



Browncroft Crier

NEWSLETTER OF THE BROWNCROFT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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P.O. Box 10127, Rochester, New York 14610
<http://browncroftna.org>

Summer 2025

BNA Executive Committee

Officers:

President
Andrew Spadoni
Vice-President
Cassy Petsos
Secretary
Sara Castro
Treasurer
Bruce Rumbold

District Reps

Elm
James Nicholson
Corwin
Holly Petsos
Croydon
TBD

BNA Email:

contact page on <http://browncroftna.org>

Crier Editor -

Cassy Petsos

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It's May! BNA Annual Meeting

**Tuesday, May 20th
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.**

**At
School 46
Newcastle Road**

Agenda:

**Refreshments and Neighbors' social time
throughout**

**Guest Speaker John McMahon, Administra-
tor, City of Rochester's South East Neighbor-
hood Service Center. Learn what the role is
of the four NSCs - one for each quadrant of
the City - and how to access the varied ser-
vices provided.**

BNA Business

Election of Officers

Active Committee Reports

2025 - 2026 Planning

OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Andrew Spadoni, President

Andrew has been a resident of the Browncroft neighborhood for more than 8 years, originally residing on Elm Drive and serving briefly as the BNA street representative for Elm Drive before assuming the role of President a few months ago. He, his wife and newborn son now reside on Windemere Road. Professionally, he has worked for MVP Health Care for the past 7 years, where he currently serves as the Market Leader for the company's Medicare Advantage and Commercial Group lines of business. Andrew has gotten right in the swing of things by enlisting a new BNA Garage Sale Committee and helping them get organized.

Cassandra Petsos, Vice President

Cassy has been BNA President, and is currently Vice-President. She has lived in Browncroft her entire life and has been involved in neighborhood work most of that time as a charter member of BNA, working as the chair of the Beautification Committee, Traffic Committee and on zoning, historic preservation, and the Crier newsletter. She says that Browncroft has been a wonderful neighborhood to grow up in, and she hopes the characteristics that made it that way will continue long into the future.

Bruce Rumbold, Treasurer

Bruce took on the treasurer position in 2024, and has dived right into the many duties associated with it, from "keeping the books in order" (number one) to paying bills, taking in and recording membership dues, Winter Gathering reservations, and garage sale fees.

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Hi all, I'm a new Board member and serving as Treasurer for the Association. I just wanted to pass along some information about our finances and how we operate as well as the value proposition for joining (paying the \$10 dues) the Association. BNA has many events throughout the year that bring us together.

Some of these events are free,

Bruce Rumbold, is another long-time resident of Beresford Road, having purchased in, 2013, his family home (since 1959). Bruce, who has an MBA from the U of R Simon School, is currently retired from a career consulting in the banking industry and is now serving as treasurer for another not-for-profit, NeighborWorks Community Partners.

Sara Castro, Secretary

Sara has been BNA's very excellent secretary for a few years. She and her husband, Mel, have lived in Browncroft on Beresford Rd. for approximately 40 years!. Professionally, she was a dental hygienist for 26 years, returning to college in her forties, then working as a Physician Assistant for 18 years at Unity Hospital. She is now retired and enjoys reading, hiking and traveling with friends.

She has been very active on the Events Committee working on the Ice Cream Social and Picnic. She loves city living, especially in our beautiful Browncroft neighborhood that has so many conveniences within walking distance, as well as historic architecture, street lights, and beautiful trees.

such as the Ice Cream Social, Summer Picnic, and Movie in the Park where we spend over \$1,000. Other events such as the Winter Gathering are held at a cost that is less than profitable (subsidized). We raised the fee on the garage sale to \$10 this year as expenses have all gone up. We provide advertising, signage and porto-potties.

We take care of the Rose Garden. We also provide books for students at #46 School via separate donations, as well as the Garden Tour.

There are also programs that we are starting or hope to start in the 2026 fiscal year (June – May). We are bringing back hospitality bags for new neighbors and trying to start a program to provide grant funds to members for new trees in their front yards (not the City property).

Of course, we have administrative/overhead expenses as well. Our insurance, printing charges and other fees total around \$2,500.

Some facts to consider. Dues (and other contributions) are \$2,600 year-to-date with only 202 households (30%) paying dues. This adds up to deficit spending over the year.

Additionally, as I collect fees for the garage sale, I noticed that about 60% of those registered have not paid dues for the current year. We are considering making it mandatory that dues are paid in order to take part in the events that we offer.

While we have money in the bank, we need to make sure that we are sustainable and also able to do more for the neighborhood.

I'm asking you to please take a look to see if you have paid your

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NEW BOOKS FOR NEW STUDENTS



We are pleased to announce that the Browncroft Neighborhood Association will continue with our New Books for New Students Project for the 2025 kindergarten class at Austin Steward No. 46 School.

Each year, usually at the beginning of October, we deliver 2 new paperback books, gift wrapped, to the two kindergarten classes. Traditionally one of the books is a colorful age-appropriate picture book, and the second is a National Geographic Kids Book. We work with Hippocampus Book Store to select and purchase the books.

The students are delighted with this Welcome Gift and we always include a note that the books are a gift from BNA.

Donations for this project are greatly appreciated and checks can be made payable to BNA and mailed to: Ann Kanthor 175 Dorchester Rd. Additionally we will be collecting donations at our Annual Meeting on May 20th, the Ice Cream Social on June 27th and the Family Picnic on September 19th.

Please feel free to contact Ann at hakanthor1@outlook.com if you have any questions.

BNA PLANTS MEMORIAL TREE

A sugar maple will be planted on the School 46 grounds in memory of David



Kaiser — a life-long resident of Browncroft, BNA past president and street representative, neighborhood advocate for historic preservation and quality of life — who passed away in February.

The planting will take place this spring along the Newcastle sidewalk as part of the effort to preserve the Browncroft Historic Landscape, designed and planted in the early 1900s by the Brown Brothers Continental Nurseries residential landscape department for the new subdivision.

David's knowledge of the neighborhood and the trees, based on his childhood memories, has confirmed for the History Committee that Dorchester and Yarmouth Roads had Elm trees, which were originally planted in a line inside the sidewalk, with the flowering trees and shrubs placed on the tree lawns consistent with the other Browncroft Streets. When Dutch Elm disease killed those trees in the 1950s, replanting on the tree lawns instead occurred. This explains the landscape anomaly on those streets.

David found on his

Yarmouth Road property the remnants of a Browncroft tree near the sidewalk, which amused him in an archeological sense.

Treasurer

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2025 dues and to please consider joining BNA. We would love to get our participation rate up to 50% of households. Please feel free to reach out to me at rumboldb@gmail.com for the status of your dues, as well as dropping an envelope in my door at 283 Beresford.

Thanks and I hope you have a better understanding of the value proposition that is offered. Again, we are hoping that folks come to the Annual Meeting and tell us what you want from your Association.

Bruce

School 46 Bee Keepers Suited-Up and Doing Their Thing



Siding with History: *Preserving Browncroft's Historic Charm*

In Browncroft, original siding materials stand as a testament to craftsmanship and durability, but decades of Rochester's harsh freeze-thaw cycles and sweltering summers can take their toll. As many historic homes near the century mark, their original features are reaching the end of their natural lifespan. This guide delves into the siding commonly found on these early 20th-century homes, how to care for it, historically appropriate modern alternatives, and highlights key pitfalls to avoid when maintaining the "skin" of your home.

Wood Clapboard & Shingle Siding

Original wood siding can last 100 years or more with proper maintenance. Many Browncroft



homes still retain their original siding, as it was sourced from old-growth wood, which is denser and more resistant to decay than modern lumber.

To maintain your original siding, periodic inspections should be made and any necessary repairs undertaken immediately. This approach can prevent damage from becoming widespread, saving money in the long run. As a first de-



The dramatic difference in the number of growth rings between old-growth wood and wood that was recently harvested from second- or third-growth forests is indicative of the diminished dimensional stability and durability of most lumber currently available, making a composite product potentially longer lasting and durable.

fense against weather, wood should ideally be painted every 5-7 years. Similarly, natural shingles prefer a good stain or oil-based sealant every few years, to stay protected from snow, rain, and pests.

Stucco Siding

Like wood, with proper maintenance, stucco can last over a century. Its greatest vulnerability is moisture—unchecked cracks allow water to seep in, leading to mold, mildew, and rot. Watch for water stains or bulging corners, as these often signal hidden moisture damage.



To clean stucco, use a garden hose and avoid pressure washers, which can erode the surface. Unpainted stucco is more durable and requires less upkeep. If painting is necessary, choose a breathable lime- or silicate-based paint to prevent trapped moisture.

Brick

Brick is the strong, silent type—timeless, fire-resistant, and incredibly durable—but not maintenance-free. In Rochester's freeze-thaw climate, historic brick may require repointing every 25-50 years, depending on exposure. However, full repointing is rarely necessary and can do more harm than good. Similarly, masonry cleaning is generally discouraged.



Repointing should only be done when deterioration is evident, such as crumbling or eroded joints. Early 20th-century homes typically used lime mortar with little or no cement binder, which is much softer than modern alternatives. This work should be done carefully with hand tools, as power tools like masonry saws can easily damage

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Siding

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historic brickwork.

It's important to note that modern prepackaged mortars often contain high amounts of Portland cement, making them too rigid for older bricks, leading to cracking and spalling. Like stucco, brick is subject to trapping moisture so painting should also be avoided.

Aluminum Siding – The Mid-Century Quick Fix

During the 1950s-1970s, many historic homes received an aluminum siding makeover. Marketed as modern and low-maintenance, aluminum seemed like an ideal solution. However, like all siding materials, aluminum is vulnerable



to moisture infiltration, which can become trapped beneath the surface, leading to the deterioration of the underlying sheathing and structure.

Almost always the original craftsmanship is hiding beneath the aluminum. If removed, expect to infill any nail holes with exterior-grade wood filler or epoxy, repair any damaged boards, sand and paint.

For homeowners who prefer to keep their aluminum siding, a fresh coat of paint can help revitalize its

appearance without full removal.

Vinyl Siding – The Budget Option with a Big Cost

Today's modern quick fix is vinyl siding. On a historic home, vinyl siding is like putting a plastic cover on a classic leather chair. It's cheap and easy, but at what cost?

Vinyl has an artificial appearance that often dramatically alters the historic appearance and character of a home in many ways: the width of substitute siding often does not match historic clapboard width, shadow reveals are reduced, and trim is frequently changed or removed at cornices, corners, windows, and doors. Historic decorative shingles or vergeboards, as well as other materials and patterns, may be completely obscured or destroyed.

Like other substitute materials, the moisture trapped behind vinyl can drastically decrease the efficiency of insulation. Over time, as vinyl fades and fails, replacing it can become difficult—especially as color options are discontinued.

Finally, vinyl is non-biodegradable, so when it fails, it'll spend eternity in a landfill.

For all these reasons, historic districts typically discourage or outright ban vinyl siding. While it may offer short-term savings and low maintenance, it's ultimately unsuitable for historic homes and can lower property values in the surrounding neighborhood.

(Historically Appropriate) Modern Alternatives

If your siding is beyond saving

and you want modern durability, there are historic district approved options:

Engineered wood siding, such as LP SmartSide, is crafted from compressed wood fibers and resins, offering the aesthetic of real wood with enhanced durability. It's more resistant to rot, insects, and dimensional instability than traditional wood. While engineered wood still requires painting every 7-10 years, it needs less frequent maintenance due to its moisture resistance and factory-applied primers.

Fiber cement siding, like James Hardie Plank, is made from a blend of cellulose fibers and cement. It offers exceptional versatility, and is able to mimic the appearance of wood, shingles, or stucco. Fiber cement is highly resistant to pests, moisture, and fire, requiring repainting only every 10-15 years.

Finally, as current Browncroft stewards, our responsibility goes beyond the preservation of individual homes—it extends to maintaining the unique character of our entire neighborhood. By embracing historically appropriate materials and committing to regular care, we ensure that the craftsmanship of the past remains visible for future generations. Preserving the “skin” of our homes isn't just about protecting brick, wood, or stucco - every decision, from the choice of siding to the frequency of maintenance, contributes to the collective identity of our community.

Karsten L. Solberg
AIA,
LEED BD +C

SUMMER BNA EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDAR

(AND SAVE THIS SHEET SO YOU DON'T FORGET!)



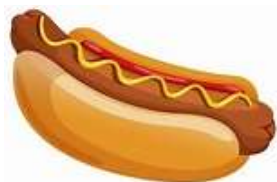
Ice Cream Social with Netsins Ice Cream
Thursday, June 26th 6:30-7:30
 in front of 127 Berwick Rd. (new location)

A free fun family event*- games for children - Rain or Shine

*Donations will be collected for the
 "New Books for New Students Project"
 for kindergarten students at #46 School



Movie in the Park
Saturday, August 16th
 Beginning at Sundown in the Rose Garden,
 Merchants Rd. side
 Family friendly movie with popcorn



Family Picnic at Hazelwood Lodge
Friday, September 19th 5:30-8:30
 Ellison Park
 Hot dogs, rolls, drink and paper products
 supplied by BNA
 Bring a dish to pass!
 Rain or Shine

Questions: bnawinter@gmail.com or call Ann Kanthor at 329-0708
 All events are free for residents of the Browncroft Neighborhood

ROSE GARDEN

Happening Now



Happening Soon



Happening Next Month

