PLAZA MIDWOOD
circa 1903

The Spirit of PLAZA MIDWOOD

Winter 2022

www.plazamidwood.org

CELEBRATING
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1903 - 2022

2022 QUARTERLY MEETINGS:

Jan. 26 cancelled
April 27
July 27
October 26
Save the Dates!

6:30 pm
at The VanLandingham Estate

Can't make a meeting? Stay informed:
- *Sign up for e-newsletter at plazamidwood.org*
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Charlotte Artist Laurie Smithwick

PM RECOGNIZES

A NEIGHBOR ON A MISSION

Laurie Smithwick's rebirth as an artist is helping to fuel Charlotte's public art scene

by Beth Dozier

Laurie's whimsical art adorns the awning created for the storefront of Betty on Thomas Avenue.

Plaza Midwood artist Laurie Smithwick is on a mission to make Charlotte into a public art destination—a key element, she says, in taking the Queen City to the next level.

After a 20-year career in graphic design, Laurie shifted gears seven years ago to pursue a fulltime career as a professional artist. While honing her abstract style, which features bold colors and textures that blur the lines between order and disorder, she decided the best way to become an artist would be to create art every single day, no matter what.

"Whenever I feel like I don't know what I'm doing, the answer is always to head to the studio and put some paint on something," she said with a laugh.

Now, some of her prolific painting is for Charlotte's benefit.

Laurie was selected by Brand the Moth, a Charlotte nonprofit focused on developing public art, for its most recent META residency. The program focuses on teaching mural-making techniques to professional artists so that they can translate so-called small art to large, outdoor spaces across the city.

Laurie points out that there is no world-class city that doesn't also have a huge culture of art—in particular, a cultivation of public art projects. She says that through efforts like Brand the Moth, Charlotte is investing in that culture.

continued on pg. 12

INSIDE:
Shamrock Gardens pg 7
Eastway Middle School pg 18 & 19
Land Use New Projects pg 21
and so much more!

EVENT UPDATE: **WINTER FLING** *on February 26 has been* ***cancelled*** *due to current Covid surge.*

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PMNA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Joey Guy

Recently, I had the privilege of joining other neighborhood leaders from the area at a lunch event in the business district. Just before leaving I began talking to a past PMNA president, Phil Gussman. Phil's eyes lit up like a kid on Christmas morning when he began to taunt me about writing my first president's letter.

Being a man of few words, I wouldn't exactly include being a prolific writer on my résumé.

So for inspiration, I began to go through the archives reading past letters… from David Hale (professional writer), Lisa Swayne Proud (marketing guru) and Wes Turner (who may have had some help from his wife).

And though I don't think I will ever be able to compete with these three with a pen and paper, reading their first letters made me excited for what's to come. We have had excellent leadership in the past and I hope to continue that.

When we began our housing search in late 2018, my wife and I were set on moving to Madison Park. We saw house after house, until our realtor suggested we look at a small bungalow on Winter Street; so, after a long day, we begrudgingly trekked across town with our realtor.

The day ended with my wife crying on the couch of our now home, refusing to move before we submitted an offer. We were already regulars at Resident Culture and Workman's Friend, but had no idea what the neighborhood truly had to offer. It was our first time inside the boundaries of Central Avenue and The Plaza and we already knew we didn't want to leave.

Although we have been in the neighborhood just four years, I can easily say that moving here was the best decision we have made.

*2022 PMNA President **Joey Guy**, with his wife Elari and their dog, Banx.*

Going into my third year on the PM board, largely dominated by the pandemic, I have seen what incredible leadership the neighborhood has had in the past and I will strive to continue that.

We have been fortunate to have leaders who were able to modify and adapt events and projects over the past couple of years in the most creative ways.

As 2022 president of PMNA, I would like to continue down this successful path. Additionally, I hope to expand on the neighborhood initiatives previously underway—most notably, providing support for our neighborhood schools and their teachers.

Though Omicron may impact some of our upcoming events and projects early on, I'm hoping that we'll still be able to plan a (mostly) full calendar as the year progresses. I look forward to seeing you all celebrate our splendid neighborhood at events like Maynia and Fall Crawl!

– Joey

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Spirit Deadlines:

The Spirit newsletter is published by volunteers. To help them meet their deadlines, please send your editorial copy or your ad ***in advance*** of the deadline. Copy received after the deadline date may be held for a future issue.

Copy & Ad Deadlines for 2022:

SPRING '22 issue ..... Mar. 5, 2022
SUMMER '22 issue.... Jun. 5, 2022
FALL '22 issue ..... Sep. 5, 2022
WINTER '23 issue ..... Dec. 5, 2022

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PMNA BOARD WANTS YOU!
Our PMNA board of directors is passionate about keeping PM one of the best communities in Charlotte. We can use YOUR participation! If you are interested, please reach out to one of your current board members or go to plazamidwood.org for more information.

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EDITOR'S NOTES

from Terri Arrowood

It sometimes feels as if we're on a carousel that won't stop. I re-read my notes from last January; I was hopeful and enthusiastic that COVID would be long-gone by now. As we all know, it just seems never-ending. I'm certain at some point, we'll see it fizzle into the endemic phase, but it's undeniable that we are all very weary from it and its repercussions.

And unfortunately, Omicron is having an impact on PM's upcoming events. The quarterly meeting in January and Winter Fling in February have been cancelled. Be sure and regularly check all of our social media outlets for updates on activities and events. We want to gather again—and will do so as soon as it's safe to do so.

Despite these interruptions, some things just don't change. At the first of every year, we have new leadership in PM. Joey Guy has taken the reigns from Lisa Swayne Proud. I found it charming to learn how he and his wife became Winter Street residents. Read his story on page 3. I'm looking forward to working with Joey in the coming year.

As for Lisa… what can I say? She is like the Energizer bunny. I am grateful that Lisa will continue her role as *The Spirit* advisor and head of our editorial board; she is a fantastic leader. Thanks so much, Lisa, for all your hard work as president and on the many projects you managed in 2021!

As always, I welcome your input and story ideas. If you would like to write an article for *The Spirit*, contact me at tarrowood@hotmail.com with your ideas. Please let me know how we can continue to better serve you with this publication.

Best, Terri

WEAR YOUR MASK
WATCH YOUR DISTANCE
WASH YOUR HANDS
GET YOUR SHOT.

Plaza Midwood Is Amazing Because of PMNA
Join or Renew Today!

Fall Crawl, Marathon Party, Santa...just a few of the many things PMNA has done for the neighborhood recently.

To keep great neighborhood projects going and to show appreciation for the hard work we do, please join the Plaza Midwood Neighborhood Association. It's only $25 a year and helps make Plaza Midwood the best neighborhood in Charlotte!

PLAZA MIDWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Visit PlazaMidwood.org/Join
To Become a PMNA Member

ZERO WASTE PLAZA MIDWOOD

REDUCING AND REUSING

by Lyz Kelk and Kelsey Lynn

Zero Waste Plaza Midwood is neighborhood group interested in mindful, sustainable and greener living.

Zero Waste = the art of living without creating trash.

We reduce what we buy, reuse as much as we can, send little to recycling and compost the rest. It's really much easier than you think and small steps matter—it's a process!

As we prepare to welcome spring and all the "greener" aspirations that come with it, we will focus our comments on ideas for reducing and reusing.

We think self-questions are your first best tool against waste: "Do I really need that?" "Can I fix this instead of buying new?" "Can I buy this second hand or even borrow it?"

Here are some ideas:

UTILIZE FACEBOOK

- **Buy Nothing Groups hosted by the Buy Nothing Project (BuyNothingProject.org)**
  - A hyper local free gift economy.
  - You can get so refined on your group, even down to your exact neighborhood.
  - You can walk or ride your bike to pick up your item.
  - Or give an item to a neighbor!
  - Example: https://www.facebook.com/groups/2259016324234999 (Be sure to find the group that most suits your location.)
- **Marketplace**
  - You can sell and buy.
  - Lots of mothers use this for kids' clothes and toys.
  - The great stuff you can score is endless.
  - It's fun to meet others in the community who enjoy the hunt for the secondhand.

OTHER RESOURCES

- **NextDoor**
  - Offer or ask for products.
  - Go to "Finds" in your left-hand menu. Tons of stuff right in our neighborhood. Sometimes even free!
  - https://nextdoor.com/for_sale_and_free/?init_source=more_menu
- **DCluttr**
  - Buy and sell tech and media.
  - https://www.decluttr.com/
- **Chairish**
  - Buy and sell more expensive items like furniture and décor.
  - https://www.chairish.com/

USED STORES NEAR US

- **Habitat for Humanity Restore**: Wendover Road. Books, home goods, home repair.
- **Book Buyers:** Eastway Crossing. Includes a wonderful green store.
- **Salvation Army:** Central Avenue. Who doesn't love some SA?
- **The Rat's Nest:** East 36th Street. Secondhand clothing with a Western/70s vibe.
- **Value Village Thrift:** Central Avenue and Freedom Drive. They always have a sale. So much to discover; the variety is endless.
- **Chinoiserie Squirrel:** NoDa. Flea market with furniture and more.

Aside from these resources, consider repairing your items. Our parents and grandparents did it. Use a knife sharpener to revive tired blades. Mend clothes rather than toss them. A new coat of paint can do wonders.

Make it a game for the whole family to see how many ways to use an item! Get the kids involved; they love this. Put items at the curb with a "free" sign. Attend yard sales; go with an open mind. Recycle bottles and cans and use refillable water bottles. And remember… your neighbors are great resources if you need to borrow something temporarily.

If you have any other ideas, please post them on our Facebook page. We would love to hear from you!

All the best for your greener life – Lyz & Kelsey

Please join our Facebook Page https://www.facebook.com/groups/zerowasteplazamidwood or email us if you have any questions: ZeroWastePlazaMidwood@gmail.com

INVEST IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL

by Rachel Frazier

Invest in Your School is Shamrock Gardens Elementary PTA's year-round fundraising effort. YOU can help keep SGE a positive and engaging learning environment for our children by contributing monetary donations or volunteer hours.

Along with the Shamrock Shuffle and small rewards programs like Amazon Smile and Harris Teeter Together in Education, **Invest in Your School** supports the school community's goals.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

While many public schools have faced major cutbacks and downsizing of critical programs and services, as COVID restrictions are lifted, SGE can keep fundamental and value-added programs that are part of our school culture. This is largely thanks to generous contributions made by SGE families and community friends. No donation is too small.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Financial Contributions

- Preferred! Zelle to sgemoney@gmail.com (no fees!), or
- Send money via PayPal (@sgepta) (fees apply);
- Drop payment in the PTA box by the front office;
- Mail check to: SGE PTA, 1900 Newcastle Street, Charlotte, NC 28216 (include donation form).

Don't forget! Check with your employer to see if they offer corporate matching gifts to increase your donation amount. These matching gifts make a difference!

Donations are tax deductible [NC PTA Group Exemption Number (GEM) 8535, EIN#: 56-1684429].

All donations are kept confidential.

WHAT IS THE MONEY USED FOR?

- Curriculum and classroom support
- Staff and teacher support
- Family engagement events
- Connect class support
- Communication and engagement technology
- Reestablishing the gardens at new school

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

Every little bit adds up. Here are some examples of what your contribution can do.

$20 - 1 Library-Bound Book for Mindful Media

$50 - 1 Class Chess Lesson

$200 - Jump Ropes for Recess

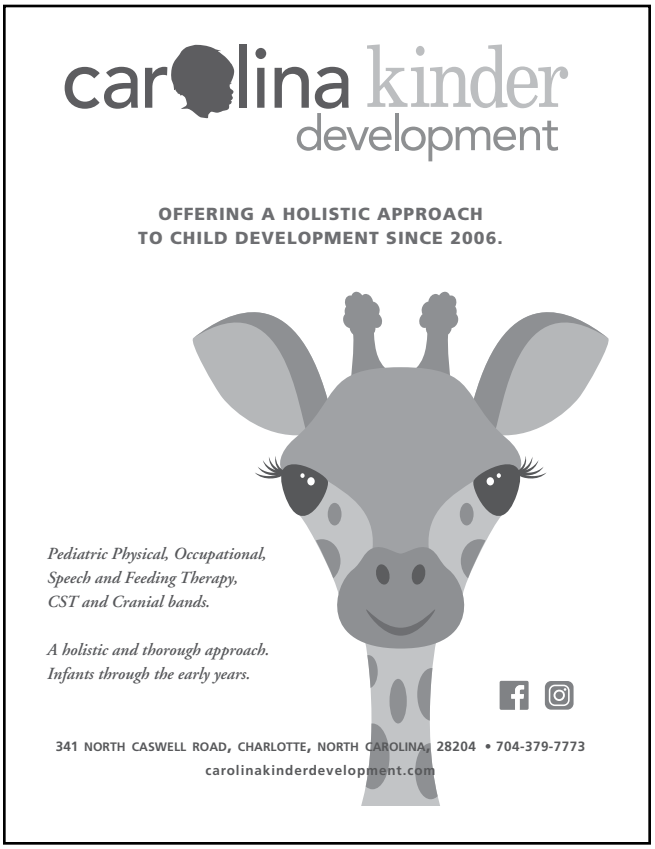
$650 - One Staff Appreciation Meal

If your family has an interest in sponsoring a larger need at the school, reach out to yourshamrockpta@gmail.com to share your ideas. Options in the past have included a meal or treat for staff.

MORE EASY WAYS TO GIVE

- Amazon Smile: Register under "PTA North Carolina Congress Shamrock Garden Elem School PTA," and a percentage of your purchases go towards the school.
- Harris Teeter Together in Education: Link to SGE (code 3961) and begin earning money for the school.
- Boxtops for Education: Download the app and log your receipts to collect.

Keep this website address handy: shamrockpta.org/invest.



The IPH Projection Booth

INDEPENDENT PICTURE HOUSE – OPENING UPDATE

by Brad Ritter

The Independent Picture House is now scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2022. We are about to embark on exciting, new and unprecedented times with our very own community cinema!

We are grateful, and quite frankly inspired, by the community support we have received since we announced our intentions of opening IPH 18 months ago. Through your support, we have raised over $515,000 to help build this non-profit cinema.

While we have made great strides in moving towards the cinema's opening, we still have a way to go to meet our $1.2M fundraising goal. This will cover our build-out and equipment costs, raise enough working capital to cover the first couple of years of operation as well as fund new community focused programming.

If you are a film fan and would like to donate to this community initiative, or if you're just looking for more information about the theater and its progress, visit our website, independentpicturehouse.org.

TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

NCDOT UPDATE

by Tony Lathrop

I represent the Charlotte region (Division 10) on the NC Board of Transportation, which allocates all state funding for state-maintained roads, bridges, ports, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. My role on the board is chair of the Finance Committee, and therefore I am more involved in decisions on funding sources and how it is managed.

Independence Boulevard Improvement—Delays Continue

The Independence Boulevard project continues to be the most significant item in our part of Charlotte on the NCDOT board's agenda.

As I mentioned in the last issue of *The Spirit*, it was scheduled to be upgraded to include managed lanes, grade separations (bridges in place of intersections) and upfitting of feeder roads, called parallel routes. However, across our entire state, costs for road projects have escalated, resulting in insufficient funding for Independence—as well as many other projects.

We are working closely with the City of Charlotte and many stakeholders to create a plan that would separate this project into phases, so that construction on the first part could start in 2026—and preliminary work can begin much sooner than that.

It's good for our neighborhood to know what's coming, even if not for several years.

PLAZA MIDWOOD UPDATE

by Christiine Shiel

Kennon Street is set to get a sidewalk soon, with construction expected to begin early this year. Included in this upgrade will be a much-needed pedestrian crossing signal at Hawthorne and Kennon.

PLAZA MIDWOOD WON AN URBIE!

The City of Charlotte Urban Design Center and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte School of Architecture presented the city's first Urban Design Awards, or "Urbies," to elevate the importance of excellent urban design. The goal of the annual awards program is to recognize and celebrate quality urban design in Charlotte, while encouraging continued community discussion around what makes for unique and great places. Plaza Midwood won Great 10-Minute Neighborhood.

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PLAZA MIDWOOD LIBRARY NEWS & HAPPENINGS

by Lauren Mullins

As the new Adult Services Librarian at Plaza Midwood, I am thrilled to be working in such a lovely neighborhood and can't wait to get to know my neighbors a little better. For me, that means a combination of meeting folks as they come into the library and getting out into the community itself. Let me start by introducing myself.

My name's Lauren Mullins, and I've worked in Georgia public libraries for the last decade, primarily in library management and adult and teen services. One of the greatest joys for me as a librarian is helping people discover all the wonderful services the library offers the community. I often find that even frequent library users are surprised by a few of them. I truly believe the library offers something for everyone, no matter where you are in life.

While Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is currently limited to virtual programming due to COVID, we have high hopes for more in-person programs to resume in the new year. My personal goals include hosting a book club outside of the library walls, expanding our adult programming offerings, representing the Library at neighborhood events, and ensuring more accessibility for seniors.

As we work to resume in-person programming, we'd love to see your faces at our virtual book clubs, learning circles, writing groups, and storytimes. Don't stop there though! We're still wearing masks and social distancing to ensure that we can remain open to our community.

The Plaza Midwood Library doors are open and we're ready to welcome our customers back. Come in and check out books, use the computers, or set up your own laptop on one of our tables. I hope to see you soon!

UPDATES & EVENTS:

Book A Librarian: (Online via Zoom) Mondays at 11 am
Book a 1-hour time slot for a 1-on-1 video call with a librarian! This session is for any general reference needs you may have. We can cover how to get started with your research, tips on using the library's catalog to find books, reader's advisory, and other ways to help you make the most of our library's resources.

Technology Tutors: 1-on-1 Support Sessions – (In-person) Thursdays at 11am & 12 pm
Sign up for a 1-hour individual session with a library staff member to get help with computer basics, job help assistance, Microsoft Office, Internet, email, or other topics. This is an in-person program and will take place indoors at the [branch] library. In adherence with current library policy, face coverings are required for both participants and staff.

Virtual Book Clubs (Online via Zoom):

Tunes 'n Tomes: A Book Club for Musicians & Music Lovers – Monthly on a Tuesday at 6:30 pm.
January Selection: *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan
February Selection: *African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina* by Sarah Bryan

Historical Fiction Addiction Book Club – Monthly on a Thursday at 6:30 pm
December Selection: *Frenchman's Creek* by Daphne du Maurier
January Selection: *The Stationary Shop* by Marjan Kamali

Book Club Crawl – Monthly on a Thursday at 6:30 pm
January Selection: Missing Molly by Natalie Barelli
February Selection: Kindred by Octavia Butler

Plaza Midwood Writing Group – (Online via Zoom) 1st Saturday of each month at 11 am
Learn the art of the literary critique, get direct feedback on your work, and meet other local writers. We focus on workshopping fiction, but also have some free-writing, writing exercises, and discussion.

Pajama Storytime for Families – (Online via Zoom) Tuesdays at 7 pm
Your whole family can enjoy stories, songs, and movement activities that support early literacy skill development and help foster a love of books and reading in your child. PJs and cuddly, stuffed friends are welcome.

YARDS OF THE MONTH — *LOOKING BACK AT 2021*

1925 Thomas Ave, *Michaud Family*

2224 Club Rd, *Susan Evans & Greg Marshall*

2020 Midwood Pl, *Sarah George & Dennis Warfle*

2021 Belvedere Ave, *Zoe Gamble & Paul Engle*

1716 Club Rd, *Stephanie Schank*

1836 Kenwood Ave, *Joyce Ghant*

1631 Logie Ave, *Karen Phillips & Ron Brinson*

1921 Ashland Ave (Alley), *Jeff Blackwell*

1625 Morningside Dr, *Rich Majerus*

1801 Club Rd, *Travis Dove*

1404 Nassau Blvd, *Gervais Family*

EST. 2007
NECTAR
BOUTIQUE FLORIST | WEDDINGS & EVENTS

Yard of the Month is sponsored by ***Nectar*** *Floral Designs. For further details on a yard, or to nominate a yard you admire, please visit plazamidwood.org/projects-initiatives/#yard-of-the-month.*

SANTA CLAUS!

Santa spent a Sunday afternoon in December riding on his golf cart sleigh and visiting children in Plaza Midwood to deliver some Holiday cheer! Thanks to our friend and Villa Heights neighbor Anthony.

Laurie Smithwick, *continued from cover*

"In a large city you shouldn't have to go to a museum or gallery to go see art," she says. "Public art finds you, and you find emotion."

Laurie says her journey to becoming a muralist has been a natural progression, as she embarked on different mediums, from watercolors and monotypes to acrylics.

"I just kept wanting to go bigger, into something without the limits of traditional art," she said. "This journey has been like a rebirth for me."

And as part of that rebirth as an artist, Laurie got the opportunity to make art where she was physically born 52 years earlier: Novant Presbyterian Hospital.

Together with her fellow Brand the Moth META residents, Laurie designed and executed a mural adorning the hospital's employee-level parking deck. Novant, which is launching an initiative to install murals in several facilities, commissioned the piece to inspire clinicians and staff as they begin their shifts—a time when they likely need inspiration the most. Featuring a serene ocean scene with fish evolving into origami boats and cranes, the mural projects a sense of hopeful calm for those hospital workers.

Novant soon tapped Laurie again for a mural across the street at its Charlotte Orthopedic Hospital, where she designed and painted a mural for patients and staff. With Novant's unique aubergine color as a backdrop, Laurie painted whimsical abstract shapes to bring energy to patients and staff as they enter the facility.

As the holidays rolled around, Laurie and fellow META resident Doris Kapner put the finishing touches on a mural that snakes through a massive tunnel at Parkwood Avenue and North Davidson Street, just as the greenway backs up to Cordelia Park. Now adorned in bright yellow, punctuated by colorful shapes and unexpected depictions of animal life, the tunnel is a staggering 100 feet long and 10 feet tall.

Top Left: *The artist at work on the mural at Novant's Charlotte Orthopedic Hospital.*
Top Right: *The completed mural.*

Left: *A collaborative mural that brightens a tunnel at Parkwood Avenue and North Davidson Street where the greenway backs up to Cordelia Park.*

All images courtesy of the artist.

Laurie says the large size and scope of these projects—paired with challenges like painting at night and in cold, rainy weather—have helped her grow bolder as an artist.

"It's fascinating to do something which pushes you to the limits physically when you're at a place where your mind has no limits," Laurie admits. "When anything feels like a slightly scary opportunity, I say yes to it. If it feels scary, it's good for me."

You can also catch Laurie's art on the awning at Betty, Moxie Mercantile owner Michelle Castelloe's latest storefront on Thomas Avenue. "I wanted to make [Betty's awning] feel childlike without feeling childish," Laurie says. "It's still abstract art, but it feels light, buoyant and happy. For the awning, Laurie sought to complement the surrounding colors emanating from neighboring storefronts. "If you stand in front of Betty and turn 360 degrees, there is an amazing amount of color—just this Plaza Midwood rainbow of colors."

These public art projects are the brushstrokes which will, Laurie hopes, help Charlotte make its mark.

"It's art in the wild, when you don't expect it," she said.

Plaza Midwood's Neighborhood Specialist and Real Estate Expert

#1 IN SALES IN PLAZA MIDWOOD IN 2021

Ready to make a move in 2022?

It all comes down to hiring the right real estate agent with a proven track record.

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Selling?

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Thanks to neighbors like you, we sold **65 HOMES** in 2021 totaling **$40 MILLION** almost exclusively in 28205.

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- Gregg and Jo Ellen Hill, 1920 Winter Street

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Top 3 Issues Facing Sellers in 2022

01 How Can I Sell My House, If I Don't Already Have Somewhere To Move?

02 There Are So Many Realtors, How Can I Find One Who Understands What I'm Going Through?

03 How Can I Be Certain I'm Getting The Most Out Of My House?

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NEIGHBORS HELPING EASTWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Eastway Middle School needed donations for its **Season of Giving** event in December—and Plaza Midwood neighbors came through in a big way for the Eastway students.

PM residents donated new items for the event so that students could "shop" for gifts for their families for Christmas, as many did not have the financial means to do so otherwise.

Thank you to all of our neighbors who helped make the holidays a little brighter for these students and their families!

CHARLOTTE MARATHON PARTY

Many Plaza Midwood neighbors turned out on November 13 to cheer on the runners through The Plaza portion of the course.

Many thanks to our Marathon Party Sponsors:

Bird Song Brewing Co., Stirling Group, YAFO Kitchen and The Culture Shop!

FALL CRAWL WRAP—THOUGHTS AND THANKS

By Wes Turner

Covid may be sending another round of hurt our way as 2022 begins, but that was definitely NOT the case back in October (before Omicron was even known).

Fall Crawl 2021 was back after a year's hiatus—and it was all about having fun again!

There was a moment when some 2020 vibes tried to spoil the parade, as Engine 8 received a call for duty 20 minutes before the start of the parade. Fortunately for us, it's not 2020 anymore and Engine 8 returned just in time (with two minutes to spare!) to kick off a magical day.

The day featured some terrific musicians, delicious food, beer and wine, tasty ice cream, a fantastic and diverse vendor village and the very popular bounce houses. It felt like the entire neighborhood was somewhere in or around Midwood Park—all day long.

And it did not stop when Fall Crawl ended. Block parties all around the neighborhood continued well into the night.

It was clear we were ready for time with our neighbors and friends! For me personally, a day like this was the exact reason that I joined the PMNA board. It was the best of the best!

Very Special Thanks to Our Fall Crawl Sponsors!

Platinum:

Bird Song Brewing Co. · The Bohemian A Wine Bar · KEN RIEL BROKER / REALTOR® / DAD

Gold:

Leaf Burrito • Jeff King • Pinhouse

Silver:

Kevin Lewis

Please remember to support these local businesses. They provide phenomenal support for our community events and initiatives.

PMNA HELPS UNDERWRITE EASTWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL GREENHOUSE PROJECT

As part of Eastway Middle School's transition into a leadership magnet, they are committed to providing an array of experiences for students. In addition to a number of STEM courses, they will offer pathways in Earth and Environmental Sciences.

As part of this curriculum, Eastway will offer agricultural science that utilizes hands-on labs through gardening.

Crowder Construction is partnering with Eastway to build greenhouse boxes in the campus courtyard on the amphitheater steps. The greenhouse project extends the planting and growing season to a more year-round time frame, allowing students to reap the benefits of their labor.

Plaza Midwood and PMNA are committed to the success of our neighborhood schools and are delighted to help fund this unique and creative course offering at Eastway Middle with a donation of $2,000—funds raised through Fall Crawl proceeds.

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MIDWOOD GIVES BACK MGB 2021

ANOTHER OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

by Mark Blythe and Renee Dial

Midwood Gives Back had another phenomenal year – one of the most successful ever!

Once again, this neighborhood fundraiser was held online due to continuing COVID concerns. And yet again, everyone stepped up in exceptional fashion—with donations totaling $8,443—exceeding our $8,000 goal! And bringing in close to $2,000 more than the 2020 total.

Way to go, Plaza Midwood! Thanks to your efforts, Second Harvest can now add 59,101 pounds of food to their pantries to be distributed into our community.

A special shout out and thanks goes to the over twenty neighborhood volunteers who helped get the word out by distributing door hangers throughout the neighborhood.

LAND USE UPDATE

by Phillip Gussman, Plaza Midwood Land Use Group

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040 / UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

The effort to sort out and update the city's development ordinances, the legal codes that organize development and building in our city, is well under way.

The Comprehensive Plan 2040 was passed last July. The plan provides the vision and framework for the Unified Development Ordinance that will actually create and codify the rules and laws going forward.

While the PMNA Land Use Group discusses these issues regularly, all of Plaza Midwood, indeed—all citizens of Charlotte (so share this information freely)—deserve a voice in how our city develops and grows for the next twenty years.

The City is still gathering input and comments. I would encourage anyone with an interest to catch up on the best current opportunities to have input. Get the most up to date information on the current stage of the process and opportunities to have input at cltfuture2040.com.

HERE ARE UPDATES ON NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS

Commonwealth, Pecan and Central: We are sure everyone has noticed construction has begun on this major project in our neighborhood. The local developer Crosland Southeast has been working with community groups to try and ensure it isn't just another cookie cutter development, but one that will complement the existing business district.

The project will include retail, restaurants, a boutique hotel, office space and a 383-unit apartment complex, with a handful of current Central Square tenants expected to remain on site.

The first phase of construction, anticipated to be complete in spring 2024, will bring Plaza Midwood's first midrise office building. It will contain more than 150,000 square feet of Class A office space. About 100,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space will surround the office building.

Midwood Corners: Located at The Plaza and Central Avenue, this is a prime location in our business district with lots of changes coming as the new owners begin a redesign that will shift some of the current tenants and push some of them out. One of them, beloved Plaza Midwood business, Book Buyers, will be moving to Eastway Crossing Shopping Center by February.

Morningside and Central: This property with the gas station on the corner is being redeveloped by long-time Charlottean Stephan Latorre whose law firm has been adjacent to the property on Central Avenue for many years. He will be building a three-story office and retail building with a restaurant on the corner.

Segen Food Mart: Permits have been pulled for this property on The Plaza between Morningside and Mecklenburg Avenue for conversion to "The Plaza Ice Cream Shop."

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN HISTORIC HOMES

By Cindy Kochanek

It's that time of year again as we are moving into wintertime and the temperatures are dropping. Do you need to break out your hat and mittens even inside the house?

Or perhaps trying to cool your house over the summer was a big hit to your pocketbook? If you have experienced either extreme, there are many affordable ways to make your historic structure more comfortable and energy efficient.

This isn't to suggest that those historic windows and doors need to go, as that is neither a very affordable option nor a preservation-friendly solution.

Doors and windows are not actually where the major heat loss happens. The biggest heat losses occur through the roof, walls, ducts and fireplaces—at 20 to 40% loss per item.

An energy audit can verify this. Not sure where to start with an energy audit? Energy.gov can help you get started.

Start With Insulation

The best way to combat heat losses is a simple one—insulation. Traditional forms of insulation like the loose fill, rolls or batts are best for historic structures, where most of the loss happens in the attics and floor or crawlspaces.

The spray foam insulation that keeps expanding, sometimes more than it should, can potentially cause damage to surrounding materials. And this process isn't reversible, not a good choice for historic properties.

The one thing to be careful of with historic houses is insulating everything, especially the walls. Historic houses were meant to breathe and adding insulation to the walls may trap moisture and prevent proper air flow.

If this all sounds daunting, consult a contractor familiar with historic structures and proper forms of insulation for them. Proper precautions and safety measures are needed for some forms of insulation.

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Back to Those Windows and Doors

Only about 10 to 15% of your heat loss occurs in either windows or doors. Replacing them means that to recoup your initial cost, you will need retain those items for more than 30 years to start seeing some return on your investment—and some of those replacements will not even last that long.

Vinyl and other new alternative materials will typically render a different appearance than wood and because of different expansion and contraction rates between the new material and the surrounding wood framing, they have the potential to cause damage.

Old growth wood in historic windows lasts much longer than new growth wood used in new wood windows.

Simpler and more cost-effective solutions for windows and doors include weatherstripping, adding storm windows and doors, and minor repairs, such as replacing or installing sash locks, frame repair, caulking and putty replacement.

Storm windows are available for either the interior or exterior of windows. In conjunction with existing historic windows, they are just as—or even more efficient—than a replacement window. The return on investment for storm windows is much closer to five years. And dollar for dollar, even less time is needed to recoup the amount spent on weatherstripping and other minor repairs.

Other Energy Saves

Another way to help is one many folks don't think about. Landscaping provides a passive addition to your energy efficiency plan. Those large old growth trees that we are all so fond of in Charlotte will help. They provide shade in the summer and when they drop their leaves in the fall, they let the sunlight through to provide warmth in the winter.

What About Solar?

Now that we are on the topic of sunlight, did you know that solar panels have now been approved in historic districts? We will cover solar panels and other forms of alternative energy in the spring newsletter.

Feel free to contact HDC staff if you have any questions on specifics relating to energy efficiency or any other questions or concerns regarding the Plaza Midwood Local Historic District.

HDC staff can be reached at charlottehdc@charlottenc.gov. Check out our social media posts on Facebook and Instagram @cltplanning.

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COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

by Christine Sheil

OUR FRIENDS THE TREES

When my daughter was in kindergarten, the class did a unit on trees. The students learned how trees provide shade and food and oxygen for us to breathe, not to mention habitat for wildlife. By the end of the unit all the parents were sick of hearing about trees (This, of course, was during virtual learning).

But have you ever thought about how *truly vital* trees are to our lives?

Trees offer some major public health benefits. The mere presence of trees and green space is associated with an increased sense of well-being and a more active populace. Trees also improve air quality by removing a lot of the dust, smoke, and ozone that pollutes the air we breathe—and the larger, more mature trees do an exponentially better job at removing pollution from the air than smaller, younger trees.

Also, trees are literally cool.

Have you heard of the urban heat effect? Cities are quite a bit hotter than the surrounding countryside, but urban areas with trees are up to ten degrees cooler than treeless ones. Speaking of cooling, properly placed trees can reduce your cooling expenses in the summertime.

Placing trees along the east and west sides of your property can shade your home and keep it cool in summer. Ensuring that these trees are deciduous lets the warmth of the sun reach your home in the cooler winter months.

Trees also play an essential role in combatting climate change. They store and use up carbon dioxide during photosynthesis, reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Another public service that trees provide is in stormwater management.

As Charlotte sees more and more development, the increase in impervious surfaces means that there is less soil to absorb rainfall. The rainwater has no choice but to flow into the streets towards the storm drains. The rush of water can overwhelm our storm drains, leading to flooding.

Trees help to mitigate this issue by slowing the flow of water. The leaves and branches catch some of the rain, which then either evaporates back into the air or slowly drips down to the ground.

And trees are great for the community.

Trees muffle noise from nearby busy roads and highways. Neighborhoods that have more trees tend to have less crime, a greater sense of community and neighborliness, higher property values, and more walkable streets. Thanks, trees!

Plaza Midwood has a vibrant tree canopy.

There are lots of large, mature trees—the exact type of tree that provides the most benefit—and because our trees are so wonderful, it is worth putting in a bit of extra effort to keep them healthy and long-lived.

Do your tree a favor and make a habit of noticing it. Throughout the year, notice the leaves: is the color right for the season? Are the leaves the right size?

Notice the branches: is there any dieback or sign of disease? And what about the trunk? Is the bark healthy? Are there mushrooms growing at its base?

By making a habit of checking in with your tree regularly, you'll get to really know it and will be able to spot early signs of disease or ill health. If that sounds like too much, just take some time once a year to inspect your tree thoroughly. If anything seems concerning, have a certified arborist come by to take a look.

Another way to care for your tree is to ensure that the soil is healthy. Mulching with organic matter will help to retain moisture and return nutrients to the soil. Just make sure not to pile mulch on the trunk itself. Mulch also helps to suppress the growth of other plants that can compete with the tree for nutrients.

Certain plants aren't compatible with optimal tree health. Lawn grasses, for instance, need a totally different type of soil than most trees. Designate a small space around your tree as a grass-free zone.

English ivy often grows up the trunks of trees, but this can actually do more harm than good. For one thing, it makes it difficult to see decay and other signs of disease on the trunk and branches. Ivy (and other vines for that matter) can trap moisture around the root crown, creating an inviting environment for fungal disease to take root (no pun intended!). And when those vines reach into the treetop, it disrupts the tree's energy production. So keep your trees ivy-free.

If you're planning to plant a tree, consider a larger shade tree, such as an oak, maple or elm. And give the tree room to grow—not too close to pavement or buildings. And

please don't place large trees under utility wires. We've all seen what happens when the utility "prunes" the trees—so often creating that hideous "shelf" effect around the lines.

Trees Charlotte, the NC Urban Forest Council, and Charlotte's Urban Forest Master Plan all have information online on the benefits of trees, tree care (including finding a certified arborist), and choosing the right tree.

Preserving and growing our canopy is the best thing we can do for ourselves, our neighbors, and future generations.

Would you like to learn more about your trees and contribute to a UNCC research project? If you have trees on your property and are interested in being a part of this study, here's more info:

UNC CHARLOTTE TREE STUDY

Dr. Sara A. Gagné (sgagne@uncc.edu) and Michael Haulk (mhaulk1@uncc.edu)

Our new study aims to assess the benefits and disadvantages of trees in Charlotte's oldest neighborhoods. In order to maintain and enhance the city's tree resource, we need a better understanding of the species of trees and their size, structure, and health on private property. If you are interested in having the trees on your property identified and assessed, sign-up using this form: https://forms.gle/Sxbvfp9V8nJ7LT7p7. One-time visits are planned for next spring or summer and all data will be shared with participants. You can find out more about our project here: shorturl.at/imszK.

Join us in the community garden in Midwood Park on the third Saturday of each month between 9 and noon. The more volunteers we have, the earlier we get done. Children and youth are welcome!

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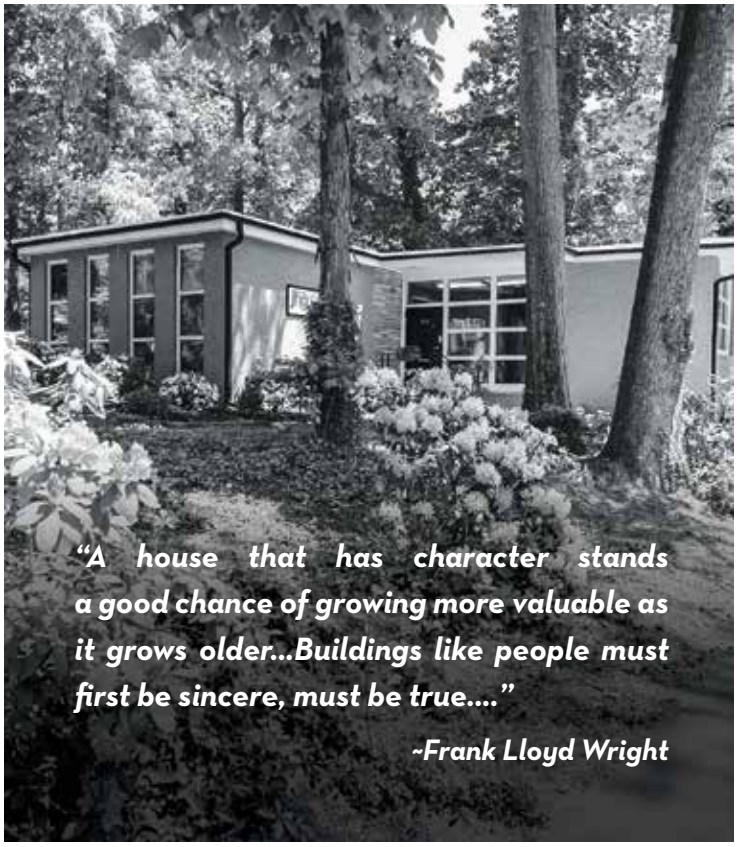

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FAITH COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Though weekly worship continues to change with health recommendations and mandates, our faith leaders continue to provide leadership and guidance during these challenging times, adapting their services and offerings to comply with COVID guidelines.

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
1900 The Plaza

- **Weekly Calendar:**
  - **Sunday School for Adults:** 9:30 am.
  - **Sunday School/Choir for Children:** 10 am.
  - **Sunday Worship Service:** 11 am. Indoors. Mask required.
  - **Ash Wednesday Service:** Wednesday, March 2. 7 pm.

For more information on any Holy Trinity event or program or other ministry opportunities, visit the website at www.htlccharlotte.org or call the church at 704.334.7348.

MIDWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH
2029 Mecklenburg Avenue

- **Weekly Calendar:**
  - **Bible Study:** 9:45 am. For all ages.
  - **Worship Services:** 11 am. Every week.

    If you aren't ready to worship in person, services will continue to be available on Facebook Live @MidwoodBaptist.
- **Easter Events:**
  - **Palm Sunday Celebration:** April 12. 11 am. In the Sanctuary. Community Lord's Supper Communion Service.
  - **Easter Sunrise Services:** Sunday, April 17. 7:30 am. Plaza Midwood Community Park.
  - **Easter Sunday Celebration:** Sunday, April 17. 11 am. In the Sanctuary.
- **Parents' Day Out Ministry for Plaza Midwood**. Midwood Baptist is offering this ministry to provide a safe, nurturing place for preschoolers to grow spiritually, physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially—focusing on developmental and age-appropriate activities, while providing a spiritual foundation. References available on request.

  Schedule is Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday, 9 am to 1 pm. Choose some or all. Registration forms are available on the church website under the Children's tab.

  For any other information, email Cheryl Baldwin—midwoodpreschool@gmail.com.

  2022 Summer Session registration will be open soon. Choose from a one- or two-day a week option; 8 week session.

For more information on any Midwood Baptist event or program, visit the church website at www.midwoodbaptist.org or call 704.376.8944.

MOSAIC CHURCH – 1817 Central Avenue

Mosaic exists to be a community reflecting the diversity of our community, including differing cultures, ethnicities, generations, socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. Contemporary casual services

- **Join in person** at 6:30 pm on the second Sunday of each month.
- **Or tune in live** every Sunday morning at MosaicCLT.online.church.

For current information visit the church website, mosaicchurch.tv or reach out to Campus Pastor Kristin Young at kristin@mosaicchurch.tv.

PLAZA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
2304 The Plaza

- **Weekly Calendar:** No current in-person worship service or other meetings.
- **The Weekday School is open.**

For information on any Plaza Presbyterian event or program, visit the church website at www.plazapresbyterian.org or call the church office, 704.376.8594; or email plazapres@gmail.com.

THE VINE, A United Methodist Faith Community
2101 Belvedere Avenue

- **Weekly Calendar:**
  - **Sunday Worship:** 10 am. In person and online. ALL are welcome. Intergenerational congregation – a great mix of ages and stages.
  - **Ash Wednesday:** March 2. Several opportunities during the day to receive ashes.
  - **Lent:** March 2 – April 10. Focus on Lament. Connect to The Vine to engage in a practice of Lament.

Please reach out to Pastor Susan at susan@thevinecharlotte.com with any needs.

For more information on The Vine, visit the website at TheVineCharlotte.com or call the church at 704.334.7348, ext. 202.

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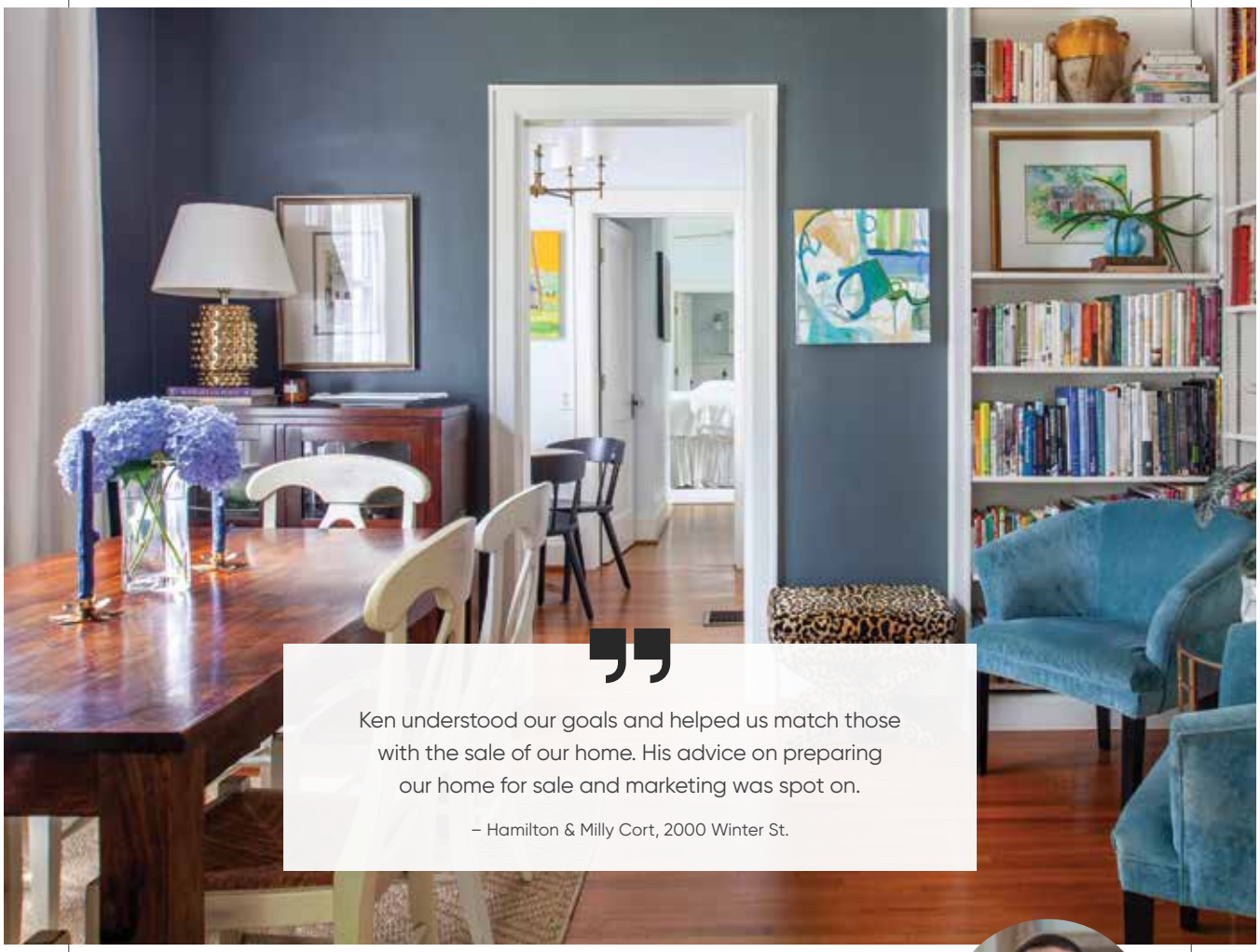

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– Hamilton & Milly Cort, 2000 Winter St.

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TO POSTMASTER: Contains time-sensitive information — Please deliver by Jan 27, 2022

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