Evergreen Neighborhood: It Happened In The 40's

by Karen C. Lytle

The Evergreen Neighborhood Association formed late last winter. Located south of A Ave., with boundaries from Second to Tenth Streets, Evergreen has a kind of fraternal relationship to the First Addition Neighborhood across A Avenue to the north. There are some similarities, and some differences.

It wasn't so much the threat of commercial and multi-family development that prompted the Evergreen area to unite, although there was an element of that too.

Mostly the Evergreen Neighborhood Association came into being to contribute to the city's comprehensive plan (now in the works). Residents want to see their area remain as it is now.

There has been some business development which "crept up," said Carol Radich, association chairman, and that's one reason the group wanted to get input into the comprehensive plan. Carol takes a dim view of development that forces old-timers out of their homes.

The mingling of age groups is a common thread between the Evergreen area and the First Addition across the way. The young Radichs have made their home in the area about nine years. They like it and plan to stay. When they moved, it was from one neighborhood dwelling to another.

The Evergreen area is also convenient to banks, schools, shopping, a variety of services. "I don't have to drive my kids anywhere," Carol noted.

A neat, quiet and for the most part settled neighborhood, Carol doesn't really view the area as a group of closely knit people. However, the recent formation of the association now provides opportunities for the residents to get to know one another.

Previously, the only central meeting occasion had been the area's easement to the lake, Lakewood Bay Community Club.

That easement Louise Hoyt labels "one of the best in town!"

Louise and Robert Hoyt have been long-time residents, buying a lot and then building a house on Evergreen Road itself in the spring of 1942. Evergreen was one of the first developed streets in the area at a time when "solid woods" occupied the site where Our Lady of the Lake now stands, with forest also between Evergreen and the lake. Although the Roman Catholic school was not entirely welcomed by all, residents now view it as a protection against potential development, and a place for children to play in the absence of a park.

When the Hoyts chose their dwelling place, the street was called First Avenue. That led to confusion between First Street and First Avenue, and workmen had a hard time finding the place.

So Louise circulated a petition for a street name change, but wasn't too crazy about a city council proposal for the tag, "Burma Road," indicative of the then-recent World War II. So, reported Louise, city council said, "YOU come up with a name."

Evergreen was the brainstorm of Robert as the couple passed by the Hamrick-Evergreen Theater in Portland.

Carol expressed some sur- a house in the thirties,") Louise remembers when a price tag of $7,500 was disparaged as "overpriced."

Most of the homes were built in the 1940's. "After the war is when it all happened," Louise said. Many of the Evergreen Road residents have lived there about 30 years; on other streets residents logging 10 years there is not uncommon.

There are six vacant lots now in the area, Carol noted, but most are owned by people who live on adjacent property.

When Louise and Robert decide to retire, they plan to stay on in the home they built 34 years ago. And, said Louise, their oldest daughter has her eye on the house, continuing the family homestead.

Louise is very pleased about the recently formed neighborhood group. "The thing that thrills me," she said, "is that the younger people have really gone all out - and they're the busiest."

WELL KEPT yards characterize Evergreen neighborhood. Carol Radich pauses with spade in island garden area. -Review photo 621b

EVERGREEN residents Louise Hoyt, left, who has seen area develop since the forties, and Carol Radich, a relative newcomer of nine years, chat at entry to courtyard at Radich home. - Review photo 621s

SETTLED AND QUIET Evergreen area neighborhood has not been immune to rezoning on borders of residential area. Residents like their single-family area, and want it to stay that way. -Review photo