



The Rockhill Times

President's Letter

Spring 2023

The Phantom Outdoor Noise Covenant of RHA

When William Rockhill Nelson re-platted Rockhill in 1905, it was probably a quiet day because that's the way most suburban days were back then. Perhaps a few birds chirped and some squirrels kiked, and at midday the surveyors may have heard a hanging triangle outside a back door ringing laughing children in for lunch. All these pleasant sounds might have occasionally been interrupted by the regrettable artificial noise of a zephyr-activated, out-of-tune wind-chime exercising its unearned and seemingly unstoppable first amendment rights. But, most sounds in our neighborhood of 118 years ago were likely soft and pleasant, which is not the case now.

That old neighborhood was not subjected to the frequent sounds of blaring sirens, car and house alarms, roaring motorcycles and circling helicopters that contribute to our current noise pollution throughout all seasons. Our Winters add the additional noise of snow plows and snow blowers, which are both minor compared to the sounds added by Spring, Summer and Fall. We are now entering these seasons that will assault our ears with gasoline-powered lawn mowers, high-decibel grass and leaf blowers, power washers, power edgers, weed-whackers, and many more noise producing machines. These seasons also tend to be when we set out to accomplish our maintenance and remodeling goals for the year, usually by bringing in laborers from outside our neighborhood, which brings me to the topic of this essay, the phantom outdoor noise covenant of RHA.

Laborers whose work does not generate

a great deal of noise and who tend to work in a relatively small area for a prolonged period, such as painters, roofers and masons, often share the desire to bring with them radios that are played sufficiently loudly to be heard by their entire crew; however, to accomplish this, their radio's sound waves penetrate and do not stop at that home's boundaries. Exacerbating this noise proliferation, there are frequently multiple work crews in our neighborhood simultaneously. In fact, I have on several occasions walked from one house to another to inform different work crews about our very specific outdoor noise covenant. I show understanding and sympathetic surprise while explaining to them that the homeowner who hired them must have simply forgotten to inform them about the covenant in our RHA by-laws that strictly forbids the playing of outdoor music that can be heard past that home's boundaries. The workers that Susan and I hire always learn of this covenant and must agree to abide by it before we sign their contract. You may wonder why you didn't know about this covenant previously and how difficult it is to locate it in our by-laws, which are printed in full at the end of your RHA Membership Directory. I must admit that it is, indeed, extraordinarily difficult to find our noise covenant, as I have carefully perused our by-laws multiple times without finding it. I reason that our by-laws must be so simple and so short that it's paradoxically easy to overlook something in them, even repeatedly. This inexplicable paradox does not deter me, however, from informing our workers about the RHA noise covenant, and I urge you to be similarly undeterred as well.

This concludes my consideration of the difference in levels of noise pollution in RHA 118 years apart. Should we next consider light pollution then and now?

Gerry Carlson
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KUDOS TO ONE OF OUR OWN

by Gerry Carlson

Linda Lighton received the great honor of having her art installed at our new MCI Airport, one of only nineteen Kansas City area artists chosen for this honor. Since 1985 Linda and her husband, Lynn Adkins ~~have been residents of Rockhill. Linda was~~ an honors graduate of the Kansas City Art Institute in 1989

Because one percent of public construction costs is devoted to art enhancements in Kansas City, our new airport had a budget of \$5.65 million for art. More than 1,900 applications for artistic installations were initially received. Selections were made using broad-based panels of citizens. Each panel chose the work for a particular airport location, near Gate 10 in American Airlines' International Terminal in Linda's case.

Linda's beautiful piece, *Ode to the Tallgrass Prairie*, is shown below. It measures 20 ft long by 4 ft high and depicts more than half-a-dozen common species of insects and flowers that have been painted onto ceramic tiles, as well as one species each of bird and frog. All these species are native to our Great Plains.



This is far from being the first honor that Linda has received. For four decades she has been receiving national and international awards, mostly for her work in ceramics. She has even been feted for her considerable philanthropic work as director of the Lighton International Artists Exchange Program. On the tenth anniversary of that organization, our Mayor and City Council proclaimed December 6, 2012 to be Linda Lighton Day in honor of the significant financial fellowships that her organization had awarded to 100 artists since its inception.

Linda Lighton is, yes, an artist. She is also a feminist, an activist, and a fearless social commentator, but most of all, she is a Rockhill Treasure!

RIVERFRONT READING SERIES: PATRICIA MILLER - April 14th @ 8 PM

Lifelong Rockhill neighbor Patricia Cleary Miller will be a featured participant in the Riverfront Reading Series April 14th at 8:00 PM. Patricia is the former poet laureate of the Harvard Alumni Association and author of numerous award-winning collections of poetry and other compositions. Join her live at 31 West 31st Street (The Writers Place) or by zoom. Details are at: <https://thewritersplace.wildapricot.org/event-5214760>

AN EASY WAY TO HELP KEEP ROCKHILL BEAUTIFUL

The Rockhill Homes and Gardens Club is gearing up this spring to plant more trees on the median and the east side of Rockhill Road. A donation last fall allowed us to plant the first 21 trees on the median. The Kauffman Center has donated money for 11 more, however, we still need funds for another 25 to 30 trees. Suburban Nursery has given us a discount to purchase trees for \$110/tree. If you can donate, please send Barry Nickell, our RHA treasurer (4500 Rockhill Terrace), a check made out to Midtown Kansas City Stewards Limited. We will donate our muscles!

Rockhill Homes & Garden Club: Spring Garden and Lawn Tips to Make Our Rockhill Neighborhood Shine

Springtime is always exciting, especially here in our Rockhill

Neighborhood, as our flowers and trees start to bloom and add so much color and variety to our landscapes.

Here are a few tips to help rejuvenate your lawn from the dormant winter months. Fortunately, we did not have a harsh winter and at the same time had regular precipitation, mainly in the form of rain. This has helped our lawns start to green up a little earlier than the previous year. We have also been fortunate with only 2 snow events of minor accumulation, so the parks and rec salt trucks did not overdo the spreading of salt onto our easements killing grass next to our curbs as occurred last year.

As mentioned in our autumn issue, early fall is the best time of year to reseed your lawn but April and May also work well if you missed the opportunity to do so this past September. To repeat a few tips, if just a few areas need attention, then a spiked yard rake will help break up the soil prior to spreading new seed. 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 such as Soil Service, Home Depot, 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 inadvertently mixed in. If we have regular April showers, then daily watering may not be needed for the seeds to germinate. But if during the first 7-10 days after seeding, there is not any help from nature, then daily watering will be needed to keep the soil moist so that the seeds germinate quickly.

Applying crabgrass control fertilizers such as Scotts Halts and Grassy Weed Preventer or Scotts Turf Builder Triple Action will help ensure that those ugly weeds will not take over your lawn during the summer months. Crabgrass control fertilizers also help prevent germination of most other weeds (except dandelions and clover). A word of caution - in those areas that you have recently planted grass seed, avoid applying these types of fertilizers, as they will also prevent the grass seed from germinating.

Dandelions and clover are best killed with a spray on weed killer such as Ferti-Lome Weed Free Zone. Using a sticker spreader such as Leaf Lock will ensure that the weed killer stays on the weeds. Several applications may be necessary but will not kill your good grass. Wherever new grass seed has been planted use a starter fertilizer with a Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium (NPK) ratio of 24-25-4 to promote quick growth.

If you are not a DIY type of person, then hiring a company like TruGreen can take care of all of your lawn needs but will end up being more expensive. There is always a trade-off with time spent and money spent when caring for your lawn.

Spring is also an ideal time for planting new shrubs and trees. When planting, in addition to an initial application of fertilizer, if you have clay-like soil use Earth Right Super Stuff (available from most nurseries as well as from Ace Hardware or Amazon) to help break up the clay that is found in so many of our yards. Many nurseries also offer an extended warranty if you use MYKE mycorrhizae when planting trees and shrubs. Finally, if you have azaleas, rhododendrons, evergreens or holly bushes, apply Holly Tone (found at most nurseries) to help acidify your soil and enhance the blooms and health of the plants.

ANNUALS: THESE TRIED-AND-TRUE VARIETIES WILL MAKE IT THROUGH THE SUMMER

ANGELONIA

A tough annual and a look alike to snapdragons, these bloom all summer long into fall. They are drought tolerant and stand up to summer heat and humidity. They are annuals in Zone 6. Planted in full sun (6 hours or more), they grow 4-10" tall and 12-20" wide. These are great in borders, or plant them in masses where they make a striking display. They also do well in pots and window boxes. They are noninvasive, non-aggressive and do not need deadheading. They require good drainage, non-clay soil and light fertilizer

during the summer season.

Angelonia have clusters of tiny, orchid-like flowers that bloom in white, pink, mauve, violet and purple. They emit a fruity scent as a bonus.

VINCA, ALSO KNOWN AS PERIWINKLE

An annual that is heat loving with 8 hours of sun a day, well-drained soil, grows well in garden beds, containers and hanging baskets. Low maintenance in terms of pests, diseases and fertilizing.

Most cultivars grow upright and can reach up to 24"-tall, but some cultivars have more of a trailing habit that makes them great for hanging baskets. No need to deadhead, just fertilize at time of planting and water early in the day to make sure the soil dries before sunset. Common colors: White, pink, red, and lavender.

DRAGON WING BEGONIA (RED OR PINK)

An annual in zone 6, easy to grow and maintain, this is a trouble-free Begonia. They need bright light, but not scorching sun. Continuous bloom from Spring to Fall. They grow 2 feet tall and can be planted in the ground, in masses for a big statement, in pots and window boxes. This is drought tolerant and does not need deadheading. Feel free to cut the stems with blooms for flowers in the house, as they last.

There is also an Angel Wing Begonia; the difference is that it has dark leaves with white spots.

ONE FINAL NOTE: Do not overlook planting herbs amongst your flowers. With the cost of herbs at the grocery today, you have a win/win with a great look that also allows you to reap rewards in the kitchen. Dill, Rosemary, Basil, are a few annuals, but Sage, Lavender, Tarragon and Thyme are perennials that will return next year.

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

by Ed Straley

Meet the Harshbargers . . .

Let me tell you about a couple of young kids working at Houston's on the Plaza. One night after working the late shift, they shared Houston's famous apple walnut cobbler and talked until the wee hours of the morning.... six months later they were married. Let me introduce you to Lance and Sonya Harshbarger, proud homeowners at 611 E. 46th Street.

For two decades, Sonya dedicated herself to raising their three daughters. Sonya always wanted to be a Mom first. While her early days had her doing catering with her sister, the girls took top concern. Recognizing Sonya's love of cooking, her three daughters directed her to start "Sugar Babies Bakery," where they made hand-crafted desserts sold throughout the metro.

Liv (25) lives in Brookside and works at the Red Door Grill, she graduated UMKC in Education

Caroline (22) is a senior at the United States Air Force Academy, where she will graduate in June as a 2nd Lieutenant.



Julia (20) currently lives in Burbank with her fiancé and will soon be moving to Kansas City. A wedding is being planned at Lance and Sonya's home on October 7th.

Lance is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) for the past 25 years. He is completing his first year as a Rockhill Homes Association Board member.

Sonya is getting back into classes with friends and is in the process of making French macrons. Sonya welcomes all.

When it comes to special interests and hobbies, both are avid music enthusiasts, and are frequent guests at The Black Dolphin and The Phoenix. They have an extensive vinyl collection of Jazz and Blues. Lance's hobby of playing bass guitar, which he has been doing since high school, allows him to sit in for a set or two when called upon. Sonya currently works at Wilson Lighting as a consultant, and is an active member of the Master Gardener Program Missouri Chapter.

For years Lance and Sonya would visit the Nelson, and each time Sonya requested a drive through the Rockhill Neighborhood dreaming of one day restoring an old historic home. Today Sonya's dream has come true, as she and Lance have been doing just that.

Welcome to the neighborhood, Lance and Sonya!

Meet Tom Winter . . .

Speaking of dreams coming true, years ago Tom Winter rented a home where the Kauffman Foundation is now located. When he left that home, he hoped to one day return and buy a home on Pierce Avenue. About a year ago that wish came true when he purchased 532 Pierce Avenue from Karen Moninger. Tom shares his home with his cat, Sox, a 10-year-old Tabby.

Tom was born in Waterloo, Iowa. His parents moved the family to Kansas City when Tom was in the first grade. Tom graduated from UMKC with a BA in English Literature and in Philosophy. He has worked in various Information Technology jobs and spent 33 years at the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. Since retiring recently, Tom keeps himself occupied volunteering with various institutions such as The Rabbit Hole, the KC Parks Department and the World War One Museum, to name a few. Tom has been applying his technology by revamping the RHA website with Lisa Hickok.

Tom has two great kids, Amilia (31), an English teacher at the KC Arts Academy and Joshua (28), a cook.

Tom is looking forward to retirement, staying active, supporting the neighborhood and surrounding institutions. Welcome to the neighborhood, Tom!



Meet Charlie Burt and Savannah Niemeyer...

Charlie Burt and Savannah Niemeyer are both lifelong residents of Kanas City. When they decided to buy their first home together, they both wanted to find an older house with a lot of character. Rockhill checked all the boxes on their list. When 711 Emanuel Cleaver hit the market they pounced on the opportunity. With a little luck and strong guidance from their friend and realtor, they found their dream home.

Burt and Savannah are two very talented professionals. Savannah has an associate degree in graphic design from Valley where she studied web development and user experience design. Charlie on the other hand holds a BFA in Print, Paper and Book Arts from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

Savannah currently works as a Product Designer for FanThreeSixty, a local tech startup primarily focused on developing apps for sports teams. Charlie is a full-time designer specializing in brand design, restaurant and bar menu system development and most recently, lettering and calligraphy.

Savannah is a life-long runner, completing numerous half marathons and 10ks, with aspirations to complete a full marathon. In her spare time she enjoys playing chess and taking care of too many plants. You can find her in the evening hanging on the back deck with a good cocktail.

Charlie spends a good chunk of his time addled with minor injuries picked up at the various city rock climbing gyms. He enjoys playing recreational soccer, collecting records, contacting UFO's with his synthesizers and reading long fantasy epics.

Love of Travel brings them together to new places try to do at least one international trip a year.

Currently, their household is run by 3 indoor cats, Phoebe, the 17-year-old Matriarch who keeps a watchful eye on Sharkey and Crispin, 8-year-old tomcats. To say the least they run the house and their favorite activity is catching treats thrown across the room.

Charlie and Savannah have spent twelve years together and two years of being engaged. They plan on getting married this September in Theis Park, further cementing the Rockhill neighborhood into their continuing legacy. Welcome!



The Summer edition of the Rockhill Times will be distributed in early July. If you have information to share, or notices of recognition or events, please send them to mussmang@gmail.com Previous issues of the Times can be found at www.rockhillkc.org/archives.html