

# T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

*Appendix A*

## Diverse East Campus requires constructive approach to problems

By Paul Wallace

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Don't turn the East Campus area into a slum. I became aware of our potential problem while attending an East Campus Neighborhood Association (ECNA) spring social graciously hosted by Betty Wilson. Weather, food and socializing provided an idyllic setting. Adults, children, a reporter, and our local contact police officers mingled in a bonding manner.

Our "paradise" had one unpleasant disruption. An individual dressed in a dark blue suit and bow tie contrasted with everyone else in casual clothes. He also contrasted in mood. He explained himself as representing landlords complaining against our neighborhood association and our leadership. I tried to calm his aggressive rant by asking that he take a calm, consensual approach. He isn't a member of our association, nor do I know if he lives in our area. We do have landlords in our association, including Betsy Peters, the city council representative our ward.

ECNA, probably Columbia's first neighborhood association, has "governed" this area along with the city council and its many committees. We have provided "adult" supervision to a reasonable degree. An earlier compromise with landlords allowed a focus on student housing dividing houses into many units with Ann Street as a dividing line from owner-occupied housing. That only partially works as limited student-occupied housing works its way into the so-called owner occupied area. Houses with rental units were "grandfathered" into the agreement, so students have been living in the owner-occupied houses. But the regulation limiting the number of unrelated occupants in any one house limits the student ingress, preserves the neighborhood and conditions the responsible behavior of the students. It should be emphasized that owner occupied homes also exist in the so-called student area. No compromise is perfect, as competing interests are accommodated. But that is **better than civic warfare and slum creation.**

Thus, segregation doesn't work in our local situation, as it doesn't in housing generally or in human relations. What should work is a non-conflict approach. It is a misreading of our legal system that we must have an adversary relationship — prosecutors and

defense. Our court system would collapse without plea-bargaining and, most desirable, mediation services. We now work within such a system, which is institutionalized through our neighborhood organizations and city institutions.

ECNA is one of several neighborhood associations in Columbia. We collect dues and engage in activities benefitting the area and Columbia. Everyone living in our area is free to join, elect our officers and participate in our email LISTSERVE. We have just finished a periodic clean-up of trash in our area and continue to work together in coping with invasive plants threatening our lovely yards and trees. We cooperate with the police in maintaining a safe and peaceful living environment. I personally headed an ECNA committee that purchased 1.2 acres adjoining then Rockhill (now Wilson) Park that became available after the purchase of a home, but without the adjoining land. We donated it to the city's Community Trust so that the land could be part of this wonderful natural park and available to everyone.

ECNA does discuss issues that legitimately relate to different interests. But, we don't appreciate terror tactics. I use that term advisedly as I continue to teach a course at MU that I began in 1993: "Terrorism and Conflict Resolution." My course tries to understand root causes and terrorism tactics. I also focus on Gandhian-type non-violent approaches. Bullying as in the example of the intruder into our Sunday afternoon picnic isn't appreciated. Rational discussion conducted in a calm manner is essential to identifying problems and engaging in a fruitful process. Differences between outside landlords and tenants and the owner-occupiers will continue. Governance in our local setting should be addressing real issues in a non-violent, non-bullying, accommodating manner.

Issues from the owner-occupier side include: landlords overcharging their student tenants, performing proper maintenance of their dwellings, providing adequate parking, supervising the trash disposal outside their buildings and seeing to the proper maintenance of their sewer systems. In brief, there is the fear of turning lovely old homes into slum warrens. ECNA is open to the concerns of all who live among us.

Paul Wallace lives on Taylor Street in the East Campus area.

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