



Neighborhood Notes from the CWNA President March/April 2005

Spring At Last!

It was a winter that did not seem to end, but there sure are signs in the neighborhood that spring has finally arrived. One sure sign is the need and ability to clean up the neighborhood. Although there was a small turnout for the clean-up along the river and in the neighborhood, plenty of trash was collected. I would like to thank Maryellen from the Fun & Games Committee for coordinating the effort. Student clean-up crews from UWM were also seen in the neighborhood, and I have requested more frequent and targeted events from UWM in the future.

Another sign of spring is the anticipated rains that green our neighborhood. In an effort to do our part by not overly contributing to waste treatment facility, we secured a neighborhood grant from the Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewage District (MMSD) for distribution of free rain barrels and downspout disconnects. Our March meeting was filled with expert presentations of benefits and demonstration of collecting rainwater and recently rolled out the barrels for eager recipients. Anyone still interested in this opportunity should contact Else Ankel at 964-4481.

As a follow-up to our January General Meeting, a plan was drafted to enhance access to the Oak Leaf Trail and the Cambridge Woods that preserves the natural area. If you have not seen the plan or would like to comment on it, it is still on our website (www.cambridgewoods.org) under Position Papers. The plan was picked up by both the Bike Federation and *Riverwest Currents*. The *Currents* will feature a story on the draft plan in their May Issue. A final draft plan will be shared with local officials and organizations in an effort to implement elements. There may be opportunity for neighborhood participation and support, so I hope people take the time to become familiar with its intentions. Just today walking through the Woods, I was fortunate to see a couple of hawks and the early signs of blooming trillium. Else is organizing some outings to take on the task of pulling the invasive garlic mustard plant, since spring is the time to literally 'nip it in the bud'. She is doing this as an educational opportunity for our young residents and friends of the neighborhood.

In closing, I recently attended a presentation by UWM students that are working on a similar project called The Kinnickinnic River Initiative. The students spoke of studies that show that areas with litter, graffiti and other quality of life crimes have a strong relationship to higher crimes. These are easily correctable by calling the city's graffiti hotline, keeping our blocks clean and reporting nuisance complaints. The term the students used was called Neighborhood Collective Efficacy. This is the willingness to control and engagement in neighborhood issues. It is my hope that we all share some degree of willingness to engage and control, so that collectively we demonstrate a high efficacy level.

May the spring rains we collect green our gardens and inspire others!

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