

# ***THE BROOKDALE BUGLE***

**January 21, 2001**

**The *Brookdale Bugle* is a publication of the Brookdale Citizens' Association.**

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **Happy New Year!**

Since September, as you know, the Executive team has been working toward a number of improvements within Brookdale, Brookdale Park being prominent among them. We also have been busy with ongoing development, as well as safety and community development issues.

### **Brookdale Park**

On October 11, 45 people came to discuss their preferences for Brookdale Park. Three Montgomery County Parks and Planning staff Brent Connor (Park Manager, Southern Region), Lynn Witt (Play Equipment Safety Engineer), and Kathy Dearstine (Landscape Architect) brought their expertise. Prior to the meeting Connor had provided some new benches and picnic tables. In the course of discussing playground equipment, we learned that the county budget (\$400,000 per year) is quite inadequate for the 300 parks. [In November 2000, I wrote to Michael Subin, then Chair of the Montgomery County Council, requesting an increased budget for all parks and drawing attention to our park's specific needs having been somewhat neglected in not having full county park status.]

The community by this meeting notified the Department that it would like to have the play equipment renovated. We also requested two new pieces of equipment one appropriate for kids 0-5 years old, the other for kids 5-10 years old. Michelle Eskinazi was appointed to be community liaison to Lynn Witt concerning the current circular slide. They have met with the company representative and will be coming to some

agreement before Spring.

The citizens requested a wooden split rail fence about 3 feet high be placed along both sides of Dalton Road. The fence was installed the first week of January. We also requested flagstones be placed by the benches in the playground to prevent muddy ruts. These will be placed when the ground thaws. In response to our request for new trees, 12 trees (3 maple, 3 cherry dogwood, 3 cork, and 3 elm) were planted in late December. Our request for a water fountain has been sent forward to the Capital Improvements Program and will be considered in their 6-year budget. Concrete removal from the site and a connecting sidewalk will be scheduled once the weather is better.

The staff suggested several improvements that residents liked: a small chain-link fence to prevent basketballs from rolling down hill off the court, a covered bulletin board (now under construction), and signage indicating the park is closed at dusk and appropriate dog behavior. A new pole will be installed to resurrect the now defunct volleyball court. Lynn Sheridan announced she has retained the Brookdale horse shoes and stakes for the last 25 years, if anyone wants to play. Residents present rejected the offer of a wood gazebo for the park.

### **Street Trees Update**

In October, I sent a request for 9 new street trees within Brookdale to the County's Division of Highway Services. The planting of the trees is tentatively scheduled for Spring, contingent upon receipt of sufficient budget. Within 6 weeks we should know for certain.

### **Streets & Parking**

Meanwhile, at the request of several residents, I approached the Department of Traffic & Parking Services about striping pedestrian crosswalks on Western Avenue and on River Road; checking the intersection of Cortland and Westport for obstruction of view, parking restrictions, and signage; and checking the intersection of Dalton and Westport for child-pedestrian safety considerations. Please let your area liaison representative, Vice President, or me know if you have other similar concerns.

## **GEICO Houses**

On December 4, I met with Steve Martz, Assistant Vice President, Real Estate and Facilities Management, GEICO, to discuss GEICO's development plans and the condition and sales of GEICO-owned property within Brookdale. GEICO currently owns 12 houses and three empty lots in Brookdale, down from 21 some years ago. Starting in December, new leases on their houses contain restrictions on parking on lawns and other "un-neighborly" acts, and specify the upkeep of the lawns and plantings expected. Mr. Martz shared his priorities in selling future properties and asked for neighbors' feedback on some ideas. Meetings with the near neighbors have provided that feedback.

## **Development:**

**HECHT's:** On December 18, I testified to the Planning Board on Hecht's Project Plan Amendment for their development site. They were asking for approval for a number of changes and worked extensively with the community to inform us of their ideas and to take suggestions into account. While it is dangerous to summarize such massive building changes, let me try. There will be no hotel, more rental apartments, fewer stores, more office space, and fewer parking spaces.

Even those who wish to reduce traffic (almost everyone) disagree on whether more parking produces more traffic. Most discussion centered on getting the numbers and types of trees designated in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan into this plan. Brookdale used this hearing as an opportunity to point out any feature of the development that could potentially be of concern to residents. The extensive comments are listed in outline form on the website. I expect to use these at the site plan stage (in approximately March or April), so please contact me or any of the Vice Presidents with your ideas or concerns after you have read the list.

**GEICO:** The New Year was off to a fast start with our first development issue hearing on January 4. GEICO asked for an extension of three years on their Preliminary Plan (to accomplish what they had originally said they would develop by June 13, 2002). While we were not opposed in principle to the extension, it was an opportunity, or so we thought, to ask for something in exchange namely, a more speedy schedule of

selling of GEICO-owned houses than the postponement would mean. Everything was going fine on this until the Planning Board lawyer informed all of us that the deadlines for sales were established by the County Council's action and, therefore, the Planning Board could not affect the scheduling. See the website for that testimony (given orally by Dave Montgomery).

*Gwen Lewis*

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***The Executive Team welcomes your suggestions for topics we should address and your initiatives to promote a stronger community in Brookdale.***

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## **ASSOCIATION UPDATE**

### **New Area Liaison Representatives: (a.k.a. Block Captains)**

4500 block Dalton: *Allison Fultz*

4600-5000 Dalton: *Ashley Olters*

Willard and 4726, 4732 Merivale: *Diane Shea*

**Treasurer's Report:** Andy Colyer reports that the Brookdale Association's assets on January 11, 2001, were \$6,334.32

**Parking:** Please observe parking restrictions indicated. Many of our streets are too narrow for parking on both sides and the passage of emergency vehicles. Thus, some streets do not allow parking on one side. In addition, Montgomery County law requires leaving 30 ft. to a stop sign, 35 ft. to a corner without a stop, and 15 ft. to a fire hydrant. For the safety of others, please observe these distances. With the

institution of parking permits on some streets we anticipate ticketing of illegally parked cars by the County.

**Permit Parking:** Several blocks in the Brookdale have begun the process of implementing permit parking to cope with concerns over an increase in outsiders parking in Brookdale. This action for individual blocks is necessary following the Association's gaining County approval to allow permit parking on a block-by-block basis. In a block where the restriction applies, a vehicle without a permit will be ticketed if it parks on the street during defined hours Monday Friday. Residents will determine the restricted hours, such as 9-5 (or 6) pm. (Of course, this does not affect driveway parking). If your car has a permit, it may be parked on the street at any time.

The *Bugle* repeated some [info available here](#). [dead link removed]

## **School News**

*Nancy Weigand*

The BCC cluster schools have many activities planned for the remainder of the school year. The Westbrook Elementary School PTA will hold a Casino Night on February 3, 2001, at the Westmoreland Congregational Church. They will host an International Night in April and the popular Westbrook Carnival will be held May 4.

The Westland Middle School PTA will hold Spring Dinners. These parties are hosted by Westland families for other Westland families and are relaxing and fun. The school will hold the annual Talent Show on February 2 at 7:00 pm. Girls and boys basketball games will be held throughout the Winter. Westland Parent Information Night will be held on February 8 at Westland at 7:00 pm.

BCC High School will hold auditions for the Spring Musical on January 30. Many sporting events will take place this Winter and Spring. Exams will take place the week of January 23-26. BCC Parent Information Night will be held January 31 at 7:00 pm. The deadline for ordering memorial bricks for the interior courtyard on the renovated campus is February 1. They can be purchased for \$50. For more

information, call the school.

### **Volunteer Tutors Wanted**

Westland Middle School, located on Massachusetts Avenue near Little Falls Parkway, is looking for volunteers to tutor students in writing, math, and computer skills. Both long-term and short-term tutors are needed for any time of day and after school. If you think you might be interested, please contact Nancy Wolfe.

<b>School Calendar</b>	
Jan 29	Professional Day: No school
Feb 7	Early release day
Feb 19	Holiday
Mar 20	Early release day
Apr 3-4	Early release days
Apr 9-16	Spring Break
May 22	Early release day
May 28	Holiday
Jun 19	Early release day Last day of school

### **Transitions**

*compiled by Hal Wolman*

### **Newcomers and Returnees:**

We welcome the following neighbors who have arrived in Brookdale recently or who have returned.

Charles Davidson	5321 Baltimore
Jetuan Dobbs	5330 Baltimore
Debra Doherty	4828 Park Avenue
Steve, Elizabeth, Claire & Elaine Dragotas	4611 Merivale
Frauke, Frank, Fiona, & Marius Harnishstege	4837 Park Avenue
John and NC Kiyonaca	5312 Baltimore
William, Bettie, & Harrison McKnight	4516 Cortland
Mario and Neli Reinsperger	5307 Baltimore
Alexi, Natali, & Irena Simakov	5327 Baltimore
Michael, Sandy, Ivan & Carol Arango	4508 Cortland

### **Births:**

**Todd & Sarah Alijani** of Overbrook Road welcomed *Alexander Remick Alijani* on December 29, 2000.

*Lucas Ifhan Fichtel* was born January 12, 2001 to **Sarbani Chakraborty and Florian Fichtel** who live on Overbrook Road.

**Recovering: Fred Sanderson** has returned home after an extensive stay in the hospital following heart surgery.

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**Robert R. Denny**, long-time civic activist and resident of Brookdale, died October 24, 2000, of a heart ailment. In 1992, Mr. Denny, a retired reporter, writer, public relations and film executive, founded Fairness in Taxation, a political action group which successfully fought to hold property tax increases in Montgomery County to the rate of inflation. He is survived by his wife Susan of Overbrook Road and sons Christopher and Stephen.

- *Don Junior*

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### **Announcements & News**

### **Community Yard Sale, Christi Perez**

Now that the holidays are over and Spring is just around the corner, it's time to clean out the attic, garage, basement, and even your grandmother's storage closets. Let's get ready for our community yard sale! *The date is set for Saturday, April 28th from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm.* We had over 30 homes participating last year and expect as many or more this year. If you are interested in helping coordinate the event, please contact me at 301.215.4199.

### **Dover Court Block Party, Pat Kitchen**

A good time was had by all at last September's block party on Dover Court. There were water balloons, egg races, face painting, burgers, dogs and some of the best desserts that ever tickled the palate. The highlight of the picnic was the arrival of the Glen Echo firefighters in their huge fire truck. Thanks to all volunteers and participants! See you next September!

### **Brookdale Home Sales, Kathleen McElroy**

As of January 8, there are four houses under contract in Brookdale: 4630 River, presently listed at \$464,500, 4602 Harrison at \$680,000, 4711 River at \$459,900, and 5014 Westport at \$649,500. They sold in 34 days, 13 days, 165 days, and less than one week, respectively. Currently, 5329 Saratoga is for sale by owner for \$429,500.

There were 17 settled sales in our neighborhood in 2000, ranging in price from \$192,500 to \$615,000, and evenly divided between the first and second half of the year. In four of the sales, sellers gave subsidies to the purchaser ranging from \$1867 to \$9000 (from 1% to a little under 3% of the sales prices). The houses took an average of 32.43 days to sell; the vast majority sold in 20 days or less but three houses took 105 to 150 days to sell. One seems to have been taken off the market unsold. May and August had the highest number of sales (4) followed by December with 3. Overall, prices showed a steady rise during the year although the average



price is not substantially higher than for 1999. This is not significant as our neighborhood is very diverse and the mix of smaller and larger houses in any given year can vary a lot. Excluding Westmoreland Hills, the Westbrook school district showed 4 sales over \$600,000 in 2000, and all four occurred after July 1.

Houses in our neighborhood continue to be in high demand and a recent sale on a block outside the association's boundaries had multiple offers well above the listed price.

5327 Baltimore	\$375,000
4806 Dover	\$400,000
4725 River	\$250,000
4804 Park	\$337,000
4805 Dover	\$479,000
5328 Baltimore	\$360,000
4802 River	\$312,000
5314 Baltimore	\$375,000
5025 Brookdale	\$470,000
5208 Andover	\$615,000
4508 Cortland	\$410,000
5312 Baltimore	\$255,000 with \$7500 subsidy

4507 Dalton	\$465,000 with \$1000 subsidy
4815 River	\$192,500 with \$1867 subsidy
5309 Baltimore	\$338,000 with \$9000 subsidy
4803 Dover	\$455000
4712 Dover	\$420000

### **Relax, Dave Montgomery**

Many Brookdale residents subscribe to the adage, "Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they are *NOT* out to get you." The demolition of the house on the corner of River Road and Willard Avenue prompted one of our neighborhood's most active buzzes. What, people wondered, was going to happen on that site?

The new owner of the lot at 4815 River Road says that nothing dramatic will happen at the location. Lois Ehle now lives and works close to Brookdale and wanted to have her home in our community. The problem with the house was that it was built in the 1930's. The easiest way to bring it up to desirable standards was to tear down the old structure and start over. Lois is planning a single-story home with the same "foot-print" as the old. Her application for a building permit raised what may be a technical issue: by changing the orientation of the front door to Willard, the measurement of the set-back to the front of the lot changed. Lois hopes that question will be quickly resolved so that construction can begin soon. She is sensitive to the concerns of neighbors and will be looking for ways to control erosion or other disruption during construction. She hopes that construction on her new home will begin very soon.

### **Potential Violation of Residential Zoning, Gwen Lewis**

Been wondering about 4906 River Road?

Since September 1, when this property was sold to Rachel Rosnick, strange things have been happening: all vegetation has been removed, the entire yard has been paved over, and the house has been enlarged over 50 percent. The purpose of all this action is a beauty shop, which would violate the residential zoning. Ms. Rosnick has applied for a business permit, which gives more privileges than a "normal" home business permits. A home business may have no more than 5 customers per day (including deliveries) and no more than 20 per week and business use of no more than 1/3 of the home in which the proprietor must live.

Green Acres/Glen Cove Citizens' Association's new President David Scribner has leapt into action by pursuing information and raising objections with the County on behalf of the entire Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH), including Brookdale. The next step is to bring resident concerns to Howard Denis, our district's County Councilman. We need Denis as our advocate in denying a business permit. Please send your objections to his office (240.777.7964; Councilmember.Denis@co.mo.md.us). If you have any information concerning the property or Ms. Rosnick, please call me at 301.215.9224.

### **Babysitting Cooperative**

*Carol Mitchell*

Several families in the Brookdale community have expressed an interest in forming a babysitting cooperative. Members of a cooperative provide babysitting services to other members free of charge, record their hours and report them to a co-op coordinator. Co-op members attend regularly scheduled meetings. A co-op is for sitting any time of the day or evening, Sunday through Saturday and can be used for appointments, golfing, a parents' night out, shopping, etc. Sitting may also be done on a regular basis.

Allison Fultz has found a successful model co-op in a neighboring community that could serve as a model for Brookdale. Carol Mitchell has volunteered to launch the

cooperative. Brookdale families interested in learning more about the co-op are invited to attend a meeting on Saturday, February 10, 2001, at 3:00 pm at 4603 Harrison Street. Please call 301.951.9103 if you are interested in attending.

### **Historic Cemetery**

*Bill McCloskey*

Using a Halloween theme, the *Washington Post* in October featured our neighborhood Crestview as the spotlight community for the "Where We Live" column in the real estate section.

The link to ghosts and goblins came in frequent references to the small cemetery located at the end of an abandoned alley that runs behind the even side of the 4800 block of Earlston Drive the street with the Western Market at the corner. You can enter the alley off Bayard Boulevard. A sign on the gate identifies the plot as the burial ground for the Shoemaker family. The *Post* says they were Quaker landowners who moved to Montgomery County in 1819.

Crestview residents now make a nice effort to maintain the grounds which officially belong to no one and were rundown for years. The *Post* reported that in 1989 the County decided to take the property off a list of potential historic preservation sites since it was not associated with any historic church or other noteworthy building.

### **Halloween Party**

*Eric Sanne*

Last October's Halloween Party was a "must attend" for all Brookdale residents with kids and a great time for all to see their friends and neighbors. We had a great turn out with kids of all ages running around in costume and otherwise. The party was a cheerful interlude to the Fall, an occasion celebrating the spirit of Halloween that highlighted that more holidays were to come. Neighbors had an opportunity to catch up on events and amaze each other with how many kids are now living in Brookdale. The games were a great success with much noise and clamoring. Kids of all ages participated.

The food, drinks, and decoration were plentiful, ensuring a festive air thanks to the tremendous effort and coordination of Halloween party veterans Anne Warner and Mike Makuch. They were staunchly aided by Fiona Carson and Eric Itsweire. Their combined effort allowed everyone attending to catch the season's spirit early on while a few leaves still clinged to the trees.

The Brookdale Halloween party has become a longstanding tradition that brings the community together at a time when so many communities seem transient and where the neighbors hardly know each other. This community spirit, like that at the 4th of July party, makes Brookdale the special place it is. We encourage new people volunteer to ensure that this tradition continues. Please call 301.215.9224 now to volunteer.

### **Citizens' Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, *Eric Sanne***

Development issues continue to be a concern for residents of the Friendship Heights area. The Citizens' Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) represents fourteen communities in Friendship Heights including Brookdale and is actively engaged in trying to keep development to levels that will not further overburden already congested streets and intersections.

CCCFH invites you to be involved with these issues and to participate in the process. The upcoming year promises many new challenges including the outcome of the Chevy Chase Land Co. hearings, local transportation management, and development issues that may arise from GEICO and Hecht's site plans. You may wish to attend meetings of the CCCFH which are held every third Wednesday of the month at the Somerset Town Hall at 8:00 pm. Alternatively, you may keep abreast of this issue by subscribing at no charge to the CCCFH's minutes. Send your request to me.

*Ed Note: Eric Sanne and Ron Tripp are Brookdale's official representatives to CCCFH. Eric serves as Chair and Ron as Recording Secretary.*

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*If you are a newcomer, we hope you have already received a warm welcome. We would like to publicize your presence and other transitions in the Bugle.* Please send them to Hal Wolman, Secretary. *The Brookdale Directory* is useful in helping you navigate around the neighborhood. If you need a copy, contact your Area Liaison Representative. Please contact Gia Regan (4723 River Road.) with additions or updates to the directory: names, phone numbers, addresses, and e-mail addresses.

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The *Brookdale Bugle* is a publication of the Brookdale Citizens' Association.

Editor Gwen Lewis

Layout Gia Regan

Distribution Evelyn Aikman, Lynn Sheridan

Contact Gwen Lewis, President, at 301.215.9224 for more information.

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