

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

May 2006

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

April has been a busy month for this volunteer and the neighborhoods. I have talked to several neighborhood activists who are trying to start, restart or re-energize their neighborhood associations. This is happening all across town. As volunteers, our challenge is to grow our replacements and to have the leadership of our associations a mixture of veterans and fresh faces. Sometimes the transition works well and sometimes, it does not. Changing neighborhoods complicate this job as well. CONA is there to help with advice, the school of hard knocks, and many examples of what works that you are free to copy. Please join us at the meetings and get to know other neighborhood leaders who face similar challenges.

One of the side effects of the CONA agenda is that it is forward looking. As a result, it does not reflect too much on problems largely solved. Code enforcement has been a major issue in St. Petersburg for the last 15 years. I am happy to say that a large number of improvements to the system have been made over the last couple of years. The addition of a special master helped relieve the backlog at the code enforcement meetings. Cell phones and computers have improved communication with the code officers. Reorganization of the typing of notices has taken many weeks out of the enforcement process. This month, the codes office added the ability to report violations, check on status of violations and check to see if a property has violations, all from the city's web site. This represents significant progress in a very important department for the neighborhoods.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the City Council will have given the scope of the management review of the police department to the staff so they may hire a consultant. After 18 years, we hope the hard questions will be asked:

1. What can we do to reduce turnover?
2. What can we learn from other cities who are cutting crime rates every year?
3. How can we improve our "closure" rate (solved cases) to match the City of Clearwater?
4. And, near and dear to neighborhoods, how are other cities using community policing to eliminate "hot spots" or crime clusters in their communities?

Thank you for caring about your neighborhood. Together, we can make a difference.

CONA Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 17, 2006

The SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

- CONA Business – Treasurer's Report
- CONA Citizen of the Month
- Pinellas Living Green Expo Update – Steve Plice
- Neighborhood Nite at Tropicana Field – Tom Killian
- City Council Issues Update
- PSTA – Bus Rapid Transit – Coming to St. Pete
- Open Forum – Neighborhood Concerns

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CONA 101 Neighborhood Association Activities

By: "Professor Tom" Killian

Activities give your Association distinction and can be your key to making money and increasing membership. Two (or more) neighborhoods associations can work together and combine their money and personnel to put on a bigger and better event. Work with local businesses, churches, hospitals and youth centers to help get the money to offset the cost of your activity.

I have listed just some of the activities put on by various associations. Neighborhoods are listed alphabetically. Don't be afraid to try something new and different.

Azalea	Fall Festival, Dance, Movies in the Park
Barclay Estates	Yard sale, Greyhound Racetrack visit and dinner
Broadwater	Champagne and Dessert Holiday meeting
CONA	Neighborhood Nite at Tropicana Field, Picnic, Pinellas Living Green Expo
Disston Heights	Halloween Party, Easter Egg Hunt
Driftwood	Fourth of July Parade
Euclid-St. Paul	Haunted Halloween Hike, Bicycle Patrols
Greater Pinellas Point	Theatre Nite, Fundraising for High School Scholarships
Greater Woodlawn	Yard Sale
Historic Kenwood	Home Tour, Founder's Day, Porch Parties
Historic Park Street	Bike Rodeo
Historic Old Northeast	Candlelight Home Tours, Garden Tours
Harbordale	Pancake Breakfast with YMCA
Jungle Prada	National Night Out, Barbecue
Jungle Terrace	Easter Egg Hunt, Pets in the Park, Green Thumb Festival, Sunken Gardens Tour
Lake Maggiore	Neighborhood Fest
Lake Maggiore Shores	Volunteers with Carefest, hosted Color me Human
Lakewood Terrace	Sponsors two youth sports teams
Live Oaks	Caroling, (using trucks and trailers – hayride w/o hay), National Night Out
Methodist Town	Halloween Festival for youth w/senior volunteers, Thanksgiving dinner for seniors w/youth volunteers, Hot Dog Extravaganza and Donut Drop – monies for summer camp scholarships at Boys & Girls Club
Magnolia Heights	Santa House – assists with decorating and refreshments
Meadowlawn	Garage Sales for High School Scholarships
North Kenwood	Picnic, National Nite Out
Old Southeast	Home Tour, Porch Parties
Palmetto Park	Community Garden
Roser Park	Art Festival, Progressive Dinner
Riviera Bay	Picnic honoring Police and Fire, Auction for hurricane relief, Christmas Dinner
Snell Isle	Santa in the Park, Holiday lighting display, Pets with Style, Snell Isle Sells – isle wide garage sale
Twin Brooks	Crime Awareness, Family Fun Day
Uptown	Progressive Dinner
Yacht Club Estates	Halloween Party

If you would like to receive more information about any of the activities listed above please call the association for details. If you have CONA questions, please call me.

2005 Neighborhood Partnership Awards

The ninth annual Partnership Awards were presented on Thursday, April 6. Mayor Rick Baker, Deputy Mayor Mike Dove, Partnership Director Susan Ajoc, her staff and City Council members were there to honor the neighborhoods. 250 people representing sixty-five neighborhood associations attended the event held in the newly renovated Batters Eye Restaurant at Tropicana Field, home of the Devil Rays. Centerplate Catering provided an excellent buffet for all the neighborhood guests and city officials.

Mayor Baker emceed the Awards which go to individuals and associations who do outstanding things for our city. The awards were given out by our Mayor and City Council members.

David Hoover, Riviera Bay President and 2004 President of the Year, gave up his crown. The city gifted him with a straw hat for his retirement and a large birthday cake.

2005 Partnership Awards go to the following people and neighborhoods:

Neighborhood of the Year	Pinellas Point	
Up and Coming Neighborhood	Westminster Heights	
Project of the Year (tie)	Euclid-St. Paul and Pinellas Point	
Newsletter of the Year (tie)	Disston Heights and Pinellas Point	
Website of the Year	Euclid-St. Paul	
President of the Year	Tom Killian	Jungle Terrace
Neighborhood Mentor	Tom Killian	Jungle Terrace
Neighborly Neighbor	Frank Klim	Disston Heights

CONA salutes Partnership Director Susan Ajoc and her staff for the wonderful job they did in organizing the event. Congratulations to all the hard working, dedicated individuals that make our city what it is.

CONA Featured Neighborhood – Who’s next ???

CONA wants to hear about each neighborhood. CONA invites you to tell us about yours. What are the challenges you face? How are you meeting those challenges?

What City departments are helping you? What are you doing to increase your membership? What social activities are you planning? Are you planning a fundraiser?

Have you done this in the past?

Please volunteer to be CONA’s next featured neighborhood.

Contact Karl Nurse or Barbara Heck today.

Neighborhood Nite at Tropicana Field

Friday July 21 at 7:15 PM

Ray's vs. Baltimore

\$5.00 per ticket (upper deck behind home plate) Remember - free parking at Tropicana Field

WOW !!! Great game, great seats, great bargain AND FREE PARKING !!!

Here is a great social event for all the baseball fans in your association and it only costs \$5 a seat.

Act fast as these seats will go fast at this price.

- Collect the ticket money from your association membership.
- Write a check to CONA for your tickets.
- Mail check before July 7th to CONA Treasurer at CONA, P.O. Box 13693, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3693.
- Tickets will be delivered to each Association President who will distribute them to their own members.
- For further information contact Program Chair Tom Killian at 343-2041.
- Remember – the Association that brings the most members will get introduced on the field.



So sell lots of seats everyone !!!

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Pinellas Living Green Expo

June 17 - 18, 2006

**Save Money.
Save the Environment.**

Saturday, June 17

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, June 18

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Coliseum, St. Petersburg
535 4th Ave. N.

Pinellas Living Green Expo is a **FREE** educational event focusing on resource conservation solutions.

Participants will learn how to **save money, save natural resources, and protect our environment for future generations.**

The **Pinellas Living Green Expo** is a **FREE**, fun-filled family event that helps residents make informed decisions and take action to lead more healthy and sustainable lives with less impact on the environment. This two-day event will provide information, ideas, resources, products and motivation to live more sustainably.

www.pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org

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CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - April 19, 2006

President Karl Nurse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He reminded the attendees of their opportunity to sign consolation cards, on the registration table, for Deputy Mayor Mike Dove and his family.

- ◆ V.P. Tom Killian led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag.
- ◆ Karl announced that our posted agenda for the evening would be modified to accommodate the late arrival of Councilman Richard Kriseman.
- ◆ Treasurer Annie McWilliams provided her report stating a current balance of \$3,653.65. We have 52 paid member associations of which 21 opted to share our CONA bulk mail privilege.
- ◆ We heard a presentation from the Disston Heights Neighborhood telling of the struggles to resist the permit approval of cell phone towers at specific unsightly locations in their area. They hope to restrict construction by zone limitations though recognizing that federal legislation makes such challenges very difficult for any local government confining limitations.
- ◆ Judy Ellis urged our members to participate in a free program sponsored by the city and county that offers assistance in drafting and implementing Living Wills for senior citizens. She offered to visit our member neighborhood meetings to acquaint their residents with this free legal service.
- ◆ Karl noted that writers for the St. Petersburg Times, Paul Swider and Jon Wilson are anxious to hear of news stories from our local neighborhood associations. Paul also monitors blogs for neighborhoods that wish to use the Times as their Web host.
- ◆ Susan Ajoc, Director of the Neighborhood Partnership Office, told us of a new feature of the city's home page, [www.stpete.org], described as "Codes On Line". It allows the public to check on the status of recorded code violations in real time, via computer.
- ◆ Recalling former Mayor David Fischer's CONA visit last month, our President is hoping to use funding, from the foundation the Mayor now heads, to cover at least some of the legal costs necessary to achieve not-for-profit tax status, [501(C)3] with the I.R.S.
 - Moved, (Whysong), to pursue the 501(C) 3 tax status for CONA. [Approved]
- ◆ Bayou Highlands announced their "Fun Day & Yard Sale" planned for May 8th.
- ◆ Karl reported discussing our upcoming Pinellas Living Green Expo, (PLGE) with the Mayor of Largo who promised to include our advertising flyers in their municipal utility bill mailings.
- ◆ V.P. Barbara Heck told us of a program of the Snell Isle Association honoring pioneer developer C. Perry Snell at the Women's Club, May 4th at 7 PM.
- ◆ Tom Killian reminded us of July 21st, 7:15 PM), baseball game- Neighborhood Night". CONA tickets are \$5. with free parking. Bring some neighborhood kids! Last year, North Kenwood led with 57 ticket holders for Tropicana Field.
- ◆ The Vice President then announced our CONA Citizen of the Month award for April. The honoring plaques and token gifts were awarded to our former Treasurer, Libby Steele, and to former Vice Presidents Theresa McEachern and Steve Plice. Each was afforded a hearty applause of appreciation.
- ◆ Steve Plice, (PLGE Steering Comm. Chair.) provided an update of progress for our Expo planning-
 - The Weekly Planet will devote their front page to our Expo this week
 - Our fund raising of \$18,000 to date will suffice to cover all currently committed expenses though more will be needed for anticipated advertising.
 - Only 19 display booths out of our 70 planned remain unsold.
 - There has been some planning of changing the venue to Clearwater next year; perhaps the city owned Harbor View facility.
 - Steve has recruited a team of advance planners to map out our 2007 Expo.
 - Seeking help to sell the uncommitted booths, Steve mentioned several categories of "Green" vendors that have not yet been signed up- recyclers, motor scooters, green builders, and hi-efficiency lighting contractors.
 - Steve noted that years of green trade shows in Sarasota have cultivated a wide public interest and, in turn, many green builders in that area.
 - Praising our PLGE Marketing Chair, Mo Eppley, Steve noted that our web page includes vendor application forms to download, also advertising flyers to print, as well as a growing list of links to other green sites and articles. Our member neighborhoods are urged to copy these PLGE flyers for insertion in their own neighborhood newsletters.
 - We learned that several of our sponsors are providing "In kind" support such as advertising space, (currently amounting to \$20,000).
 - It is planned that any residue funds will serve as seed money for next year.
 - Plans call for printing 200,000 flyers that will be distributed, in quantity, to neighborhoods, local businesses, and gatherings like the Main Sail Art Show.
 - Pinellas County has promised to include ad brochures in their utility bills and place ad spots on their Public TV channels.

- ◆ We next hear a presentation and PowerPoint slide show by Ann Wykell, of the city's Public Art Program.
 - She reminded us of the upcoming Free Museums Day May 20th. Even the Florida Orchestra will give a 25% discount on tickets that day.
 - The Public Art Program is funded by a 1% levee on major construction and remodeling projects.
 - Her department will host a major presentation of new plans for Public Art on May 9th at 7 PM in the newly renovated Mahaffey Theater.
 - Some Public Art funding is dispensed under the Neighborhood Grants Program. These projects all go to local artists.
 - Painted murals can be expected to last 10 years.
 - Public Art commissions are always competitively advertised.
 - One facet of the city's program is devoted to "Temporary Art", a theme many neighborhoods may want to consider.
 - All pieces of Public Art must be on city property or right of way.
- ◆ Our President then welcomed City Councilman Richard Kriseman who provided an update on some current City Council activities.
 - His principal discussion focused on the recently voted outside consultants management review of our Police Department and its problems.
 - Will study how to attract more police candidates while reducing attrition.
 - Increasing police budget, and "Slots" will not help if even currently approved positions cannot be filled.
 - There must be long-term growth planned to keep up with anticipated growing population.
 - Copying other cities suggests modified concepts of Community Police practices.
 - Council is also studying problems with Codes Permitting Procedures.
 - Council recently heard an update on our Green Cities Project from Mike Connors, of City Engineering.
 - Council is considering a \$50,000 procurement of a system to stream live council meetings on our web site, in an "On demand" selection system.
 - A so-called "Reverse 911" is being considered that will provide a wide variety of city database inquiries that will be immediately screened or sent as subscribed e-mail at regular intervals. Doubts of adequate staffing by the marketing staff were mentioned.
 - Yet another hi-tech system being reviewed is a "311" line that would be for any but urgent or emergency inquiries to the city. Replacing the current Mayor' Action Line, this single phone number would be the access for all city information inquiries including complaint tracking. The system has been popular in other cities.
 - An RFP is being written by the city's IT staff to solicit bids for a citywide Wi-Fi network that would provide broadband Internet access from any part of the city- unlike most municipal systems in limited "Hot Spot" areas.
- ◆ The Councilman also heard a few questions from our membership:
 - Referring to the Police Management Review- Will all levels of the department staff be interviewed? What measures will be in place to insure the privacy of the investigators discussion? How does Council plan to respond to the conclusions reported by the review consultants? Will CONA have a voice in implementing the recommendations of the review contractors? [President Karl Nurse promised to provide City Council with a "Position Paper" on the subject of the planned management review. Karl solicited inputs from our members present to assist in compiling our position statement.]
 - It was noted, from the floor, that our S.P.P.D. has only a 17% record of closures on crimes of burglary.
 - Who will bear the responsibility to review and evaluate the recommendations of the management study contractor?
 - Affordable Housing was cited as a major impediment to police recruiting. [Councilman Kriseman noted that Council's René Flowers currently heads a committee to investigate that problem.]
- ◆ Director Don Delzell, speaking for Board of Americana Cove outlined the advantages of this waterfront community that was established in 1948 but became a resident owned mobile home community in 1994. A CONA member, Americana Cove offers affordable living with a close proximity to our city center as well as our seacoast shores, the international airport, and many popular area attractions. We saw a brief video that proclaimed the advantages of the retirement lifestyle at Americana Cove.
- ◆ The Northeast Park neighborhood picnic was announced for April 29th. at Crisp Park.
- ◆ Steve Plice invited subscribers for our two CONA Listserv Robots (Listbot). One is essentially an e-mail newsletter, the other serves as a discussion group. He urged our members to post their inputs to the CONA Position Paper, mentioned earlier, to assist our President in compiling this document addressed to City Council
- ◆ A conservation minded member questioned, "How can a city that does not believe in curb side recycling pickups call itself a Green City?"

Our meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary



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CONA's Citizen of the Month

CONA's May Citizen of the Month Award goes to another very busy person who has helped at all levels to make our city a much safer and a much better place to live. Please help us congratulate Ingrid Comberg.

Here are just some of Ingrid's activities and accomplishments:

- 1996 Neighborhood President of the Year (the first time it was awarded)
- Mayor Fisher took Ingrid to the 1997 All American City competition awards in Ft. Worth Texas. Ingrid represented the Neighborhoods. (St. Petersburg came in second).
- CONA Treasurer for 3 years
- CONA Neighborhood Leadership Program – 10 Years
- Co-chairman of the Social Service Ordinance Task force for 18 months.
- Started Court Watch
- Started the top 10 Worst Property List in Uptown (It was later copied citywide).
- Former President of the Uptown Neighborhood Association
- Member of the St. Petersburg Homeless Task Force
- Asian Face Center Board Member

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