

FOUNDERS' GROVE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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A Brick Street's Second Life

by Kurt E. Hoffman and Cheryl Lewis

Anyone who has walked along the 2000 block of East Taylor Street lately might notice a big change – especially those familiar with the bumpy charm of the old brick street. In the spring and summer of 2024, the City of Bloomington began work to restore the bricks, which coincided with the City's plan to redo water and sewer lines in older Bloomington neighborhoods. This project aimed to preserve the historic significance of the street, while upgrading essential infrastructure.

But this transformation is about more than infrastructure – it's a story of neighborhood pride, persistence, and just a little bit of brick dust.

The history behind this one-block street comes from **Kurt Hoffman**, who moved to the block of East Taylor around 2003. At that time, he was restoring his 100-year-old home, and he got to know the neighbors – and the story of the street. He learned about the original brick pavers and how earlier residents had long committed to preserving them. A codicil even existed to ensure brick replacements would stay brick.

Residents like Carole Mulliken were known for keeping an eye on things. If a utility crew removed even a single brick during repairs, neighbors acted quickly. For example, in 2008 a water-line replacement left behind a concrete patch instead of restored brick. Concerned neighbors raised the issue with city leadership.

Read on, BRICKS — page 3



Taylor Street neighbors share their thoughts

- **Long-time residents Val and Shirleyan Maeker** recall the city asking neighbors for input in the early 1980s, with most voting to keep the brick street. After a while, the Maekers said they almost preferred asphalt for new curbs and gutters. But they were happy the work was going to take place in spring of 2024. "We were surprised and delighted when we found out the city planned to reset the brick after the sewer project was completed. We are so appreciative of what the city has done!"
"We think it gives all our houses great curb appeal. And the brick street just seems to invite people to drive down and take a look at our neighborhood," Shirleyan added.
- **Gayle Bruno moved to Taylor Street** shortly before the city began the street work. "I feel the restoration of the brick street connected us to the original families that lived here," she said. Gayle is grateful the people who lived here a few decades ago had the foresight to file the legal papers protecting the bricks. "When I describe where I live to someone new, the first thing I mention is my street is a brick street. Just like it was 100 years ago."

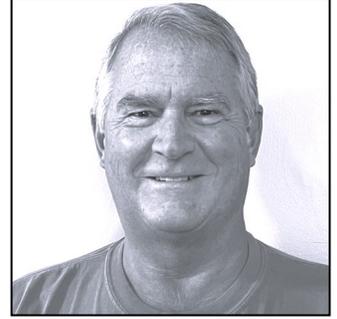
HOT OFF THE PREZ - By Todd Vincent on Grove, Board President

The neighborhood looks so pretty this time of year, with the trees and flowers in bloom. Almost magical. I'd like to personally thank all the people that responded to our survey from the last newsletter. We've received some good suggestions, and we're looking at doing some fun, new things this year. Several of you suggested some additional kid-friendly events, so let me share with you some things you'll see in the coming months.

We are in the planning phase for an evening pool/pizza party at Holiday Pool, a magic show, cookie decorating class and a family play day with root beer floats. Yoga will be returning to the neighborhood on a recurring basis, and a new

puzzle exchange, where you can bring your old puzzles and trade them for different ones. These are all in addition to our normal events. The June social will be at Casper Brewing with an optional golf outing at the Links, and don't forget about the 4th of July parade and potluck afterward.

It's shaping up to be a fun-filled season here in the neighborhood, and as always, I'd encourage you to get out and join in the activities. We'd love to see you there! Have a wonderful summer!



The Annual Tour of Homes is June, 14, 2025.

Buy tickets at oldhousesociety.org or scan the QR Code.



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About Founders' Grove Neighborhood Association

FGNA is a 501c3 organization formed to enhance the community in which we live. Every residence on and between Oakland, Mercer, Washington & State streets is a member invited to join all events. No dues required: Activities are funded by donations.

Donate by:

- Cash in FGNA jars at events; or QR code available to pay digitally
- PayPal to fgnabloomington@gmail.com
- Venmo: @FGNABloomington
- Check to: FGNA (c/o Neil Gridley), 1219 E. Washington St., Bloomington, IL 61701

GOALS

- Celebrate and preserve our neighborhood's unique character and history.
- Promote communication and a sense of community between neighbors, with many social gatherings.
- Keep neighbors informed about city projects that may affect them and give our neighborhood a voice in city decision-making.
- Keep the neighborhood safe and traffic under control.
- Help our neighborhood schools & businesses thrive.
- Share expert info on topics of interest such as gardening and home restoration.

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Yoga in the Grove returns in June!

We're excited to announce the return of outdoor yoga to the neighborhood this summer!

Two volunteer certified yoga instructors will offer yoga on a donation basis. Times and location may adjust as we get into it, but we'll start with:



When: Thursdays at 6 p.m., starting June 5 (weather permitting)

Where: The shady backyard of Neil & Rochelle Gridley, 1219 E. Washington (parking available at Washington School)

Bring: Your mat and a donation. Please no pets.

Summer kids activities

Survey feedback led us to add more family-friendly activities to the summer lineup. Check the back page calendar for details!

Save puzzles for fall exchange

An FGNA resident has offered to coordinate a puzzle exchange this fall. Watch for details later, but start saving puzzles for neighbors now!

Other recurring events:

Mystery Book Club meets 3rd Thurs; **Washington Street Book Club** 1st Tues. For details on these, or monthly **Euchre & Music Guild** events, go to fgna.org or email fgnabloomington@gmail.com.

Upcoming FGNA volunteer opportunity: Midwest Food Bank

If you'd like to get involved, watch for details or email leisa.barbour7@gmail.com.

TIDBITS

Neighbor to Neighbor Classifieds

Piano lessons: For all ages. Contact Cheryl Richards at cherlcm@yahoo.com.

To submit a free one-time classified ad: Email sonyajeremy@yahoo.com



Need a tool temporarily?

The West Bloomington Revitalization Project has "Tool Library" lending.

Learn more at: westbloomington.org/tool-library



Continued... BRICKS (from page 1)

When told the bricks were "gone," Hoffman offered up 2,000 bricks he had in his backyard. A few neighbors held brick-cleaning parties, and together they cleaned and organized over 13 pallets of bricks. The city picked them up to add to its reclaimed brick inventory.

In 2009, then Public Works Director Jim Karch presented a draft brick street master plan to the city council. It aimed to evaluate and preserve the remaining 3.4 miles of Bloomington brick streets, which once totaled more than 43 miles. The Historical Preservation Commission reviewed the plan, suggesting certain criteria to prioritize each remaining street. Thanks to the passion and persistence of local advocates, the 2000 block of East Taylor ended up earning a higher rank on the preservation list.

Today, both neighbors and visitors alike enjoy this street, whether walking dogs, pushing strollers, or simply soaking in its unique neighborhood atmosphere.

A little history of the kiln-fired bricks

Restoration of the original bricks, kiln-fired around 1913 from clay sourced near Holiday Pool and Lakeside Country Club, began in 2024 after more than a decade of follow-up and nearby infrastructure work. These bricks, over 110 years old, are non-permeable, tough and have never been covered by asphalt. While the block was once affectionately known as the "roly-poly" street, its new, smoother surface keeps its timeless charm.

Sign up - FGNA Yard Sales: June 6 & 7

To get on the sale map, by **June 3** complete the form with this QR code or at bit.ly/2025fgnasales.



Kids books left after yard sales?

Donate them! You can leave them on the porch at 1219 E. Washington to be donated to the "book bike" in town.

Please remember to pick up after pets!



Mark your calendar!

Sept. 19-20 –

FGNA Palooza Music Fest

Details in the next newsletter.

Centennial Church invites FGNA families to Homecoming Weekend

By Pastor Tom Cici Greetings from Centennial Christian Church! The church is excited about all God is doing in our neighborhoods and communities. Please join us for a Homecoming Weekend this August.

Saturday, Aug. 16: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

- Youth games, including bounce house, outdoor chalk, bubbles, corn-hole game
- Facepainting
- Petting and adopting small animals from Wishbone Canine Rescue
- Food trucks (ice cream, Mexican cuisine & more)
- Church Stain-glass Window Tours

Sunday, Aug. 17

- 10:15 AM Worship Service in Sanctuary
- **Meal: Please RSVP by August 1st** at www.centennialcc.org or call (309) 828-2185
- Meet former ministers
- Church Cookbook sales
- Church Stain-glass Window Tours



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Tips to get growing!

The Illinois Extension of the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences has some great resources if you're looking to...

- **Plant & maintain a vegetable garden:** extension.illinois.edu/gardening
 - ◊ Includes tips for each type of vegetable you'd like to grow.
- **Start an herb garden:** extension.illinois.edu/herbs
 - ◊ Fresh basil, anyone? #thebest
- **Groom the perfect lawn:** extension.illinois.edu/lawns
 - ◊ With tips for avoiding and addressing common lawn problems.
- **Add color to your life with flowers:** extension.illinois.edu/flowers
 - ◊ Browse varieties to see which catch your fancy.
- **Grow backyard fruits:** extension.illinois.edu/small-fruits
 - ◊ Ready to branch out from veggies?
- **Get kids involved in gardening:** extension.illinois.edu/youth-gardening
 - ◊ A powerful and rewarding learning opportunity.




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Neighborhood Sale Dates

- **June 3 sign-up deadline:** For \$4, get listed on sale map, borrow a sign & help cover Pantagraph ad cost. Complete form at bit.ly/2025fgnasales. Email lollarmatt@hotmail.com with questions.
- **June 5 from 6-7 p.m.:** Pay fee & pick up your sign/maps at Matt Lollar's, 1304 E. Grove.
- **June 6 & 7 sales:** Usually run 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. but vary. (Leave sign in yard for Board to pick up.)

Fri, June 13 at 6 p.m. – FGNA Happy Hour at Casper Brewing Co. + Optional Golf

- **Where:** 3807 Ballybunion, Bloomington. Bring snack to share, cash for 50/50. No outside drinks.
- **Golf at 5 p.m. (RSVP):** 9-hole FGNA Golf Scramble will begin at 5 p.m. at The Links, Ireland Grove. RSVP by Friday, June 6 to Todd Vincent at jtvincen@att.net. As golfers finish, they can join the in-progress FGNA Social at Casper Brewing Co.

Sun, June 22 at 2 p.m. – Children learn to decorate cookies with Christine

- **What:** Children (age 7+) learn cookie frosting techniques. Parents welcome to participate too.
- **Register & fee by June 15:** Email fgnabloomington@gmail.com to sign up. Limit 10 kids; possible 2nd session. Pay \$5 by Venmo: @FGNABloomington or PayPal: fgnabloomington@gmail.com
- **Where:** Leisa Barbour's home, 108 Fairview Ave.

Kids Event

Sat, June 28 at 2 p.m. – Family Magic Show by FGNA resident “Great Scott”

- **What:** G. Scott Sober has performed magic all over the U.S., including on stage in Las Vegas with David Copperfield. He started in magic at age 8 and has lived in FGNA 39 years.
- **Where:** Matt Lollar's backyard, 1304 E. Grove St.

Kid Friendly

JULY

Fri, July 4 at 9 a.m. – Annual 4th of July Parade & Potluck Brunch

Kid Friendly

- **What & Where:** Decorate bikes, wagons, strollers, scooters to join the parade - or line the streets to watch. Starts at corner of Grove & Woodland, then west to Harwood, south to Taylor, east to Vale, north to Grove. Finish with a potluck brunch in the Schulz's backyard, 1322 E. Grove.

Fri, July 11 at 6 p.m. – FGNA Happy Hour / Social on Moore St.

- **Where:** Marilyn & Kevin Maffett's, 512 S. Moore St. Bring snack to share, BYOB, cash for 50/50.

Sat, July 26 from 6 to 8 p.m. – Holiday Pool Family Night / Pizza Party

Kid Friendly

- **Where:** Holiday Park Pool, 800 McGregor St, Bloomington
- **What:** The main & kiddie pools reserved for FGNA. Enjoy pizza donated by Mike & Nancy Schulz.

Sun, July 27 starting at 2 p.m. – Vinyl Hullabaloo

Kid Friendly

- **What:** Enjoy tunes on the turntable. Bring your own records or pick from the selection available.
- **Where:** Matt Lollar's backyard, 1304 E. Grove. Bring your lawn chair, beverages, snack to share.

AUGUST

Thurs, Aug. 7 at 2 p.m. – Park Playdate at Oakland School

Kids Event

- **What:** Bring the kids out to play together on the playground. Event will include a scavenger hunt.

Fri, Aug. 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. – FGNA Social & Pool Party

Kid Friendly

- **Where:** Michele King's, 1219 E Jefferson.
- **What:** Pool open to all, including supervised children. Bring snack to share, BYOB, 50/50 cash.