

Commentary

To have good neighbors, be a good neighbor

BY RYAN POLIAKOFF

Sept. 28 is the 39th anniversary of National Good Neighbor Day, the day to recognize and appreciate your good neighbors.

When people live side by side, disputes are inevitable. Almost anything can become a nuisance — smells (cooking, garbage, animal waste), sounds (loud radios or televisions, garage bands, construction) and sights (overgrown lawns, dilapidated roofs or even offensive messages) intrude into the careful

The vast majority of people want to avoid conflict, not create it.

balance of tranquility we aim for in our own households.

Here are the five most important things that anyone can do to be a good neighbor:

1. Work out problems face to face. In our world of e-mail and

Twitter, we've become disassociated from communicating with people in person. Sometimes, all that's required to handle a disagreement between neighbors is a friendly, face-to-face chat. Most of us are quite embarrassed to find that our late-night Letterman marathons are keeping our neighbor from falling asleep, and we're happy to make adjustments. The vast majority of people want to avoid conflict, not create it, so approaching your neighbor in a non-confrontational way is often the best solution.

2. Respect your neighbor's heritage. Today our neighbors are likely to be from all walks of life, with different backgrounds, habits and tastes. It's important in the modern American community for us to remember that different cultures are not wrong, they're just different. Instead of getting annoyed, why not open yourself to new experiences? Often, you'll find that your neighbor is happy to share their heritage with you.

3. Get involved in your community. It takes a village to run a community, and part of being a good neighbor is offering to pitch in however you can.

4. Hug a board member. Most board members are fine-meaning community volunteers who are offering many hours of their time for the good of their neighborhood. But serving on the board of directors of a condo, co-op or HOA, for example, is a sometimes brutal, thankless job.

5. Be the neighbor they can count on. Most people have to balance work, family, pets and other commitments, all while hoping for just a few moments of leisure. So when you offer to do favors for your neighbors, that help is almost always repaid in full. Do you and your neighbor both own dogs? Mention that, if there were ever an emergency, you'd be happy to walk them. Both have kids in the same school? Offer to take them to the bus stop one morning, or to let them play at your house after the day is out. In addition to simply feeling good about yourself, you'll be building a bank of goodwill that can be cashed in if your own emergency ever requires a neighbor's help. So you know that neighbor that everyone can count on? Be that person — because eventually, everyone needs a helping hand.

RYAN POLIAKOFF is the co-author of "New Neighborhoods: The Consumer's Guide to Condominium, Co-Op and HOA Living," and Vice President of The Ocean Palms Association, Inc.



Reasons for marching on Washington

To the editor:

More important than the attendance at The 9-12-09 Tax Payers March on Washington, D.C., were our reasons for participating and the convictions with which we returned. Three busloads from northeast Indiana marched up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol. Many stood for most of the all-day event. People of all ages, occupations, and backgrounds represented all 50 states. None were strangers; we were one as we sang "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America!"

Why we marched — "Freedom is our God-given right," "Big government is taking away our freedom," "Stop the out-of-control spending," "Rid our government of corruption." Spoken most often — "We, the people" and "government of the people, by the people, and for the

people." Almost everyone wanted health care reform, but not the government plan as written in HR3200.

There were no confrontations or arrests. People were friendly, kind, polite and helpful. The homemade protest signs revealed the deep passion, ingenuity, creativity and concern of the marchers. Many had humorous messages. Reading the signs was a like moving museum of folk art literature. American ingenuity on parade!

Discussions with Congressmen Mark Souder and Mike Pence revealed Congress adjourned early the day before the march so legislators could get out of town to avoid facing their constituents. An obvious attempt at disruption occurred when some community organizers held an event at the same time as our march. Members of our group witnessed these organizers instructing people on how to scam the government and "get the most out of them." There we were — protesting for fewer taxes. There they

were — plotting how to get more taxes!

Some of us were taught that you just don't discuss politics and religion. Yet, discussing politics and religion resulted in the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War, and The Constitution, and "one nation, under God." If America is to be renewed, it's up to us to begin the dialogue now!

Pray for America. Read our founding fathers' words. Know the Constitution. Use every available source — talk radio, TV (especially FOX News), books, Internet, discussion groups, etc. — to get educated. Track voting records. Learn about candidates, by asking them where they stand on issues. In short — become a political snoop!

Get first-hand reactions from Noble 912 members who marched as Proud Hoosier Patriots. Meetings are on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Check the Web site at noble912.com for meet-up locations.

Carol Hart
Kendallville

Letters to The Editor

Kids 'face up' to all kinds of facts

Natalie, 6, told her daddy one evening, "I like my name, but when I look in the mirror, I don't see a Natalie." Daddy



GRACE HOUSHOLDER

Kendallville

Bree McComb, 4, told her mother, Lori, "I am going to be a doctor." Her mother replied, "You will have to go to IU if you want to be a doctor." (Bree's family is composed of Purdue fans.) A couple weeks later Bree asked her mother, "If I'm a babysitter will I have to go to IU?" — Amy Barker (great-grandmother) of Kendallville

Riley, 8, lives in Fort Wayne. One day this summer was visiting her great-grandmother, Barb. While on the patio Riley saw the neighbors' clothesline and asked, "Grandma, what is

that?" Barb explained, "That's where they hang their clothes." Riley asked, "That's their closet?" — Barb Davis of Kendallville

Max, 6, has a loose tooth in front. He proudly opened his mouth wide to show his grandmother, Sandi, saying that when it fell out he would place the tooth under his pillow and the Tooth Fairy would bring him some money. Sandi told him the Tooth Fairy only comes if the child has been very good, both at home and at school. After pondering this for a moment, Max asked, "Are Santa Claus and the Tooth Fairy cousins, Nana?" — Sandi Pound of Florida

It seemed like it had rained all over the state, except in Irma's neighborhood. Isaiah, 4, really wanted it to rain. So when he said his prayers he said, "And God can you drop some rain because we didn't get any last time." Then he said, "You know what God said, Mom? God said, 'Oh sure I can! Come on Thunder, we've got a job to do!'" — Irma Cisneros (mother of Isaiah) of Arizona

Sandra and her family were driving down the highway playing a game called "Slugbug" (the first



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

"I snapped my daughter, Lizzie Buchs, just as she opened the windows in her log cabin play house," writes Jenny Buchs of Waterloo.

person to see a Volkswagen gets to slug another person on the arm but not hard). Ian, 3, hollered "Slugbug." They looked around but didn't see any cars. He did this again so they asked him where was the car? He pointed to the dead bugs that were smashed on the windshield. — Sandra Walker (grandmother of Ian) of Nevada

Thank you to everyone who contributes stories. It's especially good to hear from area residents. If you have a story to share please don't put it off... call today or e-mail me. The number is 347-0738; e-mail is graceh@kpcnews.net. Or send it to 816 Mott St.,



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

"This photo was taken one our granddaughter's first fast boat ride on Lake Gage — did she ever love it!" writes Steve Post of Auburn. If you have a photo you'd like to enter in the KPC photo contest (and for possible use on this page) e-mail it to photocontest@kpcnews.net. Visit kpcnews.net/photocontest for contest details. Photos must be submitted by e-mail. No prints, please.

Kendallville, IN 46755. Thank you in advance!

GRACE HOUSHOLDER is a columnist and editorial writer for this newspaper. Contact her at graceh@kpcnews.net.

Avilla Town Council drops the economic ball

On a night when the Avilla Town Council voted in new stringent regulations for burn barrels and recreational fires, the town's fathers also nearly doused the best economic development opportunity to come to northeastern Indiana in years.

Region III-A Economic Development Corp. has proposed the construction of a \$2.8 million business incubator on land near the intersection of S.R. 8 and S.R. 3 in Avilla.

The business incubator's sole purpose would be to attract entrepreneurs to the area. The entrepreneurs would have access to in-house manufacturing facilities and would be able to confer with other entrepreneurs as they attempt to turn their own visions into reality.

When these entrepreneurs have enough momentum, they would leave the incubator and move into their own production sites.

Basically, the incubator would turn a match-sized flame of an idea into a manufacturing bonfire.

Two similar incubators are alive

and doing well in Fort Wayne.

With an emphasis on green technologies, the center proposed by Region III-A would be on the cutting edge.

Avilla. On the cutting edge.

The project would benefit all of northeastern Indiana. But Avilla stands to gain the most with the building to be constructed right on its front porch.

But when Region III-A went before the Avilla Town Council on Wednesday, asking for \$100,000 over three years to help fund construction of the project, the Town Council majority inexplicably couldn't muster the vision to make it a reality.

Instead, the council tabled the decision. Talk about pouring water on what should have been a celebration.

Council president Paul Shepherd spoke in favor of putting up the funds. He said that with the economy being so tough right now, the town should do something about it. He spoke about the potential of having the latest technology coming out of Avilla.

But his sound arguments weren't enough to sway the council's other two members.

The dissenters wanted guarantees. Guarantees that the new center wouldn't sit empty. Guarantees the businesses which come from the incubator would locate locally when they were big enough to be on their own.

Guarantees? There are no guarantees when it comes to economic development.

But consider the facts: Region III-A was asking for \$40,000 in 2010, and \$30,000 in both 2011 and 2012. The monies would come from the town's County Economic Income Tax (CEDIT) fund.

According to town officials, as of Wednesday the CEDIT fund had \$447,198 in it. The fund has been

bringing in approximately \$7,000 per month in tax revenues.

Even if the town were to pledge \$40,000 for 2010, the fund would still grow by approximately \$34,000 in 2010.

The whole purpose of the CEDIT fund is for economic growth. There are no other projects vying for the town's money at this time. If the town fathers can't muster support for a \$100,000 investment and get a \$2.8 million building in return, then maybe there won't be any projects in the near future.

Avilla has always been a forward-thinking community. The town's population has grown faster than any other in Noble County over the last few years, and the community still managed to keep a small-town feel that makes it attractive to many.

When the issue comes up again, northeastern Indiana residents — and those residents of Avilla — can only hope the Town Council in Avilla will unanimously pass a measure pledging the money requested by Region III-A.

At risk is more than just the \$2.8 million project, but also the town's

reputation as being progressive.

It is unlikely an economic growth opportunity such as this will happen again anytime soon.

The worst-case scenario is that Avilla would be out \$100,000 over a three-year period if the business incubator would fail. During that same time span, the CEDIT fund would grow by \$142,000 — even with the loss.

The upside is practically limitless. Avilla. On the cutting edge.

The project hinges on getting a \$2.1 million federal grant. Word on whether or not the town receives the grant should come as early as the first of next week.

Those who want to see this area rebound from its economic malaise should be crossing their fingers that the grant is approved.

Then all eyes will be on the Avilla Town Council.

Will the town fathers pony up their share? Or will they douse their community's potential?

MATT GETTS is editor of The News Sun. He can be reached by e-mail at mattg@kpcnews.net.