-Gaudens

Mark your calendar for October 6, 4-7 pm when we'll once again gather in the pocket park at 45th and Kenwood for our annual Rockhill Neighborhood picnic. Social hour from 4-5 pm will be followed by mealtime from 5-7 pm. This is a potluck picnic so please share a favorite side dish or dessert with your neighbors. A variety of soft drinks, water, hamburgers, brats and brisket will be provided by RHA. Contact Erika if you have any questions (text or call 707-342-8691). The picnic is a wonderful chance to catch up with old and new friends and to get acquainted with neighbors who have recently become

part of our Rockhill community. The Chiefs game is on the 7th so you don't have an excuse not to come!

This is a good opportunity to thank Ed Straley for his many years of organizing our annual picnic and making it the "must attend" event that it has become!

Next Coffee Club, October 19

By Jeffie Mussman and Karen Moninger

The coffee club is a great way to catch up with neighbors and meet new ones! This month we'll be meeting in the lovely home of Pat Session on Saturday, October 19 at 10 am, 4511 Holmes Street. Please RSVP to our hostess at patsession4511@gmail.com to let her know you plan to attend. We're looking forward to seeing you!

If you are interested in hosting future gatherings, please contact Jeffie Mussman at Jeffiemussman@gmail.com or Karen Moninger at kmoninger@gmail.com



Charles Joseph Egan, Jr. 1932-2024 (service October 12)

Patricia Miller

Charlie Egan loved Kansas City, especially the Rockhill neighborhood. He and Mary moved here from Boston in 1972 with their four sons: Tim, Sean, Peter, and James. They bought the big blue house at 712 Cleaver from Brook and Toto Bartlett; they loved the size, the history, and the convenient location. Charlie was general counsel for Hallmark and the boys attended variously, Pembroke and Sion, and eventually Groton; Mary was a beloved volunteer at Pembroke. They maintained the house and the grounds meticulously and were proud to have them open for a Rockhill garden tour. They sold the house in 2007, but Charlie maintained a residence near Winstead's until recently. He and Mary lived seasonally in Phoenix and on Cape Cod.

Charlie was a wise counsel, a devoted friend, a brilliant strategist, a witty companion. He was one of the first people to arrive at the Hyatt Hotel after its collapse and he spent the night helping with the rescue, and the next several years guiding the complex ensuing litigation. Among his greatest civic achievements were advising Notre Dame de Sion Schools and the Kansas City Art Institute, setting up the Durwood Foundation, endowing scholarships at Rockhurst and Harvard University. A proud member of Harvard's class of 1954, he gave generously of his time and treasure. He knew how to make the right phone call when a friend was at a crossroad or in crisis.

Charlie's family invites all who revere his memory to attend his memorial reception at the Kansas City Art Institute at 2 o'clock on Saturday 12 October.

<https://www.chapmanfuneral.com/obituaries/Charles-J-Egan-Jr?obId=32151960>

Todi Hughes (nee Rosemary Jackson), 1926-2024 (Service November 9)

Laurel Hughes

"Thank you Rockhill neighbors!! Todi absolutely loved all of you and living here for 68 years. Please join us for a colorful celebration of her life on Saturday, November 9 at 2pm. Notre Dame de Sion Lower School, 3823 Locust. If anyone planning to attend has a portrait or sketch they can bring, please let Laurel know (laurelhughes@me.com). For obituary: www.HughesFuneralAlternatives.com

Below are a few photos of my mother. One taken in her studio around 1950, another while she was pregnant with my sister; and a more recent photo.



Neighbors Remember a Beloved Todi Hughes

By Galen Mussman

Todi Hughes didn't just live in Rockhill, over the years she became the embodiment of all that is great about this neighborhood. Todi spent almost her entire adult life in Rockhill. When she and her husband found a house to buy in Rockhill, they had to raise financing privately because in those days lenders would not fund mortgages in areas where Black people might live. Once here, she got busy making everyone around her happy to live in Rockhill. Todi had a motto for living well that explains a lot: love, laugh, listen, learn and live.

Joy Payne: "48 years ago we moved into the neighborhood and the first person we met was a young girl named Laurel. She told me her mother had sent her and that we had kids! I told her 'yes, we have four kids, two dogs and two cats.' Soon afterward Todi followed along and invited us to lunch at the Rockhill Tennis Club. Todi said 'you have to join. Everyone does. It's a neighborhood necessity.' We watched Todi swim every day. She was an inspiration. I have way too many stories to relate from all these years. One that reminds me of her every single day is the portrait of our children she painted for me. I wanted it to be a surprise for Ralph for Christmas. Todi started in July and would come to our house off and on for weeks. One day when she was leaving she dropped her palette on the sidewalk. She was worried Ralph would see it and ruin the surprise so we used turpentine, anything we could think of to remove it. It was there for years and Ralph never noticed. Her smiles, her friendly manner....she was a joy to be around."

Nancy Bollier: "Todi was a true ray of sunshine who would always brighten our day with her beautiful smile and contagious joy and happiness. We loved seeing her on her usual walks around the neighborhood, and hearing stories of what it was like for her to live in the house behind us years ago. She was so kind and loving to everyone she met, and so grateful for her family, her neighbors, her health, and her life that she seemed to live to its fullest. We are blessed to have known her. She will truly be missed."

That was Todi. Bringing joy to others just by being herself. Todi was well known for her love of swimming, for her talent as an artist, and as the beloved "Welcome Chairperson" for the Rockhill Homes Association.

Don Closson: "One of my favorite memories was seeing Todi make her daily trek to the Rockhill Tennis Club swimming pool. Her love of swimming continued long after the club closed with trips downtown to the YMCA pool. Staying active with her exercises in the water surely contributed to her exceptionally long and healthy life!"

Linda Lighton: "Todi was a member of the Rockhill Investment Club that we had for many years here. She was always a joy to be with and always very off center. Just like an artist should be. She raised many children next door to me. There was a crazy painting at the back door. Anything goes with Todi. Always a joy to be around. She will be missed."

Karen Moninger: "Jim and I moved into the neighborhood in the fall of 1998. It was a magical time for us because we had just gotten married and just bought our first house. In the midst of this joy came the icing on the cake, which was a greeting from the neighborhood Welcome committee. We couldn't believe our good fortune when two smiling little ladies, Todi and Sylvia, knocked on our door to say "Welcome to Rockhill!" The four of us sat in our beautiful, new backyard and talked for a long time, getting to know each other and learning about the neighborhood. That was the most wonderful introduction which I've never forgotten."

Kitty McCoy: "Todi had a good eye for recognizing good people. She was a champion for me and my husband, Carl McCoy, moving to Rockhill in 1993. I miss her so much!"

Susan Carlson: "Soon after we arrived from Memphis, Tennessee, in 1997, there was a knock on our door. We were greeted by a tiny, energetic woman with the most wonderful smile. She came carrying gifts and materials to introduce us to our new neighborhood. Rockhill could not have had a better way to greet a new neighbor. She learned that our son Christian was an artist, and, being an artist herself, always expressed a genuine interest in how he was doing. Todi gave the impression she was not ruffled by anything. Several months ago, Regina Bassa showed me a photo she took after doing Todi's hair. At that time, Todi was not always totally aware of what was going on, but she was proud, beautiful and still had that wonderful smile!"



Time and dementia affected Todi, but that "wonderful smile" and the beautiful personality remained to the very end. Todi and her daughter Laurel welcomed having people stop by to play with balloons, talk, or just sit together.

Jim Sager: "Carolyn Fredrick and Angie Parenza have a dog named Mr. Emmitt. I took him to see Todi and Laurel this past May 16th. He sat on Todi's lap and Todi petted him for half an hour."

Laura Adams: "Todi welcomed us to Rockhill with genuine warmth and we felt immediately part of something, someplace very special. She quickly connected us to her own family too- sharing art, cherry pies, and new traditions like celebrating half birthdays. After our son Grey was born, she invited me to draw together and we shared lunch each Wednesday, reflecting and painting together. She taught me about art as a path to observe and appreciate the world, to truly see. She danced as she painted and shared an open heart. Todi was the dearest of friends."



Jim Wanser: "Todi made me a better person. She always saw the positive in everyone she knew. If I was critical of someone, I could see a slight cringe on her face before she reframed the conversation with the positive aspects of the person or situation. It was always a gentle reminder to look for the good in life. ❤️"

Nancy Abraham: "My favorite memory is helping to get her out of bed late one night so that she could watch the amazing night blooming cerius flower open up, surrounded by three of her children."

Shibani Maulik: "I have so much to say about my Darling Todi - her smile, her zest for life, her positive attitude, and the joy that she brought into my life! BUT writing about her is very difficult because I want to remember her as I saw her a few months ago."

"It is the heart that makes a person rich. He is rich according to what he is, not according to what he has." Henry Ward Beecher. Todi may have been one of the wealthiest people on the planet.

Celebrate Todi's life by living out her motto: Love, laugh, listen, learn and live.

Meet Adam Carey and Erin Schramm



We give a warm Rockhill welcome to Adam and Erin, the newest residents of 618 Emanuel Cleaver Blvd. This relatively new couple is not new to Midtown, having moved here from the Valentine neighborhood with their corgi, Tyrion. Although Erin, an elementary school librarian, spent most of her life in Topeka and Lawrence, Adam is a native Kansas Citian who is Sales Director for the *Johnson County Post*. Prior to that he was the owner of *The Pitch*. He enjoys 3D printing, having three machines, board gaming and painting miniature objects. Together the couple likes movies, museums, concerts and entertaining. They should fit very nicely into our Rockhill neighborhood.

Fall Garden & Lawn Tips to Make Our Rockhill Neighborhood Shine

Don Closson

[Don's lawn is the inspiration for the neighborhood. We asked him if he would share his tips for putting our lawns and garden to bed in fall.]

As we transition into the autumn months, here are a few tips to help rejuvenate your lawn. With early fall being the best time of year to reseed your lawn, this task is one of the most important for making your yard beautiful next spring and summer. Prior to reseeding and fertilizing your lawn, it is always best to first remove those ugly weeds that tend to invade our lawn during the summer months. The two main types of weeds that are prevalent in our neighborhood, as well as in most of the city, are crab grass (also referred to as watergrass) and nutsedge. Both of these weeds can be removed by

pulling them out by hand, but they will grow back the next year if all of the roots are not removed. This is especially true with nutsedge. If you have a batch of nutsedge, it is important to dig down 3-4 inches with a hoe or shovel so all of the root system is removed. Then fill in the area with a good quality topsoil. Scotts Turf Builder LawnSoil works great as it contains fertilizer, peat and compost so new grass seed will grow better and result in a thicker healthier turf.

Fescue and blue grass blends work well in our climate, and their proportions are adjusted for shade or sunny areas. You can find several good blends at stores like Soil Service, Home Depot, Lowes, Ace Hardware or Sutherlands, but it is best to avoid buying the cheapest seed you can find as these will often have seeds from weeds and other unwanted grasses mixed in. Fall seeding is best done when the daytime temperatures are above 60 degrees, as this will help the seed germinate more quickly. Daily watering (2-3 times per day) is a must until the seeds germinate, which can take 7-10 days. Covering the seed with straw will help retain the moisture and prevent the soil from drying out, which is key to fast germination. The straw will eventually be almost unnoticeable as the new grass starts to grow, so it is best to leave it in place as removing it will also result in removing some of the new blades of grass. If you need to reseed a larger area or an entire lawn, it may be easier to hire someone with the equipment who can do the project for you.

The second key to a beautiful year-round lawn is fertilization. Applying fertilizers such as Scotts Winterguard Fall Lawn Food will help ensure that your grass will develop good roots during the winter and be better prepared for the next summer's heat. Lawn aeration is best done in either the fall or spring to help break up the clay soil in your lawn. Ryan Lawn and TruGreen can provide this service. But a less expensive option for breaking up the clay is to apply Earth Right Soil Conditioner using a garden hose sprayer. This product can be purchased in one-gallon containers (enough to do most lawns) from hardware stores or on Amazon.

In addition to rejuvenating your lawn, autumn is also a great time of year to fertilize the plants and bushes in your yard. If you have acid loving plants and bushes such as hydrangeas, hollies, azaleas, rhododendrons and other evergreens then Espoma Holly Tone organic fertilizer works great.

What Inspired Me to Garden?

By Rockhill Homes and Gardens Club

[In preparation for the Gardens & Architecture Tour of Historic Rockhill that will take place May 17, 2025 to celebrate our 50 years as a National Historic District, 3 gardeners who will have their gardens on the tour share their inspiration to garden.]

Karen Moninger: I attribute my love of gardening to the several generations of farmers in my family. Every summer my brother and I spent a few weeks at our grandparents' farm. Some of my earliest memories are of my grandma and me packing a lunch to take out to the field. Grandpa would come down off the tractor to eat his sandwich and drink the iced tea while the two of them discussed the crop. Then he'd climb back up to run the tractor to work until sundown. To make a living off the land when everything depends on the whims of the weather seemed crazy to me back then, but it also gave me a healthy respect for both Farmer and Nature. Gardening is like that too, though for the most part, thankfully, the stakes aren't nearly as high. Gardeners form a kind of pact with nature in which we try to create the most favorable conditions for our plants knowing that, without question, the fate of our garden is not in our hands. In that way, we are a lot like farmers.

It's funny but one of my biggest gardening thrills is on the smallest scale. When I plant a seed in the ground and in a few weeks see something green shoot out of where once there was nothing, I feel as if I have witnessed one of nature's best magic tricks. There is always more to learn with gardening, too. We are always finding better methods, better materials. These days I am learning about the benefits of native plants. Natives (plants naturally occurring in a region prior to European colonization)

are better able to withstand shifting weather patterns. Their roots are deeper so they need less water, and they have a hardiness you don't see in many of the non-native species. Plus, they have the added benefit of encouraging birds and insects into the garden by providing food and shelter. Even the smallest garden can create a habitat. A good way to get started is to visit a nursery that specializes in native plants. One near Rockhill is City Roots. Also, the Discovery Center hosts native plant sales throughout the growing season. Whatever your preference, get outside and enjoy your garden!

Susan Carlson: Some of my friends who don't like to garden tell me it is because they don't like that gardening inevitably means getting dirty. Growing up on a farm, where we were encouraged to be outside most of the day, got me used to being dirty early. Also very early, I noticed and fell in love with the giant trees that my Swedish grandfather had imported and planted on our property many years before –catalpa, weeping willow, horse chesnut and fir. The tulips planted by my grandmother shared their genes liberally over many years and came back every spring in a unique array of colors and patterns. In the summer, her orange poppies were covered with dozens of plate-sized blooms that appeared against the backdrop of a 6-foot-high rock wall. I once read that in old age we surround ourselves with what we loved most in our youth. This may explain my passion for a certain property in Rockhill where rock walls are the norm and getting dirty is the beginning and ending of many of my days.

Jamie and Don Closson We've been calling our 1911 house home for 30 years now, and it's hard to believe it's been that long! Sometimes, it still feels brand new and exciting to us. When we bought the place back in 1994, it already had some key ingredients for what would become our beloved formal garden: an iron fence, a fountain, a small pond, statues, and a brick courtyard. So, it seems our garden had a head start! Luckily, we love a well-manicured lawn, perfectly trimmed boxwoods, and clean edges around the flower beds. And—surprisingly—we don't mind the work!

In 2000, we decided to up our landscaping game and brought in Kissinger and Associates. Brian Kissinger had a signature style, using magnolia trees, holly bushes, boxwoods, and even some large sago palms. He placed a stunning urn in the center of our courtyard and popped a sago palm in it. Every winter, Don and I wheel that palm to the basement and, come spring, it's back outside. Thanks to Don's green thumb and a couple of grow lights, we've managed to keep it alive for years without much fuss!

Brian also planted two Atlas cedars in our azalea beds near the front fence. Those trees are whimsical and add a fun twist to our more formal setting. Well, one tree did—sadly, the other didn't make it, thanks to a bit of a sun imbalance between the two beds. Oh well!

We've planted over 30 trees since we moved in, either filling in new spots or replacing trees that didn't make it. The two giant locust trees in our courtyard, however, were not our doing. They were added by the previous owner's landscaper—and, in our humble opinion, that was a mistake! Don's forever pulling up bricks and chopping out roots to keep the patio level. And those trees? Always dropping something! If you know us, you know we like things tidy, and those locust trees really keep us on our toes.

We've also added large evergreens and year-round greenery because, let's be honest, brown winter trees are a little depressing. Watching green buds peek through in spring is one of our favorite things, but until then, we need our green fix! We seldom plant perennials, though every spring and summer, we find ourselves a bit jealous of the lovely perennial beds around the neighborhood.

Five years after moving in, we decided to add a concrete deck with cast stone balustrades to the back of the house. This space has become an extension of our living room—we're out there from March to November! The pride and joy of our deck? A massive lime tree! Yep, we wheel it in and out of the basement too. A true labor of love. Right now, over 50 limes are growing, and they're the juiciest, most fragrant limes you'll ever find. Limeade, anyone? Or maybe a mojito, margarita, or gin and tonic?

Our formal deck, complete with seasonal flowers, an olive tree, and other plants, really ties together the formal look of our garden and house. We often think about how the existing features—like the fence, courtyard, fountain, and statues—pushed us toward this formal style. It was not necessarily planned; it just felt right.

Tending to our yard has become our favorite form of therapy. As Audrey Hepburn once said, “To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” We could not agree more!

Historic Kansas City Celebrates Their 50th Anniversary

Susan Carlson



On September 28th, Historic Kansas City celebrated its 50th anniversary with a Gilded Age Garden Party at the historic Stevens home, 3223 Gladstone Blvd. Not surprisingly, given that Rockhillians have chosen a historic neighborhood in which to live, the party was a great place to interact with neighbors. Below are a few photos taken on the occasion.



Historic Plaques are Coming Soon

Brian Ball

We will soon have the historic plaques. They will come to those who ordered with a package that will include the Rockhill National and Local nomination form and notes about coordinating with me to have installation by Larry Schubach (if you wish) and estimated cost of installation. We will offer a couple of sign-up days for using Larry's services.

Celebrating Linda Lighton

Susan Carlson

You can't live in Rockhill long without learning about Linda Lighton, the talented, internationally known artist in our midst. Casual visitors to the neighborhood will recognize her garden as the one with large contemporary sculptural figures that Linda created. Linda and Lynn's art-filled 1916 Tudor is featured in the fall issue of "In Kansas City." Linda shares stories of the art they love and live with every day; and the article and photos of the interior of her home are well-worth checking out (Patricia Miller loaned me her copy and I'm sure would be happy to loan to others). If you travel on Alaska Airlines to Seattle as often as Gerry and I do (5 times so far this year), you see her wonderful ceramic installation at A10 in our new airport terminal. She also created the chandelier in the entrance to the newly renovated Kansas City Museum on Gladstone Blvd.

One Stop Shop for Rockhill News

Tom Winter

Be sure to check out the RHA website: <https://rockhillkc.org> where you can find current events, links to neighborhood news, and shortcuts for City services. Previous issues of the Times can be found at www.rockhillkc.org/archives.html

The Winter edition of the Rockhill Times is due in early January. Depending upon what we hear from you (see the President's letter), it may be in a very new format. With this issue, the format has been changed already to a single column so those of you who read on your phones can do so easily. If you have information to share, notices of recognition or events, or good gossip please send them to scarlson@kumc.edu.