

# South Plaza Neighborhood Association 2021 Winter Newsletter

[South Plaza Neighborhood Association Website](http://SouthPlazaNeighborhoodAssociationWebsite.com)

## Our friend and good neighbor, Henry Leonard: R.I.P.

*Henry E. Leonard*

JULY 28, 1956 - NOVEMBER 10, 2020



Henry Leonard lived in South Plaza since the 1950s & served our community as proprietor of Marthabelle's Print Shop for many years. As an owner of the building housing Marthabelle's & the US Post Office, Henry personally cleared the entire SW corner & sidewalk at 51<sup>st</sup> & Main of ice, snow & debris as needed, & displayed a humble "Aw, shucks" attitude when thanked. A long-time supporter of SPNA, Henry oversaw the printing of our paper newsletter for years.

In July 2018, Henry and his mother, Marthabelle, then 99 and still keeping a hand in the business, shared with SPNA neighbors some history of the family, who moved to South Plaza in 1953; Marthabelle started the print shop in 1956. Mr. Leonard passed away when Henry was 12 and Marthabelle became one of the few women operating a printing business. Henry told us the building currently housing Osteria IL Centro was originally a grocery store and there was an ice house across the street. Door prizes of historical photographic prints of the neighborhood were given by Henry to 10 lucky winners. He told us that Visitation Church was built 2 years before Jessie Clyde Nichols started developing homes here at the beginning of the 20th Century. J.C. Nichols lived in a house he had built on Walnut, north of 51<sup>st</sup>. Walnut Street used to be called Rock Spring Road. The D.C. White grade school was a few blocks north on Main as was Sidney's Drive-in.

*Henry E. Leonard, July 28, 1956 - November 10, 2020, Kansas City, Missouri - Henry E. Leonard, 64, passed away, after a courageous battle with Glioblastoma brain cancer. He was born in Kansas City, MO, and was a lifelong resident. He graduated from Southwest High School (1973) and Kansas State University (BS marketing, 1978), and he earned an MBA from Southern Methodist University in 1981. For many years, Henry operated Marthabelle's Print Shop in the neighborhood where he grew up. Henry also invested in other real estate properties, but, most important, he had legions of friends. He was active in the KC Young Republicans and the Jaycees. He was a member of the Rotary Club of Kansas City (Club 13, 29 years), the Native Sons and Daughters of KC, Kansas City Urban Core Group, and United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. Henry was an avid consumer of Kansas City history. He loved hiking, cycling and boating. Preceded in death by his father, Henry R. Leonard, he is survived by his mother, Marthabelle Leonard; sisters Rebecca (Tim) Hyder and Martha (Patrick) Voight, niece Elizabeth (Mike) Page, and great nephew Harrison Page. Online condolences at [mtmoriah.net](http://mtmoriah.net). A celebration of Henry's life will be held later. The family suggests contributions to the Rotary Club or Native Sons and Daughters of KC.*

**Next SPNA  
General Meeting  
third Sunday of  
January  
1/17/2021 6PM  
ONLINE**

**[Zoom Link](#)**

Meeting ID: 898 4199 6771  
Passcode: 919027

Or dial into (312) 626-6799  
89841996771#

**SAVE THE DATES:**

**Sun April 18, 6PM**

**Sun July 18, 6PM**

# SOUTH PLAZA



**NEIGHBORHOOD**

## President's Message:



My wife and I enjoy walking our chocolate lab around South Plaza. Wave if you see us - my wife holds the leash. I am the one trying to keep up, while using trash tongs.

I am thankful the election is finally behind us and hope vaccines will soon be readily available for all and we can all get back to what we call normal.

We mourn for those we have lost and pray for those currently struggling.

After the holidays is the time my wife and I set our goals for the upcoming year. It is also a time for us to reflect on our accomplishments from the past year, as we excitedly look forward to the upcoming opportunities the new year will bring!

Likewise we can all be proud of our neighborhood accomplishments over the past year:

- SPNA newsletter now digital

- New southplazakc.org website

- Main Street streetscape formulation with VanTrust

- New concrete stairs and benches at Triangle Park at 50th and Grand

- Approval of Federal funds for construction of light rail from Crown Center to 50th Street

Now with the new year, we are excited for several new restaurants coming soon.

Upcoming priorities include:

- Landscaping for new stairs

- Eventual light rail construction

- Water department improvements

- Stronger partnership with VanTrust, UMKC and other local businesses

This year has made me thankful for each day and I look forward to continuing working with everyone. I am honored and proud to serve on your neighborhood board! Your board will continue to work together, encourage participation, and keep us all informed of what's happening in our beloved South Plaza neighborhood. I truly believe exciting days are ahead!

~ Cliff Couty

**This is our second all-digital SPNA newsletter, circulated by email. Please pass it on to friends & neighbors in the area who might not see it without your help.**

### Not a SPNA Member?

SPNA annual membership runs from July through June of each year, with most members paying at the July quarterly meeting. If you'd like to join SPNA or renew your membership, feel free to mail your check to our SPNA Treasurer: Martha Hogarty, 311 West 51st Terrace, KCMO 64112. Thanks!

## Business Spotlight: Minsky's Pizza and Sister Restaurants

Founder Gregg Johnson has been a long time SPNA sponsor opening his buildings on 51st and Main for many years of business meetings. We want to thank Gregg and his restaurants' staff for their amazing pizza and hospitality over many years of collaboration.

Osteria IL Centro Food and wine so good, it actually improves the conversation. This cozy casual-upscale Italian bistro presents a pleasing medley of pasta, meat, fish and vegetable dishes as well as the perfect wine to accompany. Repeatedly awarded Wine Spectator "Best of Award of Excellence." Open evenings at 4pm Monday through Saturday.

Minsky's Since 1976 we've used distinctive ingredients in our savory gourmet pizzas, hot sandwiches, pastas and salads...sure to please any palate. Repeatedly voted "Kansas City's Best Pizza," and recently selected by Zagat as one of the "Ultimate 23 Best Pizza Joints in the US!" We also offer carry out, delivery and catering.

eggtc. Enjoy the finest and freshest gourmet breakfasts and lunches in our richly delightful rooms. Treat yourself to coffee delicacies made with prime Costa Rican blends, plus our event room is the perfect gathering place for your celebration or meeting. Two locations, 51st & Main Streets and Shawnee.

## Welcome to New SPNA Business Sponsor: EMC



At SPNA October meeting, the Business Spotlight was on Tom & Yesenia LoScalzo, the owners of Environmental Mechanical Contractors, Inc. (EMC), founded in 1945. Tom LoScalzo grew up in Brookside. The company is local and services both commercial and residential customers of all sizes. Derrick Haynes, a 30-year employee of EMC, told us EMC can help with any HVAC installations, evaluations & repairs. Although the company headquarters is in Olathe, Tom & Yesenia live in South Plaza, love the neighborhood, & wish to be a good HVAC resource for the area in any new buildings & renovations. Yesenia stressed they have respect for the older historic residences and love the European-style restaurants in the neighborhood. EMC has joined forces with SPNA as a Business Sponsor. Bill Wasserman was the lucky winner of the door prize, a very generous gift card to Capitol Grill. The Wassermans plan to enjoy the gift when they can dine in safely.

[www.emc-kc.com](http://www.emc-kc.com)

## October Membership Meeting Highlights:

**Guest Presentation, VanTrust:** Rich Muller and Justin Duff of VanTrust Real Estate were present to give us an update about their current property development plans and the Main Street streetscape or possible Community Improvement District. They have been trying to acquire the low scale Regency Apartments on east 49th, behind the US Bank building (not to be confused with the mid-rise Regency condos next to the Sulgrave). The owner of the apartments finally agreed to sell them to VanTrust. However, they do not have an immediate use for the property. But in connection with the US Bank building, they will redevelop those properties together in the future. It would best be redeveloped as office space, but the current environment is a bit difficult to plan. The UMB Bank building, at 4901 Main is just 30% occupied. They will close on the property in the spring.



Glace Ice Cream shop closed recently. They had a 10-year lease that ended in August 2020. They were allowed to extend the lease to the end of summer and then closed it down. Retail rents are not going up. The Regency apartments may be demolished as it would not be good to leave them standing empty. In connection with redevelopment there, the US Bank building would also be demolished. The US Bank tenant lease has been extended through March 2021. They can have more extensions as necessary.

When asked by Cliff, Rich Muller explained that the redevelopment effort is confined to within a block or less on either side of Main Street. It has been rumored that "3rd Street Social" restaurant owners in Lee's Summit may want to go into the building that used to house Nick and Jake's restaurant. The former Black Dirt restaurant space may turn over to a new restaurant in the spring. They are working on getting it filled. Knock-Outs barber shop closed. Rich explained that VanTrust likes the South Plaza corridor but there are not enough local customers to support the retail. They want to give the corridor an identity and branding so it would get more traffic and customers. They are studying parking and pedestrian flow. They want more parking on Main Street. He reviewed the focus group meetings of Main Street property owners, nearby condo representatives and others. They have to review engineering and City Hall issues which take time. They want office workers so they will reinforce the flow of customers to the local stores and restaurants.

Mr. Muller took some questions. It was asked whether they envision another 51Main apartment/mixed use building on Main. He answered not in the immediate future. The Marshall Miller Law firm building and parking lot could perhaps be a future mixed-use building site. They would like it if the CVS Drug Store could relocate and then come back as a first floor tenant to a re-developed building on that site.

He was asked what they were trying to re-brand the South Plaza Main Street corridor as. Mr. Duff said they want to get it identified as a zone like the Crossroads District, they look towards it becoming "instagramable". Perhaps like the Brookside Shops. They want to attract people from Leawood, Prairie Village, etc. They do not see building more apartments here because a lot have been built recently in KCMO. The 51Brookside Apartments are about 80% leased. They would have put in a swimming pool that complex if they could have, but they could not because of Whole Foods. The renters are a mixture of types, not students.

VanTrust is a Business Sponsor to South Plaza Neighborhood Association

**Old/New Business:** Cliff Couty reminded members that new restaurant venues Banksia, Duck and Roll, and Nekter Juice Bar recently opened at the north end of Main. He reminded us of the generosity of Greg Johnson and Minsky's for hosting us and providing the space for our meetings and donating the pizza.

Francie Hall suggested neighbors go check out the new concrete stairs at 50th and Grand. The project started in August and has now been largely completed. SPNA Board will reach out to the Parks Department to follow up on the landscaping.

Dumpster Day was a success. The Cornerstones of Care charity participated in taking gently used clothing and household items at the event. Francie suggested members pass on copies of the emailed SPNA newsletter to neighbors so we can garner new members.

Cliff noted that a neighbor called him to inform him of recent car break-ins in the neighborhood. Cliff himself helped the police catch kids he saw stealing a Vespa motor scooter. But our neighborhood is very safe overall.

General member Pauline Wasserman suggested that SPNA post meeting minutes on the southplazakc.org website. Bill Wasserman suggested SPNA put a link to the Midtown/Plaza Area Plan on the website.

## **South Kansas City Alliance: Annual Meeting & Legislative Update**

On December 14, 2020, the South Kansas City Alliance held its annual meeting, introduced our area's State Senators & Representatives & discussed the upcoming Legislative Session in Jefferson City. Greg Razer is now a State Senator, and Patty Lewis succeeded in replacing him as our State Representative. SKCA has hired an ordinance inspector to make initial contact with codes violators: tall weeds, broken windows, wrecked cars on property, etc. The inspector works with property owner to resolve before fines are imposed. To make a codes violation complaint, call 3-1-1 or go to KCMO.gov & click on "311" near top center. Be prepared with address of property in question. You may remain anonymous.

Several speakers mentioned that at least half those in and around State offices in Jeff City are NOT wearing masks.

Questions remain about recent passage of "Dirty Missouri" amendment last November. The mandated count of *only* adults qualified to vote raises constitutional questions. Unfortunately, gerrymandering by the supermajority and governor will be with us for another decade.

### Legislative priorities of Sen. Razer, Rep. Lewis & other South KC legislators include:

- Mental Health Parity, MO being 1 of only 2 states not mandating equal coverage of mental health services.
- Implementation of Medicaid Expansion, unless those opposed find a way to bring it back in front of voters.
- Common-sense gun reform such as: denying gun ownership to those convicted of domestic violence, allowing cities/towns to impose some requirements for concealed carry.
- Continued effort for Missouri to become last of the 50 states to require prescription drug reporting to combat opioid abuse (the other pandemic).

For more information, visit [www.SouthKCAAlliance.org](http://www.SouthKCAAlliance.org)

## **Our South Plaza Post Office:**

Our neighborhood Post Office at 5104 Main is open from noon to 4:00 each weekday. Outside of those hours, there is no way to deposit outgoing mail. Turns out there is a person in Senator Roy Blunt's Jeff City office who deals with postal issues. We have asked her to request installation of a drop-box. No promises, but we will keep you posted.

## **City creates stronger snowplowing game plan for future storms:**

City Manager Brian Platt met with our snow operations team to evaluate our response to the New Year's Day snowstorm and to create a more aggressive strategy to plow and salt during snowstorms.

"Through a smarter and more collaborative deployment of our already available resources, we will be able to deploy an additional 50 trucks and 100 drivers for all future snowstorms," said Platt, who spent New Year's Day observing and supporting the team plowing city streets. "We will create a larger, 24-hour plowing operation during storms."

To get there, we are making immediate changes that include:

- increasing the amount of salting during storms
- adding overnight shifts to residential routes
- instituting a more aggressive approach to snow removal on residential streets
- plowing multi-lane arterial streets with multiple trucks working in tandem to make sure the street is fully cleared on the first pass
- assigning all available employees in solid waste and the water department to snow operations during every snow event
- suspending trash and recycling during big storms to make those drivers available for snow plowing
- deploying additional snow removal vehicles throughout snow removal operations
- improving communication and coordination during snow operations
- identifying additional municipal fleet vehicles that can be deployed for snow removal



“I thank our Public Works Department and city workforce for its dedicated efforts to treat our roads, bridges, and neighborhoods pre- and post-snowfall,” Mayor Quinton Lucas said. “Still, we have significant work to do to ensure the City more quickly provides the services we’ve promised to our residents, and today we are enacting significant reforms to improve the delivery of these services, including deploying more snow response teams to work round-the-clock to clear our roads and sidewalks, and improving the treatment of residential streets in all neighborhoods so our roads don’t turn into sheets of ice days after the storm is over.

As we head deeper into winter months, Kansas City government will continue working to ensure our roads are plowed and safe for you and your family as you travel throughout our community.”

Next steps include buying another mini-plow to clear protected bike lanes, as well as adjusting staffing and maintenance work to support these improvements in our snowplowing operations.

During snowstorms, updates are posted on our snow operations page and on Twitter@KCMO.

### **Attn Bus Riders: South Plaza Transit News:**

Many SPNA residents are dependent on and grateful for bus transportation provided by KCATA, which has been free to riders for some months now. Spring of 2021 is likely to bring changes, though details are not yet set in stone. The Main Max will no longer jog over to the Plaza stop (by tennis courts), but will run straight on Main/Brookside Boulevard. The only stop within our boundaries will be at 51<sup>st</sup> & Brookside. However, the #40 Broadway bus *will* be rerouted to come through South Plaza with stops at 48<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> & 51<sup>st</sup>, replacing those Main Max stops. Here is a link to current plans, though these could change in first quarter of 2021. Probably effective in April:

[https://ridekc.org/assets/uploads/documents/RideKCNext\\_map\\_1120.pdf](https://ridekc.org/assets/uploads/documents/RideKCNext_map_1120.pdf)

## Triangle Park Update

David Dale, the contractor working on the Grand to Brookside stairs recently notified the SPNA Board that the city has provided a letter to proceed on the retaining walls to be built behind and on the south and west sides of the seating area. This work is underway as seen in the photos below

When that is completed the benches can be installed.

The Parks Department denied the SPNA board that the north handrails request be added on the horizontal landings. The city claims the stairs are ADA compliant as they are.

We are also waiting for the addition of “no parking” signs to be installed.

There is no plan to place an identification sign on site by Parks and Recreation (as is on other parks). This could be a simple PIAC request if the board desires it.



## KC Parks Board Awards Million Dollar Contract to Diverse Project Team for the Design-Build of Historic Playsite at MLK Park



The City of Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation Board of Commissioners has awarded Gunter Construction the design-build contract for a destination education playsite at Martin Luther King Jr. Square Park sponsored by The 15 & The Mahomies Foundation. The \$1,000,000 dollar contract includes community engagement, conceptual design,

developing construction documents, performing all work, and acquiring all materials for construction of the playground. The final completion for this project is set for August 2021.

Project funding is provided through a cooperative agreement with the 15 and the Mahomies Foundation. Gunter Construction (WBE) has put together a diverse team that is representative of the community this playsite hopes to serve. The project team will utilize more than 20% Minority-Owned Businesses and over 55% Women-Owned Businesses.

The team lead, by Gunter Construction, includes:

- Ochsner Hare & Hare (Design Lead)
- DuBois Consultants (MBE) (Civil and Structural Engineering);
- Parsons and Associates (MBE) (Community Engagement);
- Custom Engineering (MBE) (Lighting and Electrical Engineering);
- Lovelace & Associates (MBE) (Land Surveying);
- Dye Electric (MBE) (Light and Electrical Contractor);
- IBC Traffic (MBE) (Traffic Control);
- Erosion Specialists (MBE) (Erosion Control);
- Kompan (Playground Equipment);
- Fry & Associates (Playground Equipment); and
- RGS & Associates Development (MBE) (Concrete and Hauling)

This innovative playsite will focus on civil rights and racial justice. The vendor will work closely with the project's Community Design Team, a diverse group of community leaders, who have been working to shape the design, themes, and content of the site. This public design process has ensured the end users informed our selection process and design of the site.



On October 7, 2020 the Parks Department received RFQ/Ps from five design-build teams for the construction of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Square Playground. Each team was scored and interviewed. The project was rebid to each of the teams that submitted with clarifications that there needed to be greater connection to the 15 and the Mahomies Foundation, and they will have a guaranteed maximum price of \$1,000,000.00 to design and construct the playground.

On November 5, 2020 the Parks Department received the rebid RFQ/Ps for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Square Playground. The technical submittals were reviewed and scored by a selection committee, and it was determined that the best team for the project was Gunter Construction Company.

### **About 15 and the Mahomies Foundation**

The 15 and the Mahomies Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of children through initiatives that focus on education, health, wellness, underserved communities, and other charitable causes. It was established by reigning Super Bowl MVP, Kansas City Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes in 2019.



## New Murals in South Plaza



Leopold Gallery Mural at Marthabelle's on 51<sup>st</sup> and Main



South Plaza Apartments Mural on 51<sup>st</sup>

**Save the Date: 01/08/21 thru 01/17/21 is KC Restaurant Week!**

<https://www.kcrestaurantweek.com/>

SPNA Participating Restaurants: Chaz on the Plaza - Eggtc. - Minsky's Pizza - Mission Taco Joint - Osteria Il Centro - Stock Hill

**Thank you to our Business Sponsors**



**SOUTH PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSN. INC.  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS (July 2020)**

Name and address of director:	Term of Director:	Officer term, current year:
<b>Cliff Couty</b> , President 5036 Walnut Street Kansas City, Mo. 64112 Mobile phone: 816-686-2547 E-mail: <a href="mailto:cliffcouty@live.com">cliffcouty@live.com</a>	07/2020-07/2022	President, 07/2020-07/2021
<b>Francie Hall</b> , Vice President E-mail: <a href="mailto:francie416@gmail.com">francie416@gmail.com</a>	07/2020-07/2022	Vice President, 07/20-07/21
<b>Martha Hogerty</b> , Treasurer E-mail: mhogerty47@gmail.com	07/2020-07/2022	Treasurer, 07/2020-07/2021
<b>Sean Tucker</b> , Secretary E-mail: <a href="mailto:smtucker@cmh.edu">smtucker@cmh.edu</a>	07/2019-07/2021	Secretary, 07/2020-07/2021
<b>Kelly Hollowell</b> , Member E-mail: khollowell@gmail.com	07/2019-07/2021	
<b>Kate Marshall</b> , Member E-mail: <a href="mailto:katemarshall430@gmail.com">katemarshall430@gmail.com</a>	07/2020-07/2022	
<b>Jeannie Moore</b> , Member E-mail: beanwoman33@yahoo.com	07/2020-07/2021	Vacancy Appointee
Ex-officio: <b>Keith Spare</b> , President E-mail: <a href="mailto:keithspare@aol.com">keithspare@aol.com</a>	Ex-officio: <b>Donna Kerr</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:dmkkc210@gmail.com">dmkkc210@gmail.com</a>	

**APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN SOUTH PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Please indicate:     Tenant \$15  
                            Homeowner \$20  
                            Small business/organization \$75 - \$100  
                            Large business/organization \$100 - \$150 or more

Make check payable to:    South Plaza Neighborhood Association  
   311 West 51st Terrace  
   Kansas City, MO 64112

Complete document and mail with payment