



Inside • May 2008

AQCA Meeting

**Thursday, May 15
7:00 pm**

Classical Condominiums

Parking available in Library's State Street lot

Guest Speaker

Jeff Keck

*Executive Director of the BID
(Business Improvement District)*

“What the BID Can Do For You”

Refreshments will be served

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Welcome New Member!

We extend a welcome to AQCA's newest business member - **Chestnut Package** and its new manager, Rick Brown. Chestnut Package is located on the corner of Mattoon and Chestnut Streets.

10% Discount on alcohol purchases for all card-carrying 2008 AQCA members



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The Armoury-Quadrangle
Civic Association
newsletter is published once a month.

President's Letter

Maybe Our City Really is Beautiful

Robert Louder

It seems as if Spring rode in like a whirlwind covering the trees in a cloak of greenery and warming our bodies with much needed heat. The Springfield Pancake Breakfast will be held on May 17, and will delight the tongues and help our city celebrate its claim to the largest Pancake Breakfast. We will be working the Breakfast and greeting our friends and neighbors and hope you will come to see us. We also could use some help working the booth and it's a great way for you also to work on your tan for summer.

Last month I had the chance to see some of the projects that have been going on and was surprised at the wonderful sights and projects that were going on. The history of the York Street jail is now a footnote in history while we turn a new page for the development of that land. I had a chance to visit the north end areas that I had not been to in quite some time and I was amazed at the wonderful progress this area has made in the last 5 years. Buildings that were in bad repair have come down and a growth of single-family homes have mushroomed into a community. Union Station may hold a promise of realty with the new plans that should be forthcoming any day. The State Street Corridor also should be finalizing plans and the city should also be circulating the new zoning laws for review very soon. This new version is to help simplify the laws that have been confusing.

Armory Park is again showing signs of work and it may be done on time and will be more user friendly than before; hopefully, it will be done by the end of summer in time for the Mattoon Street Art Festival. The new Museum of Springfield History is going along at a reasonable rate and may open on time. The new courthouse is close to opening and will be a new fixture to the neighborhood. I know we all get tired of waiting for things to happen but these are real projects that are happening. It's the little things that keep coming up that create the stumbling blocks sometimes.

Because we are at the crossroads of a lot of activity, it should remind us that some stranger may be our neighbor someday so take a minute and say hello - it may provide you with a new friend.

Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers and hope your day is filled with special memories. See you next month or sooner, Neighbor.



The View from City Hall

Bruce Stebbins, *Member of the Springfield City Council*



Elderly Committee Meetings

This year I have the privilege of serving as the chair of the City Council Special committee on the Elderly. My personal goal has been to try and help make Springfield a “senior-friendly” place to live. As part of my chairmanship, I have been taking committee meetings “on the road” to every senior center and Golden Ager club meetings across the city. The

purpose of the meeting is to ask our seniors where they feel the city has fallen short in providing services, where we have done well and what programs should we be examining going forward. I have been pleased to have the participation of the city’s new 311 and Citistat program director Paul Foster to brief everyone on the city’s new 311 call system. In addition, representatives from the PVRTA have also attended the meetings to hear firsthand about bus and transportation service questions.

We have heard a number of seniors voice concerns about snow removal, health programs, location of the Good Life Center downtown, and trip opportunities. Several of the centers would welcome donations of supplies for simple programs such as art classes.

On April 28th, we invited the four Springfield colleges to discuss the programs and services they offer our seniors. Springfield College and STCC attended the first hourlong meeting. Fortunately, AIC and WNEC representatives had scheduling conflicts because we used the full hour just discussing STCC and Springfield College. Springfield College has a wonderful “Learning Later in Life” program with a variety of affordable and interesting courses. STCC does offer a number of free clinics on their campus including dental. Both offered discounted admissions to courses, access to facilities and cultural events for seniors to attend. Just to see how our area colleges can impact the lives of our seniors, at our first elderly committee meeting at Riverview Apartments in the North End, we met several nursing students from Elms College who have been conducting basic dementia assessment testing for several seniors. After we wrap up our meeting with every senior center, we will reconnect with the colleges and discuss what efforts we can make to partner more closely with our colleges.

City Budget

The Council is anticipating the arrival of Mayor Sarno’s FY 2009 budget, which begins July 1, 2008. In the past few years, councilors had been invited to attend individual department budget hearings so we could hear firsthand the different department priorities. Unfortunately, we were not invited to attend this year’s hearings. I feel our budget discussions and review will not allow us the in-depth discussion the residents have been encouraging.

Old First Church Property Sale

The recent auction of several historical items certainly captured the news and attention of city residents. I was glad to see the museums collected many items before the church closed and was able to retrieve several items at auction. I did feel that it was not necessarily the council’s place to press the church on the disposition of their private belongings. The church is an important landmark to our city and the downtown, and I was supportive of the city’s efforts to purchase the building and protect it as part of the overall Court Square development. My parents were married in that church so the building is personally important to me. For the time being, I hope the city can secure and maintain the building and consider conducting events in that space and I have urged the Springfield Public Forum to use the space as an additional program venue.

(continued on page 4)

Residential Rental Occupancy Permit

The issue of creating a city residential rental occupancy permit is a continuing topic of discussion among the council. In a time of rising foreclosures and large number of rental properties being owned and managed by out of state and out-of-town landlords, we have had several discussions about ensuring responsibility on the part of property owners. Rental property owners would need to apply for a residential occupancy permit renewable each year. Permit fees could go toward the cost of property inspections when there is a new rental. I would like to see a permit system work to help us target landlords that might not be maintaining their buildings. Councilor Tim Rooke has been working on this issue using model programs from other communities.

City Loan Repayment Schedule

Springfield is facing a pressing problem as we approach the end of the current fiscal year. If the loan repayment schedule to the state for the \$52 million, no-interest loan is not changed, we could face a payment of over \$6 million in this current fiscal year and succeeding fiscal years followed by a large balloon payment for the balance of the loan in FY2012. Every councilor has voiced his or her support to extend the repayment schedule out to 2028 thereby costing the city just over \$2 million per year. Councilors Rooke and Walsh have filed a bill to push through a home rule petition to make this loan payment change. Without a home rule petition requested by the city or a bill drafted by the Governor and passed, we will be liable for the larger payment this fiscal year.

Economic Development and the Massachusetts Film Bureau

* As a member of the council Planning and Economic Development Committee, I appreciate the recent series of meetings we have held chaired by Councilor Bill Foley. We regularly meet with businesses, colleges, the Springfield Parking Authority, and realtors to discuss the current economic climate in Springfield and what we can do to work together. The recent meeting to hear the Parking Authority's plans are extremely helpful. They expressed their hope that a new civic center garage should be constructed in 5 years. It was pointed out to the council that similar facilities like our garage built in the early 1970's are no longer in use.

* I have extended an invitation to the director of the Massachusetts Film Bureau to visit Springfield and strategize with the city how we may work with the state to attract production companies to the area. Massachusetts, like other states, offers attractive tax incentives to attract movie and television production opportunities. If Western Massachusetts is not a potential location for these productions, what is the benefit of these tax incentives to our economy? Are there things we can do to elevate our region as an attractive production site? I have to admit that the idea of inviting the bureau director was inspired by Brad Shepard on WHYN-AM, who asked the same question. The bureau director has replied that he would like to target late May for a visit.

Once again, please do not hesitate to contact me at 734-6216 or bstebbins2005@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

May Museums à la Carte Programs

The Springfield Museums at the Quadrangle will present the following Museums à la Carte programs in May. The programs are held on Thursdays at 12:15 p.m. in the Museum of Fine Arts.

May 8 - A Brief History of Indian Motocycles; Will Boutelle, M.D.

May 15 - The Impressionists: Camille Pissarro; DVD from the series *The Great Artists: Their Lives, Times and Work*.

May 22 - Better than Ever: The Springfield Symphony at 65 - An Insider's View of the 2008-2009 Season; Kevin Rhodes, music director, Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

May 29 - Springtime Blooms in the Southwest; Jack Megas, astronomer and group travel leader.

WALKING TOUR **Saturday, May 10**

May's Second Saturday Walking Tour features Keith Korburt of the Duryea Society talking about the automotive history of Springfield. Tourgoers will get a sneak peek at the new museum of Springfield History (the old Verizon building), which houses a reproduction Duryea as well as an authentic early Rolls Royce (and lots of Indian motorcycles). Mr. Korburt will talk about automotive design, manufacture and sales in Springfield.

The April walking tour was attended by 35 people! The weather was perfect, and we got two new AQCA memberships at the tour. Hope to see you on this one. As always, tours happen rain or shine and run from 10:30 AM to noon-ish. Meet at the Quadrangle welcome center. Tours are free to AQCA and museum members, \$5.00 to all others. The money raised goes to a neighborhood beautification fund.

SBID Supports Bike-to-Work Week

May 12 - 18

Springtime is upon us and it is time to kick it into high gear. What better way to start than to take part in Bike-to-Work from May 12-18 as you travel around the downtown. The plan is to promote the benefits of biking such as, reduction of pollution and increased health and wellness. To show our support the BID will be hosting a table on Thursday, May 15th from 7:00am – 9:00am at Court Square. We encourage all bikers to stop by and visit us for a coffee on their way to work.

Pancake Breakfast **Saturday, May 17th**

Volunteer at the AQCA table and join your neighbors in welcoming area residents to downtown.

If you wish to volunteer,
call the AQCA office at 747-1830 or
email us at aqca@kimballtowers.com.

Community Music School to Host **Benefit Concert** **Featuring *Rising Tide***

Wednesday, May 7
7 ~ 8:30 pm

Community Music School of Springfield
127 State Street

Donations
(to benefit CMSS Scholarship Program)
Adults \$10 Students & Seniors \$5
Includes concert & reception

Four voices, 6- and 12-string guitars, a great harmonica, a banjo, and some percussion. Heavenly harmonies, memorable melodies, upbeat rhythms, and lots of fun.

This dynamic group sings popular and familiar songs by the Kingston Trio, the Everly Brothers, the Eagles, The Chad Mitchel Trio, and Peter, Paul and Mary. Songs by Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Donovan, Eric Clapton, and John Denver evoke memories of special times in the past.

Science Museum Celebrates **Astronomy Day**

The Springfield Science Museum will celebrate Astronomy Day on Saturday, May 10, from noon to 4 p.m. Weather permitting, visitors can look at sunspots through specially-filtered telescopes set up on the Quadrangle grounds. Jack Megas of the Springfield Stars Club will display his meteorite collection in the museum and give informal presentations throughout the afternoon. Special visits to the museum's large rooftop observatory will also be offered.

Spoken Word Saturday!

Open Mic

May 10

1:00pm

Central Library Community Room

* All ages *All forms of creative writing

* All languages welcome

Stearns Square Block Party
Stearns Square Park ~ Thursdays at 7:30pm

June 26**

JAY AND THE AMERICANS

July 3

GARY US BONDS

July 10

BLUE MANGOOS

July 17

JERRY GARCIA BAND

July 24

PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE

July 31

FAT

August 7

LA GUNS

August 14

GEORGIA SATELLITES

August 21

ROOMFUL OF BLUES

August 28

BLACK 47

September 4

JOHNNY WINTER

September 11**

THE LAST GOOD NIGHT



*** Paid for by club owners*



Second Sunday @ Stearns

June 8 ~ September 14

June 8

BOB BALDWIN

Opening is Doug Jones

July 13

DAVID 'FATHEAD' NEWMAN w/ CURTIS FULLER

Opening is Ethel Lee

August 10

GORDON JAMES

Opening is Scott Kasanicky

September 14

KEN NAVARRO

Opening is New Directions



**140 Chestnut Street
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