



The Rockhill Times

President's Letter

Spring 2021

Dear Rockhill Neighbors,

Ahhh Spring! I don't know about you but I have blocked out of my mind the horrible spell we had in the winter and barely remember it. We have so much to look forward to with spring in full bloom, summer coming and everything returning to almost normal!

Speaking of spring or really spring cleaning, have you noticed the park side of Rockhill Terrace? Sarah Ingram-Eiser with the help of Barry Nickell have formed a neighborhood cleanup committee. The HOA paid someone to clean up the park side of the street in the fall and 311 responded to follow up requests to sweep the street. In addition, Sarah and Barry have contacted 311 to ask for other streets to be cleaned and old tires, etc. to be picked up. I also believe there are a few of you who take a bag and pick up litter while on your walks. Thank you from all of us! We appreciate you taking care of our beautiful neighborhood.

I hope to see you at the annual meeting May 18th, 6:30, at our house (627 E. 46th). It will be outside so please bring a chair if you can. Jim Wanser and Joy Payne have volunteered to organize and serve drinks and small bites.

The KC Streetcar's Main Street Extension project team will be our guest speaker(s). Since we are so close to the line, I'm sure you will have some good questions for them.

Following that, we will have our general meeting with summaries from our treasurer, security chair, and so on. I will recap the home association's year and discuss some of our agenda items.

We will also vote on next year's slate of board members and officers. We would love to know if you are interested in serving as a board member, officer or special chair in the future.

That is all I have this time! So I will leave you with two quotes that made me smile.

Science has never drummed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day—W. Earl Hall

My favorite weather is bird-chirping weather.—Loire Hartwould

All My Best,

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The Great Walking Trail In Gillham Park

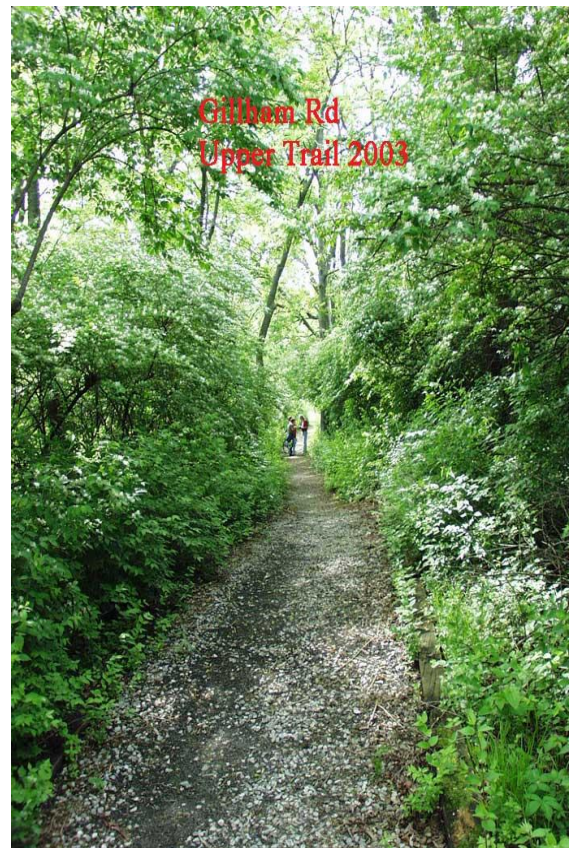
by Jim Wanser

After hibernating most of last winter, I renewed my exercise program with utilizing the walking trail in the southern end of Gillham Park. I knew the history of George Kessler and his work with August Meyer in creating the great boulevard and parks system of Kansas City, but walking in Gillham Park has renewed my appreciation for the aesthetic serenity that Kessler created on the eastern edge of our neighborhood. At many points along the trail, the visual beauty is remarkable. Many of the trees, some well over one hundred years old, are perfectly placed. Gillham Park, from 36th street south to Brush Creek, was one of Kessler's first Kansas city projects (1887) and resulted in numerous other opportunities both locally and nationally. As was his trademark, he accentuated the best of the natural terrain while integrating great amenities for the emerging urban development. At one point in time, Gillham Park had both a horse riding trail and a casting pond to practice fishing skills.

As with many parks in midtown, Gilham Park went through a period where maintenance and rehabilitation needs outweighed resources. Much of the west side of the park was heavily overgrown with honeysuckle and much of the stonework was in a state of significant disrepair.

But in 2003, with the help of the Kessler Society, Home Depot, the City and community groups, the park saw major improvements that continue through today. The park improvements renew appreciation of the wonderful design that Kessler created. The trails are in great shape, the park is clean and safe, and a great diverse group of midtown residents use the park daily. As Rockhillians, we are surrounded by great greenway options, but Gillham Park is one of our best.

Hope you have time to take a walk...



If these walls could talk

with assistance from Jack Lapping

The beloved old houses and walls that define the character of our neighborhood require our attention now and then. Sometimes more “now” than “then” it seems. Yet, we take on the responsibility of preserving these structures when we become members of the Rockhill community. The following is a brief introduction to the preservation of historic stone with resources for additional reading below.

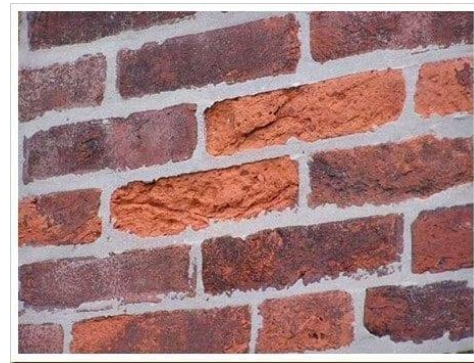
The limestone that comprises our homes and walls was quarried right here in Kansas City. Limestone is a relatively soft, porous rock formed from sediment including shells, creatures, and plants that calcify on the ocean’s floor. Brick is made from sand and lime. Water and air move naturally in and out of these stones as if breathing. Over time, damage occurs from water and wind, though stone repaired using the wrong mortar can also crack and crumble. Houses (and walls) built before 1900 used lime mortar[LJ1]. Those built between 1900 and 1920 transitioned to a mortar made from lime mixed with cement. After 1930 most all mortar is cement[LJ2]. [LJ3]Meanwhile bricks have also gone through a transition, being made of harder and harder materials. So, using a too strong mortar could damage your historic bricks. Be sure to select the right mortar to repair or maintain a limestone or brick construction. Most masonry cement used today is too hard for our historic stone. Type K mortar is used for historic buildings though you cannot find this type of mortar premixed at a Home Depot or Lowes. You may need a professional analysis to determine the type of mortar that you need for your project. A simple test is to pour vinegar over a piece of mortar. If the piece bubbles, then it’s lime mortar. Ask your mason about the type of mortar they are using for your project. It’s important to choose the right mortar for the job.

From: thebalancesmb.com

From: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/2-repoint-mortar-joints.htm>



The upper most mortar in this image is the proper limestone mix. Note its white-ish color. Also note the improper concrete



Bricks damaged from using improper (too hard) mortar.

Remembering Neighbors



Branham, Don, *Studio Cards*, Dean Norman, 2004

Rockhillians who lived in the neighborhood in the wild and carefree ‘60s, will recall a man who owned the house at the corner of Cleaver and Holmes. He was a friendly, gregarious man, full of energy and creativity. For example, he spray-painted many of his belongings either

black or gold including his house, his car, and even the trees! He'd often enlist kids in the neighborhood to assist in these numerous projects. (you can ask Todi, Patricia or Libby about that) He worked as a cartoonist for Hallmark cards. He regularly wore a black cape with a red lining, sometimes with very little underneath. He loved to play classical music on the piano at high volume at all times of the day or night. Patricia remembers when he was discovered doing this at 3am ... in the house next door. No one locked their doors in those days and he just helped himself. When asked why he was playing the neighbor's piano in the middle of the night, he said it was because his house was too smoky...and it was, because it was on fire!

A Year of Living Perilously

A year ago in March the Covid pandemic arrived on this planet and forever changed our lives. The anniversary invites a chance to reflect on the impact of this experience. With our country more politically divided than ever, the pandemic managed to bring unity in a way we could never have imagined. With our lives on the line, we became at once more amenable, more appreciative, more able to smell the roses and at the same time more anxious, more irritable, more prone to jumping of the handle at the slightest provocation. It seems to me that Rockhill has undergone an upheaval as well. We are both more connected and at the same time more disengaged with each other. It seems strange to say Thank You to a technology but surely Zoom has done its best to hold us together as a neighborhood. Now, as the pandemic morphs into what we hope are its final stages, let's view this as a time of healing. Let's take time to reflect on the past year, both the good and the bad, the damage and the growth, perhaps write down some of your thoughts and keep them as a reminder of this experience and of our remarkable resilience.



THANK YOU EVERYONE for my many birthday greetings, flowers and laughs! --Todi

Meet the Neighbors



Photo by Laurel Hughes

Jamie Cumby and Saskia Nislow are first time homeowners at the corner of Cleaver and Holmes. They moved to the Kansas City area last August from NYC so that Jamie could take a position as Assistant Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts at Linda Hall Library. Jamie is also a historian of early modern printing and publishing. Saskia left teaching after 8 years to focus on her ceramics. She enjoys working with kids through programs like BBBS. Both Jamie and Saskia are working on their first books. The two are excited about the art community in Kansas City, gardening and beekeeping, and being part of the friendly Rockhill neighborhood. Please welcome Jamie and Saskia!

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

