



## NCH MAYOR'S NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2005

Hi Neighbor! We're back. Yes, as much as we wanted to have more, we could, once again, only afford two newsletters this year. Well, we will just have to make it worth the wait. While we look at our city and ponder the future, we should not, cannot, and must not forget why we are all here in the first place. Namely, to build and maintain a "home" for us all. In this newsletter, we are going to let you know what has been done this year, where we are now, and what is ahead for the future in order to keep building that home. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy.



**POLICE DEPARTMENT:** A very thin line exists between order and chaos. The police are the ones charged with maintaining that line. Are we always successful? No. Nevertheless, we keep trying. Thankfully, most of the time, we win. To that end, we now have a full compliment of officers, which means we have more visibility and more officers on patrol. Welcome to our newest fulltime officer, Ryan Schrand and part-time officer Keith Duncan. How about saying hi and thanks?

I know, most of us only meet a cop when we have fouled up. Believe me, I know. But remember, they are there to help maintain our homes, and I am glad they are. We carried out three drug raids since April. Some of these were in cooperation with Federal Officers and some were on our own. The results were good but the laws will allow them back on the streets before the paperwork is complete. We keep trying!

A big concern, and rightfully so, is the seeming growth of sexual predators. We all need to be aware of unusual behavior or vehicles in all areas of the City. If you notice it, call the police. Having said that, please be aware that just because someone may seem suspicious, it does not make them guilty. This is America; we are all innocent until proven guilty. However, that doesn't mean we ignore situations that are suspect. Once again, it is OUR HOME.

Last year at this time (September 2004), we had 1,033 offense/incident reports. This year we have 1,011. Our goal for the Police Department is two-fold. We need to become more efficient financially due to limited revenues, while increasing the visibility of officers and developing more personalized relationships between our police and citizens. This is going

to be an important task. We are looking forward to increased involvement with schools, churches, & citizens groups to make it work.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:** There has been a lot of activity here. We are revamping policies and personnel to make those in our department better trained, better informed, and more accountable, both to fellow firefighters and to the citizens. We have always had and will continue to have a department of which we can be proud. However, that does not come without cooperation, communication, and innovation on everyone's part.



Speaking of cooperation, a big thanks to all those involved in this year's Firefighter's Festival. It was a great success and fun for all. The weather cooperated and we received rave reviews on the fireworks. Isn't it great what we can achieve when working together? Many of our N.C.H. students were involved in the Fire Department's Fire Safety month program held in the schools. The students received great tips about fire safety in a fun setting. Also, please welcome our newest members of the Fire Department: David Moore, Ryan Schwitalski, & Eric Uhlhorn. Welcome and stay safe!

**RECREATION:** Well, to say the least, it was an interesting summer. As you may recall, we went ahead with the pool repair on the promise that it would be ready by mid-June. June turned to July and July to August. Funny how that works. Bottom line is that we finally received the finished product in mid-August, just in time for the community picnic. Then the problem of lifeguards arose. Because of the delayed opening, many of our lifeguards had already gone back to school, thus, we were unable to open on certain days. Now, the good news. First, we are going to get a few thousand dollars back from the contractor for not finishing on time. Second, the pool is absolutely beautiful. That thing looks like it should be in the Olympics, and we have preserved an important part of N.C.H.'s heritage. Third, because we made it free of charge for the little time the pool was opened, a lot more people utilized the facility. Many didn't even know we had a pool. Thanks to all the publicity, good or bad, everyone knows about our pool. I will be reminding you next spring to buy your annual pool pass. It really is the best deal in town.



If you bought a pool pass this year, make sure you hold onto it for next year. It is still good for the 2006 season! If you attended the picnic, you saw firsthand what a great pool we have here in N.C.H. We all look for fun and a way to cool off during the summer. Keep in mind season pool passes are only \$30 for students, \$25 for senior citizens, \$40 for adults and \$100 for a family of four. Any season pass purchased includes a 2-week session of swim lessons. Take advantage of our great facility. You'll have a blast!

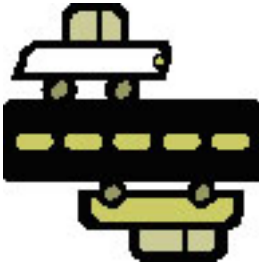
Welcome to our newest members of the Recreation Commission: Al Long and Renee' Stiles. They both bring an abundance of energy, enthusiasm, and fresh ideas with them and we look forward to their contributions.

The revival of the community picnic was an absolute fabulous success. I would love to list everyone involved, but if I do, I will surely miss someone and so, will just leave it at thanks to everyone. No kidding, the volunteers took their ideas and made it happen. For most, it was the first time to be a part of a civic endeavor, and what a job they did. Every single person was important and everyone delivered. I am proud of all of them. Over 600 people showed up, people discovered they had friends they had not met yet, and for one shining afternoon, we showed what a city should and could be. AND, I haven't received a single complaint ...YET! Now that is something. THANKS AGAIN and look forward to next year.

Our goals for recreation are to establish a reasonable and consistent program of recreational facility improvements and program extensions. Recreation is an important part of life in a city and we need to approach it as such.



**PUBLIC WORKS:** As usual, our guys in Public Works continue to do a superb job. The crew maintains all the landscaping around town and, as a result, we get to enjoy the beauty all summer. A developer that is interested in moving to town commented that one of the things that grabbed his attention was the landscaping throughout town and the way it is maintained. People do notice and it does make a difference. When you see our guys, take a minute and say thanks. We also want to thank the Business Association for sponsoring the "Big Dig" in April. Business Association members and volunteers did a great job on this beautification project. Sign Effects, Clovernook Country Club, Clovernook Health Care Pavilion, Life Spring Christian Church, Specialty Vending, Gear's Garden Center, All Star Screen Printing and the City of N.C.H. all contributed to this project. Another example of working together to do great things for our city!



**STREETS & HIGHWAYS:** Meis Avenue construction is finished and it turned out great. The Meis and West Belmar residents were very patient. The contractors that did the job were fabulous. We seem to get a little better each time so I guess we will keep on doing it. Speaking of that, the Goodman Avenue project has begun. Yes, we can stop worrying about the front-end suspension of our cars when driving in that area. Construction for the Southridge project will soon follow & is expected to be complete by year's end or early spring 2006. We have applied for grants for Foxwood and the 1900 & 2000 block of Catalpa. Keep your fingers crossed.

**FINANCE:** The Finance Committee has begun preparing the 2006 budget, and the city's budget is just like the budgets of our households. There always seems to be more things on which to spend money than there is money. It's kind of like closet space. No matter how much you have, you always need more.



The Tax Department has been busy this summer, chasing down delinquent taxpayers. In 2005, they have re-established the quarterly tax courts, citing dozens of non-payers into court. Results have been good for the City, with collections up \$50,000 over the same time last year. It's a good idea to get into the office to file and pay before you get a notice to court! They are looking into user-friendly software that will enable our residents to file online. More on that to come!

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Local business is the lifeblood of a community. Business owners pay more taxes per capita than anyone else. The more successful the business district, the more successful the city. It keeps the necessity of asking for more money from the citizens to a minimum and allows good things to happen within the neighborhoods. Good neighborhoods and good businesses go hand-in-hand. Schools benefit, churches benefit, we all benefit. Does it sound like I feel pretty strongly about this? We have tried several things in the past with limited success, so we are going to try something new. We have established a business round table in order to open up a working relationship with local businesses. We hope to achieve progress by pooling ideas and focusing on projects.



Our Community Improvement Corporation is becoming very active once again. Brenda England of Underground Treasures is the new president and she is dynamic. The C.I.C. has plans to facilitate the progress of re-development, both residential and commercial. The program is in its infancy, but with Brenda's guidance, it will get done. In addition, the C.I.C. has expressed interest in "marketing" our city so that we no longer keep our positive qualities a secret. We received a grant from Hamilton County Community Business Revitalization Program to do a business corridor study along Hamilton Ave. and

Galbraith Road. This is a very important win for us. With this study, we can actively market our city to attract more businesses.

We received word that the old BP property will be developed soon and have reason to believe that the PNC corner will likewise be developed within the next 12 months. I am not holding my breath, but we are actively putting pressure on Walgreen's to move forward with their development plans. If you did not already know Walgreen's owns the PNC corner, you do now. We have probably heard as many rumors about the old Thriftway property as you have, none of which have much credibility. The owner is trying to attract a single user and that is difficult. The problem with all of these deals is that they take so darn long. It sure drives me "nuts" (and that is not a very long drive). Anyway, light a candle or say a prayer, but just hope things start moving soon. As always, remember to shop local.

**BITS & PIECES:** It saddens me to report that Vern Finke resigned from Council this summer. He and Carol relocated and he was unable to continue to serve on Council. Vern was one of North College Hill's best Council members. It was a privilege to serve with him. His dedication and love for his hometown was unquestioned and he had the rare ability to mix humor with seriousness in dealing with tough problems. Our city will miss Vern and we wish him well.

- God continues to smile on us. How, you ask? As much as we will miss Vern, we were very fortunate to find Tom Graves. Or rather, Tom found us. Tom Graves has been selected to take Vern Finke's seat on Council. Tom brings the qualities of humor and wisdom to Council, while being a calming element during what sometimes can be spirited debate. The result is a really good Council member for our city. Welcome to city government Tom, and good luck.
- Brent Stiles moved from Planning Commission to Earnings Tax Appeals Board & Stacey Strasser is now on Planning Commission. Welcome Stacey! We're glad you're on board!
- Betty Friedrich, the City Treasurer for over 23 years will not be seeking re-election this year. Betty has been a dedicated public official and a dear friend. Betty, it was an honor to serve with you all these years.
- City Hall had its own mini baby boom over the summer. Congratulations to Ginny Wagner and Lisa Pfaffl on the birth of their baby girls! Both mothers and daughters are doing well. Many thanks for a job well done by interim Police Clerk Denise Brown and Court Clerk Chris Schadel. These two came in and we didn't miss a beat while Ginny and Lisa were on leave.
- My cardiologist is happy but life without chocolate stinks!
- Do you consider yourself a good neighbor? Do you cut your grass, weed your gardens and take your garbage cans in on time? Have you stepped back and looked at your house lately? If you were buying a house, would you buy your house? If your answer to any of these is no, we have a problem. Good neighbors mean good neighborhoods. Think about it. It doesn't cost a thing to be nice. Try it!

- Don't forget Halloween is on October 31. The ghosts & goblins will be out from 6:00pm-8:00pm. If you observe any problems, call the police immediately. To borrow a phrase, "it takes a community to raise a child".
- According to the Hamilton County Auditor, the City of North College Hill is worth \$392,845,860. That is up nearly \$50,000,000.00 from 2004. So if you have some loose change lying around...
- St. Paul Church has contracted with the Jordan Center to provide health and social service assistance for uninsured and underinsured residents. Services are available the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 5:00pm-7:00pm. Please call St. Paul Church at 931-2205 for more information.
- Leaf pick-up dates are as follows: November 5, 12, 19 and December 3. Please have your leaves curbside by 6:00am in biodegradable containers such as paper bags or cardboard boxes or trashcans. No plastic bags will be accepted. Also, how about helping those neighbors who are unable to rake their leaves themselves?
- Support N.C.H. schools and their activities. This is a prime example of solving problems and not dwelling on the negative. Our schools have steadily improved over the last five years. So go tell somebody it's time to start bragging. After all, we are champions in more than basketball.
- Hamilton County is now offering Head Start for N.C.H. school district residents. The program is being held at Becker Elementary, but it is open to any child in the district. Call 589-3012 with questions or to enroll. School district residents may also participate in a similar program called the Early Learning Initiative. That program is housed at Goodman Elementary but is also open to all N.C.H. school district residents. Call Shari Blessing at 728-2610 for more information on either program.
- Many thanks to those who donated to the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. Just within the last few weeks, the caring residents of North College Hill and the surrounding areas donated over five truckloads of items as well as several hundred dollars. These desperately needed funds and items have been transported directly to some of the hardest hit areas in the South. Thanks for caring folks!
- If the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina didn't teach us anything else, it should have taught us about the importance of local government. November 8th is Election Day. It is important because it affects us all directly. Remember to vote. **Specifically, vote YES on State Issue I.** This is the fund we use to help fix our streets, sewers, curbs, etc. We have received well over \$6,000,000 in grants from this fund. A **YES** vote is a vote for N.C.H.

As I write this newsletter, Hurricane Katrina has delivered a horrendous blow to the Gulf Coast. After watching and learning firsthand of the plight of our brothers and sisters in the south, I am reminded of the importance of local government. I confess to feeling a pain in my soul as I see my fellow Mayors cope with incredible disaster. While meaningless rhetoric flows from Washington and state capitals, it is the Mayors, Councils, Police, Fire, Public Works, and brave citizens that are faced with dealing with the front line of saving their respective cities. It is their home and they are fighting to save it. The point is this. We are responsible for who and what we are and who and what we become. We have a plan. However, just like any plan, it will not work unless we all

work together. We will succeed because of our spirit. Thanks for allowing me to be your Mayor. I am humbled and honored. See you next time.

*-Mayor Dan Brooks*

JUST A THOUGHT: "Perseverance and spirit have done wonders in all ages"  
-George Washington