



Village East Update

Fall 2016

published by the Village East Neighborhood Association for its residents and friends

(Surprise) Autumn of U.S.' Discontent



UPCOMING EVENTS!

Look for our distinctive yellow signs around Village East informing you of activities. The announcement signs are posted about a week in advance.

Tuesday, March 1

Winter Newsletter Articles Due

December 16-22

Holiday Lighting Contest

Year-round

Adopt-A-Street Cleanup

VENA Monthly Meetings are open to all residents the third Thursday in JAN, APR, JUL, and SEP, at 7 pm in the Village East Community Elementary School library, 1433 S. Oakland St. (east main entrance). Come by and check it out!

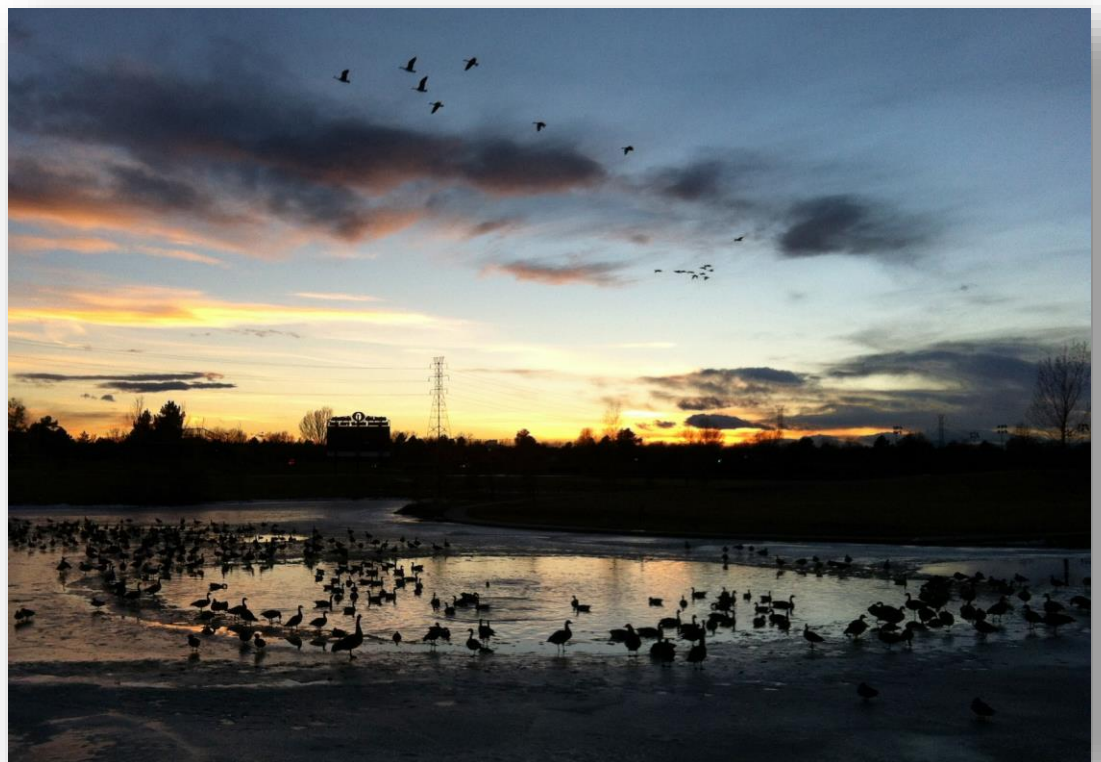
Village East Provided Few Clues to 2016 National Election Results

I don't know about you, but your intrepid *VE Update* Editor saw too few yard signs anywhere, including our fair Village East, to get any sense of political trends portending the national election winners in this 2016 election.

Colorado's polls seemed to reflect predictions far closer than many other

states. Perhaps our state's well-being relative to other states' apparent discontent with the status quo explains the surprising change at the top.

Weary citizens' satisfaction or disappointment will probably seem short-lived: politicians are no doubt planning Campaign 2020 as you read this... *



Season of Transition: Utah Park Pond Begins Annual Freezing and Flocking Processes



President's Letter

Steve Huffman

VENA President

Hello, Fellow Villagers,

Upcoming VENA Board Transitions

Greetings everyone. I will be your president for another year. I am in my 9th year and intend to step down next October and let someone else lead VENA. Most of our directors have also been on the Board for many years. Several are also thinking of stepping down, including the editor of this neighborhood newsletter. It is time to get some new blood on the Board. Please consider joining the Board to continue our presence in the neighborhood.

Warming Up to Weather Activities is Cool

We had a late frost in October then a month of warm weather before the real cold started. The temperature went from 80 down to about 0 degrees in one day just after Thanksgiving. People were rushing to get their sprinklers winterized. I finished most of my outside work, but there are still some leaves on the trees. They seem to be falling later this year. October and November were mostly dry with very little snow. Now our thoughts can turn to Holiday season and yes, wintertime. I know many of you dread the thought of fighting with the cold and snow. It means we have to drive in it and someone has to clear away the snow. City code requires that the snow be removed or the home owner could face fines. Snow and ice must be removed within 24 hours after a snowfall ends, and 48 hours after a snow emergency is declared by the city. To make an anonymous complaint about a property that has not been shoveled, call Access Aurora at 303-739-7000.

Annual VENA Meeting Provides Civic Interaction Opportunity, Light Rail Update

Our annual meeting was October 11th at 7:00 pm at the Village East Elementary School. It was an opportunity to catch up on things in our neighborhood and to discuss any concerns you might have had. We had a guest presentation about the progress of the light rail and they expect to have the Aurora link done sometime next spring. The opening has been delayed because of

the problems with the crossing gates on the line out to the airport. We also had a presentation about the status of Aurora from our City Council representative, Charlie Richardson. Greg Toler continues as Vice-President and Linda Metsger as Treasurer. Our secretary is Ann Dougherty and Arnie Schultz has rejoined the board. We will be continuing the Holiday Lighting Contest, Yard of the Month Contest, Spring Cleanup and the Adopt-A-Street program. We have Officer Dan Southwick (303-739-6951) as our PAR Officer. We have been posting our newsletter on our website and sent out a printed newsletter just prior to the annual meeting. We will also be posting the newsletter on Nextdoor Village East. The meeting was attended by about 20 Village East Residents. Our current membership is about 75 homes.

The condition of the neighborhood in general is very good. We have a few vacant homes or under foreclosure. House sales have picked up a little again. Many homes could still use improvement. Every home a visitor in our neighborhood notices forms an impression of our community. Collectively, we would like to show visitors how nice our neighborhood really is. It takes everyone's cooperation to project this image. If you live near a neglected home, please call code enforcement (Access Aurora – 303-739-7000) and report the situation or be a good neighbor and help out yourself. Thanks to all of you that take care of your homes.

Yard of the Month Winners Recognized

The winners of our Yard of the Month Contest were recognized at the annual meeting. The winners were:

- June – Michael, Ristana and Nancy Hada at 11058 E. Mexico Avenue
- July – Lynn Matson at 1814 S. Oakland Street
- August – David and Stephanie Thompson at 1376 S. Oakland Street
- September – Bob and Linda Clancy at 1487 S. Macon Street

We gave out \$25.00 gift certificates from Lowes to the winners. We wrote about the June, July and August winners in the last newsletter but had not yet written about the September winners. Check out their story on page 4. *

Thanks again for your support,

Village East Neighborhood Association (VENA) Annual Meeting 2016

The VENA Annual Meeting provides an easy hands-on opportunity to engage in local governance. Our country was founded on dispersing civic responsibility as broadly as possible. Our quarterly meetings, especially Annual meetings, exist to inform residents on local issues that may affect their households and property values, allow folks in shared communities a voice in their daily lives, and help decide what neighborhood services and events to sponsor and/or conduct. The Candidates' Forum is appreciated for its contributions in creating informed voters and accountable politicians. VENA encourages all Village East residents to attend as many meetings as possible. *



Yard of the Month Winners for September 2016

We gave out \$25.00 gift certificates from Lowes to the winners. We wrote about the June, July and August winners in the last newsletter but had not yet written about the September winners. The Clancy's have been residents of Village East for 30 years. Their children, Sean and Meghan attended Village East, Prairie and Overland schools. Their dog Cutter is a yellow lab and loves to greet everyone passing by. Bob is a vice-president of Sales for American International Group Insurance and Lynda is retired from Cherry Creek School District and also Real-estate. Lynda does all the work in the yard and Bob picks up the leaves. Their backyard is also nicely landscaped. *



Editor's Note: Our City Council Representative, Charlie Richardson, writes an article every month to be posted in neighborhood newsletters. We start posting information from Charlie as "Behind the City Scene" in this newsletter.

Behind the City Scene

By Charlie Richardson

November –

It is that special time of year, and no I am not talking about the cool evenings and the leaves turning and dropping! It is City budget time. During the City Council meeting of October 10 the City Council adopted the 2017 budget.

Here is how the process works. In mid year the City Manager proposes the budget for Council review. Then a "Workshop" occurs in late summer on a Saturday. The proposed budget is reviewed Department by Department. A Council Member can make a Motion to either add or delete something. It takes 5 votes to list the action up on a whiteboard. At the end of the day the Mayor asks for votes on all the whiteboard items. If there are 6 votes, which is a majority of the 11 member Council, then the action is considered to be formally incorporated into the Budget documents. This year there were 9 items added to the budget during the Workshop. I voted for only 2 of the nine. These 2 items related to adding 5 more police officers and providing stop signs (\$600) for an intersection in Ward 3.

I was unsuccessful in proposing the elimination of a \$100,000 study to determine how many police officers we should have. I am not a big fan of studies like this

because, very candidly, the results almost always reflect the preferred outcome of the sponsor of the study. Currently the minimum ratio of police staffing is 2 officers per 1,000 population. This is mandated by a previous ballot issue. The City Manager's office, in my opinion, opposes this mandate on the grounds that the number of police officers should be the prerogative of City Management and Council. The problem I have is that the mandate is a result of a vote by the people and I have no problem with a "floor" of required police officers. Public safety including both police and fire is "Job 1" for local government, followed very closely by adequate maintenance of our streets which is a, "Pay me now or pay much more later" paradigm.

Of the 7 items I did not support, one item really upset me in terms of an outrageous misuse of tax payer money. The expenditure sponsored by a member of Council is ten thousand dollars for "Buskers, Brews and BBQ". Some might say, "It is only ten thousand dollars." In Washington DC it would be, "It is only 10 million dollars." That sentiment is wrong here just as it is wrong in DC! I don't mean to sound uptight but I'm also not comfortable with

(Continued on next page)

Behind the City Scene (continued from previous page)

public funds being used for the purchase of alcohol. There was only one adjustment when the budget was adopted. A fellow Council Member proposed, and I supported, seven thousand dollars to create a low power radio station in Aurora to serve immigrants and refugees from Africa with pro-democracy news and information to help them successfully assimilate into our country. For example, in many African countries, the police are much feared for very legitimate reasons.

December –

When I was growing up in the 1950's the terms describing homeless individuals were: "vagrants," "tramps," "hobos" and the like. These pejorative descriptions have been thankfully replaced with terms such as "urban travelers" or just "homeless". However, the phenomenon remains and has exhibited itself in Ward 4 especially along and around South Havana.

Of course, there is a fierce debate as to the causes, ranging from unexpected and unanticipated events to a free choice. In my opinion, there is a spectrum of causes in relation to each individual. Mental illness, illegal drugs, alcohol, domestic violence, loss of employment and aversion to living in main stream society. Some have suggested that marijuana legalization has contributed. With several states including California now voting to legalize marijuana it will be interesting to see if there is a decrease.

This column is not intended to address causation. The City of Aurora has initially committed to spending approximately 1.5 million dollars each year for 3 years from the marijuana revenues. The City Council has authorized the refurbishing and opening of a day resource center up on the old Fitzsimmons campus. The Center will provide a wide range of services including counseling of all sorts and activities. In addition, there will be 2 "HOT" vans put into operation. These vans will be utilized to contact homeless individuals and offer transportation to the Center. The homeless person will obviously need to voluntarily get on the van.

I was the ONLY Council Member to vote against the above. Here is why. The Center closes at 5 pm. Furthermore, I have just received confirmation that the "HOT" vans will, upon request, return individuals to their original location. I recently spoke to an owner of an auto dealership on S. Havana who has experienced homeless people sleeping behind the dealership. Let's be clear, I am not criticizing this activity per se because when the Center closes it has to be empty. Simply put I voted NO to make a statement. We need to provide places for people to sleep at night even if it is a hostel or dormitory arrangement. I understand the noble hope that the provision of counseling will get the homeless back into society. And I am sure it will for some.

Those wishing more information on this subject and my position on the need for housing are invited to visit www.liveaffordablycolorado.org



LET THERE BE LIGHTS – COMPETE IN VENA'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST!

VENA will once again sponsor a holiday lighting contest for the neighborhood. The winner will receive a free membership for one year, the honor of displaying a sign in their yard proclaiming them the winner of the best holiday display, and a \$25.00 gift certificate from Target. Two runners-up will also be chosen. Lighting displays will be judged by a volunteer neighborhood

committee and will be judged on creativity, breadth and beauty. Judging will take place during the week before Christmas so be sure to have your lights on all that week. Winners will be announced at the VENA Monthly meeting on January 19, 2017. There will be an article in the next Village East Update and pictures will be posted on the VENA website. *



Nextdoor

The private social network
for your neighborhood.

[https://nextdoor.com/
about us/](https://nextdoor.com/about_us/)

Multi-Tasking Board Member

Here is a picture of our own Madam Secretary Ann with her finds after cleaning the corner at Jewell and Peoria. Ann reports she got a full bag of detritus, plus a hubcap from the site under the power lines. VENA remains open to Adopt-A-Street volunteers to help keep our neighborhood clean and tidy. *



1. License Plates
Ensure you have unexpired license plates on the front and back of your vehicle.

2. Distance from driveways, fire hydrants, stop signs
Don't park too close to driveways (5 feet), fire hydrants (15 feet) or crosswalks, stop signs and traffic signals (30 feet).

3. Street parking
Don't leave your vehicle parked too long in one space on the street: three days if the vehicle does not work or has expired license plates, five days if it is a motorhome or RV, seven days if it works properly, or longer if it's parked directly in front of your residence.

4. Any parking
If it's time to move your vehicle, make sure you move it at least 100 feet.

5. Pay/permit parking
Always look at signs to determine if permits are needed or payment is required.

Pay/Permit Only
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sat., Sun.,
Holidays Excepted

Follow these 5 tips to avoid getting a parking ticket in Aurora.



Help Us Contact You...

It's easy for all VE residents (owners AND RENTERS) to stay informed. We just need your preferred:

- ☐ Mailing name _____
- ☐ Mailing address _____
- ☐ E-mail address _____
- ☐ A check for \$15 dues made out to "VENA" (sorry, no credit cards)

Please print out and CLEARLY complete this page, include check, and mail to:

VENA Membership
1155 S. Havana St. #11-373
Aurora, CO 80012

Newsletter e-mail reminders provided upon request. E-mail addresses NOT used for any other purpose. Contact the Treasurer (below) with any contact info updates. We're trying for 100% participation among neighbors. Please send in TODAY. Thanks for your support of Village East!

Bookmark Our Website: www.VillageEastAurora.org

VENA Board of Directors

Steve Huffman, President, 303-369-6863
shuff110@comcast.net

Greg Toler, Vice President, 303-755-4256

Ann Dougherty, Secretary, 303-743-8411

Linda Metsger, Treasurer, 303-696-6839

Terry Snyder, VE Update Editor 303-696-6003

Robin Bruce 303-751-3033
Jack Dougherty 303-743-8411
Barbara Goree 303-750-5063
Dora Hamilton 303-369-9005
Cort Weaver 303-745-4794
Mike Wolford 303-632-6403

Arnie Schultz, City Referrals 303-750-8824

To submit articles or purchase ads for the *Village East Update* newsletter, please contact Terry Snyder, Village East Update Newsletter Editor at terry.i.snyder@comcast.net 303-696-6003.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES ARE THE 1ST DAY OF MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, and DECEMBER. The *Village East Update* is published four times a year by the Village East Neighborhood Association (VENA).