



Hawthorne Place Neighborhood  
Association

March 1, 2025

## Thirty Years of the Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association

Claire Martin in 1995

In 1994, Claire Martin (1417 Holmes) was considering the needs of our neighborhood. She remarked that whenever she took the bus home from downtown she was enchanted by the period homes and the tree-lined streets of Whittier, Lowell, and Holmes. Here was a neighborhood preserved in time for nine decades. Shouldn't it be recognized and protected? Claire was already an activist, working with her neighbors to get a stop sign in place at Holmes and Cedar. Maybe a neighborhood association would help garner the city's attention for other neighborhood needs. She rallied the residents. And so began the Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association. Thank you Claire, our first HPNA president.

The collective energy and enthusiasm reflected the spirit of those who lived here at that time. Officers were elected. Bylaws were written. Block captains were chosen. Activities and projects were planned. City concerns were addressed. Demarcation signs and flower beds were installed. A neighborhood newsletter was initiated. It was a promising beginning. (Continued on p. 2)

**Just a reminder, many of you may not know that there is a webpage that is up and operating for the Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association. Take a look. You will learn about the history of our neighborhood, see photographs from the past and maybe even find something about your house. You can view it at [www.hawthorneplacena.com](http://www.hawthorneplacena.com).**

**Also, make note in your calendar of these upcoming events for which there will be forthcoming information: directory and dues: March 1 - April 20, spring clean-up: April 5, Easter egg hunt: April 19 and neighborhood yard sale: May 17.**

It was also a time when the local government encouraged these endeavors. In addition, the Council of Neighborhood Associations organized sessions to inform residents on how they might organize. Even today, the city's webpage lists seventy neighborhood associations, identifying their officers, wards and contact information.

When Claire got us up and running in 1995, she was also setting an example. She would serve her time, she told us, and then others needed to follow. An organization like ours can only endure by participation. The quality of its efforts are only as good as the number of residents who are willing to help.

This spring, the HPNA board will be asking for your membership. Those dues pay for an array of projects and activities. There will also be a number of events needing your involvement and assistance such as the spring cleanup, the annual Easter egg hunt, and the Big Event (neighborhood garage sale), and other tasks requiring more frequent attention.

The Hawthorne Neighborhood Association lapsed some years back. This is an attempt at a restart. Come out. Get involved. Care. Take pride in our wonderful neighborhood.

## Massage Parlor Concerns

Location. Location. Location. Zoning. Zoning. Zoning. Realty and opportunity. In 2024, Hawthorne Place had not one but two massage parlors in our tiny subdivision of six blocks. And the signs were in place to herald these services on the south side of South Grand along with our own sign as a residential, family-oriented neighborhood. Imagine the welcome. Imagine our neighborhood's identity.

While outsiders may have been amused, no one here was happy. How did it happen? Where were the guardrails? Was there a city plan and city ordinances in effect to address these concerns?

The immediate neighbors noticed activity at these locations that set off alarms. And often, customers parked their cars away from the businesses. Anonymity? It appeared that employees lived on the premises and that they were being exploited. Then there were the headlines: 3/7/24: "FBI Targets Asian Massage Parlors," 3/12/24:



Lindsey and Ben Trojahn (1317 Whittier) were among many neighbors who addressed the parlor concerns.

"Springfield Man Charged with Operating Six Houses of Prostitution," 4/19/24: "Additional Raids on Asian Massage Parlors." And not to be forgotten, the police conducted raids right here.

These concerns brought our neighbors together as activists. Police were contacted. Photos were posted on social media. We talked to the press. Emails were sent to the Mayor and all of those on the city council. At one council session, David Baker (1613 Holmes) gave an eloquent presentation of how young lives can be affected. On examination, this controversy has been a discussion occurring in communities across the country for decades.

In June, an ordinance - sponsored by Mayor Buscher with Alderwomen Notoriano and Conley and written by Corporation Counsel Moredock - was approved. It addressed city licensing, state regulations, inspections and fees for these parlors. In January, nine of our residents attended council to encourage enforcement. As of now, the signs in HP are down.

But this evolving story is also a cautionary tale. Paying attention, communicating with one another, attending city council and zoning meetings, working with the city officials, knowing our Neighborhood Police Officer, talking with our alderperson are all part of caring about our neighborhood.

And one more thing: zoning matters.



### Holiday Decorations

Help! The holiday HPNA decorations were taken down in January. Who in our neighborhood is willing to store them? Would that good Samaritan take on the responsibility for their display this December? *Christmas is a time for giving!*



Rich Saal

### *Soil and Soul*

We live in homes on great farmland. Have you ever taken a spade to turn the soil over in your yard or in the boulevard? You'll discover the fertile smell and the rich, black soil that all gardeners love. Farmers love it too. Our neighbor, Rich Saal (1605 Lowell) spent two years collecting stories and creating a film about ten individuals who share memories of farming the Sangamon River Valley. The result of these efforts is a documentary titled *Soil and Soul* and it is a timely appreciation of a way of life that is vanishing. The family-owned farm, passed down through generations, has been a backbone of American agriculture.

Rich's 42-minute documentary was recently featured in an exhibit at Sangamon Experience on the lower level of the Public Affairs Center at UIS. You can still watch *Soil and Soul* on YouTube.

## Hawthorne Troubadours

Last December, the Springfield Choral Society had a sold-out performance of Handel's *Messiah* at the Blessed Sacrament Church.

They had to put up extra seating. If you missed that concert (so close to HP), you'll still have opportunities to hear that ensemble in the next three months. And you should. After all, some of our neighbors (Sue Meister, David Ross, Dale Rogers) will be singing in the choir.

For Women's History Month, the choral society will feature Songs of the Unsung: Music and Stories of Women. These concerts are scheduled March 21 and 22 at 7:30 PM at First Presbyterian Church (321 South Seventh Street). Tickets are \$15.

The choir will then be performing at three different venues with Malcolm Dalglish, a composer and hammer dulcimer performer, in a concert with an appreciation of nature. It's titled *Hymnody of Earth*. The first concert is scheduled for First Presbyterian Church at 7:30 on March 30. Tickets are \$20. There will be a dulcimer recital and singing hike at Adams Wildlife Sanctuary on March 31 at 9 AM and 3 PM. Tickets are \$15 with each event limited to 40 people. Finally, on June 1 at 2 PM, Dalglish and the choral society will be performing an abridged version of *Hymnody of Earth* at Lincoln Memorial Gardens. This one is free.

Check [springfieldchoralsociety.org](http://springfieldchoralsociety.org) for more information.



Sue Meister (1421 Holmes) is in the second row far right.



## Civic Participation

There are a number of local opportunities where all of us as citizens can participate. And they are free although in some cases a paid membership would be appreciated. Here are three:

1.) ICON stands for Independent Coalition for Our Neighborhoods. Its mission is to improve the quality of our residential areas and encourage the city to pay attention to those needs. ICON meets the last Monday of each month except in July and December. Check [springfieldicon.org](http://springfieldicon.org).

2.) Citizens Club of Springfield meets at 8 AM on the third Friday of each month at the Hoogland Center for the Arts (420 South Sixth Street). Each meeting features a speaker or speakers addressing issues of local concern. Check Facebook or the Thursday Illinois Times preceding the Friday meetings.

3.) The Springfield City Council meets at 5:30 PM on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at City Hall (300 South Seventh Street). You can watch these sessions on channel 18. To attend, check the council's calendar at [cityclerk.springfield.il.us](http://cityclerk.springfield.il.us). There is no better way to keep an eye on local government and have your say.



Mark Mahoney (1520 Lowell), president of ICON, is on the right.

Be sure to vote on April 1 - That is the date of the consolidated election pertaining to school district 186, county wide propositions, capitol township trustees, park districts, etc. We typically vote at Westminster Presbyterian Church.



## The City's 2025 Branch Pickup Schedule

The Department of Public Works announced the schedule for branch pickup in Springfield's four quadrants. Hawthorne Place is part of the Southeast Quadrant which is defined as properties south of South Grant Avenue and East of Walnut. Our remaining pickup dates are the weeks of April 21, July 21, and October 20. Branches must be placed curbside, between sidewalk and street. Avoid covering manholes, drains, sidewalks, bike lanes, boulevards and anything that could create a barrier for the service.

Here is a list of the city's instructions for residents:

The City of Springfield will pick-up branch piles from residents:

- No larger than 3 feet in height, 4 feet in depth, and 10 feet in length;
- Piles larger than a small pick-up load **will not** be picked up by the city;
- The program is for **branches only**, no firewood or precut logs will be accepted;
- Branches/limbs trimmed by a commercial contractor will **NOT** be picked up;
- Branches must be placed on the curb **not** obstructing the street or sidewalk;
- Branches must be placed curbside by 7:00 a.m. on Monday of the area's pick-up week;
- Small branches may be broken up and put into yard waste bags for bi-weekly curbside pick-up; and
- Branches are **NOT** allowed on center boulevards.



## We Remember

Our former neighbor, Ann McDonnell Vandiver, 76, passed away on December 29, 2024, in Bloomington, Illinois.

Ann was born in Bloomington on December 20, 1948. She married Marty Vandiver in 1973 in her hometown. It was Marty's employment for the State that brought them to Springfield where they raised two sons, Douglas and Matthew. Here, Ann worked for Franklin Life Insurance and Horace Mann. She volunteered for "Women Helping Others" and St. Joseph's Home.

Ann and Marty were anchored to their community in many ways. Blessed Sacrament was an important part of their life and they mentioned how meaningful it was for them to return here for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary last year. For us in Hawthorne Place, they were always engaged with a quiet but vital energy. They didn't just commit for a year or two, they were in all the way. Marty served on the HPNA board, worked as the treasurer, represented our neighborhood with ICON, and together they inspired the rest of us with their good cheer and dedication. They resided at 1528 Whittier and when they departed Hawthorne the loss was significant.

With sympathies to our friend and revered former neighbor, Marty Vandiver and his family.



Ann and Marty Vandiver in 2005



Kathy Ward and Emma

## Walking the Dog

Kathy Ward (1508 Holmes) walks her dog Emma every day. You can't miss them. Kathy has red hair. Emma is white and brown. That brown coloring circles and emphasizes Emma's eyes so she is quite the beauty. According to Kathy, her smoky eyes make her feminine and alluring.

Emma is 19 months old and Kathy's first dog. While she is frisky, a characteristic of her breed, she likes her exercise. Consequently, there is ample time to meet her. She gets more than one walk a day. Emma is an Aussiedoodle which is a cross between an Australian shepherd and a Poodle, a breed prized for their intelligence, friendly demeanor, and striking appearance.

Say hello to Emma - and Kathy too.

---

"Because of the dog's joyfulness, our own is increased. It is no small gift." - Mary Oliver

---



503 South Grand from the front

## History: Just Across the Street

Whenever you leave Hawthorne Place and turn onto South Grand, you see two large brick buildings on the west and east sides of Henrietta. Ever wonder about them? They have histories, long histories, and, yes, they were once the residences of the people who had them built.

First, 503 South Grand Avenue West. Those of us who have lived in the neighborhood awhile may remember a variety of different businesses occupying the site: David M. Wilson Realty, Douglass Realty, Illinois Hospital Association, Lee Zelle Title Company. That's been the case for the past sixty-five years. But first it was a home.

Dr. Irving Wagner Metz received a permit to build a two-story residence there in 1913. A permit for the one-and-one-half story garage was issued in the next year. Dr. Metz (1872-1940) had graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Chicago in 1900 and came to Springfield in 1903. He married Edith Thorp in 1906 and they would have two children, Orlando Thorp and Catherine.

The son attended St. John's Military School in Wisconsin, Choate School in Connecticut, and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. He became an avid flyer through life, married, and, with that academic background, settled into a life of farming. The Metz daughter, Catherine, attended Bennett School in New York, married a doctor, and lived on Long Island before settling in Santa Monica, California. Dr. Metz died in 1940. Edith Metz died in 1953. The home had a long family history and ownership well into the 1950s. During that time the local papers wrote of the parties, the wedding receptions, the visitors, the travels abroad. Fortunately, 503 still looks great today. It captures your attention.

By the way, you've probably also noticed that string of two story apartments or offices that parallel 503 just to the west. There had been a house there at 515 South Grand. It was torn down in 1970. The new structure appeared in 1971. Both 503 and 515 are now owned by Safe Harbor Properties, LLC and the address for 503 may now be listed as 1233 Henrietta.



503 South Grand viewed from Henrietta





437 South Grand when it was a residence

And next, we cross Henrietta to 437 South Grand West which we have long known as the Vancil Murphy Funeral Home. Look beyond that formal facade and you may see a house peeking out (upper windows) at you. The house dates back to 1906.

Morris Ashton Jones (1866-1947) had that house built. Jones came to Springfield as a small boy. As an adult, he excelled in the real estate business while also becoming an owner and operator of extensive grazing and farm land. He and his wife, Rose McIntire, had three sons and one daughter. The daughter would become Mrs. George W. Bunn, Jr. (A legendary family name in Springfield.) These offspring were born in the late nineteenth century and moved into 437 with the parents. All of them were grown and of adult-age when the mother died in 1921. The house changed ownership in 1925 but remained a residence for the next forty years. What is interesting is that in the Twenties the patriarch remarried and fathered two more children. There was a pre-nup which became important in 1947 when Morris Ashton Jones died. His widow (second wife) sued - and sued all four step-children - when she learned the size of the Jones estate. Among these properties were a house in Springfield, a 490-acre farm in Sangamon County, 1840 acres of grazing land in Butler county, KS, and 160 acres of grazing land in El Paso county, CO.

By that time, legal suits would already be filed over 437 South Grand and for different reasons and with different litigants. When William Taylor Vancil (1891-1974) acquired 437 in 1941 his original intent was to turn it into a funeral home. He opened his first funeral home in Auburn in 1916. He then moved his operation to Springfield in 1927 at Fifth and Allen and later to the Ferguson Mansion on North 5th in the 1930s. 437 was to be a second location for the business. But the neighbors objected, suits were filed, the zoning could not be changed. It went all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court which backed the objection in 1947. Consequently, it remained a residence, one for the Vancil family. In 1961, the city council approved a "C" zoning for 437. In 1966, the council passed a variance for off-street parking and that year construction began on the remodeling. The Vancil Memorial Funeral Chapel opened in 1967 with the facade we have all come to know. In 2005, Brian Murphy, an employee of the chapel, purchased the property from Russell Vancil and in 2007 it was renamed the Vancil Murphy Funeral Home.

All in all, a look at those buildings at 437 and 503 suggests the grand on South Grand West a hundred years ago when the avenue was primarily residential.



437 S Grand as it appears today  
See the HP newsletter for September 1, 2006.  
1321 Lowell is a match to 437 S. Grand  
as it appeared in 1906.



# HAWTHORNE PLACE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

## What is it?

- The Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association is non-profit organization for residents of Holmes, Lowell and Whittier between South Grand and Laurel - the boundaries of the 1902 subdivision. The organization advocates for the neighborhood, sponsors social activities, and is a forum for working on neighborhood issues.

## History

- The Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association held its first meeting at Laurel Methodist Church on October 27, 1994. The organization grew out of the efforts to get a stop sign installed at Holmes and Cedar. The neighbors discovered the benefits of a group effort and a group voice.

## How to join

- Membership is \$40 per family for annual dues. Those who live on Lowell pay \$60 per annum to include boulevard mowing. You can scan the QR code to pay with Zelle. You can also drop off a check or cash to your block captain or to the



**zelle**

Dues are essential to the success of our events, activities and communications: boulevard mowing, holiday gatherings, children's programs, neighborhood maintenance and reporting with our residents. Please be an HPNA member.

## Directory

- The neighborhood directory traditionally has been issued since the association's beginnings. Not everyone wants to be listed. But it is a great aid when reaching people, knowing your neighbors, and acquainting oneself with other households. We are a neighborhood. So we ask each of you to be included. We will be updating it in the spring.

## Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association Board

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>President</b><br>Stacey Hayes<br>1321 Lowell<br>217-670-4397  | <b>Vice-President</b><br>Josh Turner<br>1331 Holmes<br>815-979-4502     | <b>Treasurer</b><br>David Baker<br>1613 Holmes<br>513-356-9344      |
| <b>Secretary</b><br>Kathleen Ward<br>1508 Holmes<br>847-644-6442 | <b>Communications</b><br>Crystal Commean<br>1317 Lowell<br>217-685-9575 | <b>Hospitality</b><br>Lauren Lumsden<br>1512 Lowell<br>217-638-7572 |

## Block Captains

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Holmes North</b><br>Josh Turner<br>1331 Holmes<br>815-979-4502 | <b>Lowell North</b><br>Crystal Commean<br>1317 Lowell<br>217-685-9575 | <b>Whittier North</b><br>Lindsey Trojahn<br>1317 Whittier<br>217-416-2426  |
| <b>Holmes South</b><br>David Baker<br>1613 Holmes<br>513-356-9344 | <b>Lowell South</b><br>Mark Mahoney<br>1520 Lowell<br>217-303-9823    | <b>Whittier South</b><br>Rasheed Shotuyo<br>1601 Whittier<br>(224)772-4160 |

**Neighborhood Officer** - Joe Vose, our neighborhood police officer, can be reached at (217) 588-1291. The email is [joe.vose@springfield.il.us](mailto:joe.vose@springfield.il.us).

**Alderpersion** - Hawthorne Place is in Ward 6. Our alderperson is Jennifer Notariano. She can be reached at (217) 801-7889 (cell) and (217) 789-2151 (city hall). The email is [ward6.jn@gmail.com](mailto:ward6.jn@gmail.com) (work email) and [jennifer@jenniferforspringfield.com](mailto:jennifer@jenniferforspringfield.com) (personal email).

**Webmaster.** - Stacey Hayes is the webmaster for the Hawthorne Place Neighborhood Association web page. See contact information above.

**Newsletter** - The neighborhood newsletter is published quarterly. It is prepared by Stacey Hayes and Jim Huston.

Here at the close of the newsletter, we mention the generous contributions in many ways to the HPNA from Crystal Commean, one who is reluctant to be recognized. With sincere gratitude from her neighbors.