

THE BROOKDALE BUGLE

Web edition of the neighborhood newsletter

Scheduled for delivery January 25, 2004

Skip to:

[Friendship Heights Task Force](#)

[International Baccalaureate at Westland](#)

[Home sales](#)

[Notices](#)

[Transitions](#)

ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT -- *Ron Tripp*, Chair, CCCFH

Developers are active on both sides of Western Avenue in the Friendship Heights area. As most of us already realize, work has begun on the Chevy Chase Center site. Behind the construction fences crews are excavating for the two retail buildings that will face Wisconsin Ave.

Expect excavation to begin in early spring for the new Hecht's store located at the corner of Western Ave. and Friendship Blvd. Hecht's surface parking lot will close when work begins, limiting parking to the existing two level parking deck.

Construction access will be from Friendship Blvd., and the developer, New England Development (NED) is interested in working with the communities on construction issues, such as truck access, staging and pedestrian traffic. The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) hopes to work through the Friendship Heights Task Force and meet collectively with NED on these issues. Concerns about this construction site can be directed to Mike Makuch, Brookdale's representative on the Task Force; Bob Cope, the CCCFH representative; or myself. NED is willing to address our concerns, and has promised to keep a contact person available throughout the project.

These projects are in the works, having already gone through the political process. In DC, the political process is just beginning on new plans for the Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor. As defined by the D.C. Office of Planning, this is an area from below Tenleytown to the Montgomery County line. In mid-November, the Office of

Planning (OP) released a draft report titled, "Upper Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Study - Strategic Framework Plan." That release started a 90-day public review and comment period, during which OP has been holding public meetings to discuss and receive comments on the plan.

In early December Eric Sanne and I attended one of these sessions and quickly discovered a hotbed of emotions over this plan. Planners, eager to advance the plan, tried hard to control questions and comments. Residents were angry and frustrated, more from the process itself than the plan. But concerns about the plan were numerous, and most of them were traffic-related, both automotive and pedestrian.

OP's stated purpose of the plan is "to provide a strategy for guiding redevelopment opportunities, encouraging a better mix of retail uses, creating a sense of place, and preserving the existing assets along Wisconsin Avenue." This may sound agreeable enough, but the details may be less palatable. Planners are identifying areas of the corridor for greater densities of development than D.C.'s zoning presently allows. They do not propose changing the existing zoning, but would instead use an individual project review process to get around it. The real purpose may be one of economics. It's not likely that planners would work on a plan like this without the interest or urging from developers and major property owners.

This draft plan calls for 8- to 10-story buildings at both ends of the corridor. This includes both sides of Wisconsin Ave. within the Friendship Heights area, as well as along Western Ave., up to and including the Lord & Taylor site. As large as The Lord & Taylor site is, with an 8- to 10-story project, there could be a massive development on this parcel alone, and of course, the additional traffic that goes with it.

Additional public meetings are expected before the 90-day comment period expires. CCCFH will be following this issue closely. Watch the Northwest Current for articles on the topic. Brookdale residents are urged to review the OP's plan and study, available on the web at the following address.

http://planning.dc.gov/planning/cwp/view.asp?a=1283&q=581486&planningNav_GID=1604

Ron Tripp serves as one of Brookdale's two official representatives to CCCFH, the other being Eric Sanne. Ron has been elected Chair for the past two years.

HURRICANE ISABEL -- *Dave Montgomery*

For years to come, we will be talking about Isabel, how long the power was off, the damage to trees and buildings, and how we cleaned up afterward. After the winds and rain left, we walked the streets of our neighborhood amazed at how many trees had fallen but also gladly surprised at how often the trees missed our homes as they fell. Not everyone was lucky in escaping building damage, but for many the downed trees just changed the landscape and required removal, raising the need for replacement. Property damage was not limited to the effects of falling trees of course: many home owners incurred water damage.

The power outage was the biggest headache for many, resulting in the spoilage of unrefrigerated food and requiring bailing out basements or sumps without the assistance of electricity-driven pumps. Without functioning traffic lights, cars backed up at intersections; a photo shows that the line of cars on River Road trying to cross Western Avenue extended for blocks.

On the bright side, we've heard the power outage brought the residents of Andover Road together for a large block party/dinner.

[Showing photos is limited to the paper edition.]

BACKGROUND ON POWER PROBLEMS -- *Mike Becnel*

Recent power outages have caused us to reflect on our dependence on electricity. Without that valuable utility we suffer spoiled food, no heat or air conditioning, no TV and no computer capability. We know that high winds during storms blow trees or branches into power lines and disrupt the flow of power. Sometimes we see the damage in our neighborhood; on other occasions, we see no damage but the power is still out! Then, we may see that our neighbors in the next block have electricity, but we do not. The power transformers hanging on poles feed power to our homes, usually one transformer will serve four or five homes. Those transformers must be

supplied power from high voltage feeder lines. These lines originate at substations that are a considerable distance from us. Frequently feeder lines from different substations supply transformers in one neighborhood so one feeder line could be down while others are still in service. When outages occur, power companies have a list of priorities to restore power to vital public services and then to feeder lines that have the potential of handling largest number of customers.

Some of us have friends or relatives in new subdivisions that have all utilities underground with cabinets on the curbs for transformers and junction boxes for other services. While there may be a need for older neighborhoods to have their utilities placed underground, doing so would involve the costly process of placing ducts under streets and pulling utility cables through them. Since the cost would be high, property owners might have to pay a large assessment.

Some day we may have individual power plants driven by fuel cells so that distribution from centralized power stations will not be necessary. Don't hold your breath! Meanwhile PEPCO has promised to renew their efforts to make their system more reliable. Let's hope so!

As a retired electrical engineer, Mike Becnel was requested to write about this issue for the Bugle.

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS TASK FORCE -- Mike Makuch

On behalf of the Friendship Heights Task Force, all in our community are wished a happy new year. For those of you who are not familiar with the Task Force, it consists of business and community groups on both sides of the Maryland and District of Columbia border at Friendship Heights. Although created jointly by the Montgomery County Council and the District of Columbia City Council, it has no legislative authority. Rather, it serves as a forum for residents, business owners and others. The Task Force meets at least three times a year to discuss a wide range of issues, with focus on partnership between residents and business, between the businesses within Friendship Heights, public safety, street conditions ("streetscape") and transportation among other matters. Indeed, the Task Force has a specific

subcommittee for each of Partnership and Promotions, Public Safety, Streetscape, and Transportation. Each subcommittee is headed by a chairman, and includes as members, individual members of the Task Force (residents and business) and members of the general public. A common agenda item at each Task Force meeting is the development plans of major businesses in the area. It is typical at each meeting to hear reports by representatives from the Hecht Company, from GEICO, and from the Chevy Chase Land Company. Within the last few years, interim reports also have been made concerning renovation and development at the Metrobus garage near Jennifer Street on the DC side, and development by Stonebridge, which has purchased and will re-develop the Washington Clinic site. As of October 29, 2003, the representative of the Hecht Co. reported that demolition, excavation and early construction could be expected to begin within the first quarter of this year. GEICO indicated that it still has no plans for re-developing its present site. Chevy Chase Land Co. indicated that construction activity would be in progress by the first quarter of this year.

There is an on-going study of the upper Wisconsin corridor extending from Friendship Heights to Tenleytown. This study focuses on green space and parks, traffic and parking, and historic landmarks along the corridor. Primary purposes of this continuing study are to encourage the creation of an attractive streetscape, standardize the placement of buildings, encourage the creation of more open spaces, and better define and make accessible those open spaces that already exist. The District Department of Transportation also has indicated plans to undertake a complementary transportation study of the corridor.

The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for January 14, 2004, from 5-6:30 pm, at the Friendship Heights Village Center. All are invited to attend. Periodic reports on these meetings will appear in subsequent editions of The Bugle.

Mike Makuch serves as Brookdale's representative to the Friendship Heights Task Force.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAMME AT WESTLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL --

Sarah Sanne

Bethesda Chevy Chase (BCC) High School, the high school that Westland feeds into, has offered the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme for a couple of years. Westland Middle School is now working towards becoming a certified International Baccalaureate school, too. The Middle Years Programme (MYP) is prepared by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The MYP is a 5-year program for students in grades 6-10.

As the Westland web page (<http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/schools/westlandms/ibmyp.html>) explains, "The goal of MYP is to develop life-long learners, critical thinkers, and responsible global citizens." The core principle of MYP is making connections between the various subjects at school. The MYP also tries to bridge what's learned at school with the world at large, encouraging students to develop an appreciation for their own culture and that of others. It also fosters effective communication skills, including learning a foreign language. Some students at Westland are already familiar with these interdisciplinary concepts because at Westbrook Elementary School (at least), the teachers often relate subjects to one another. Nevertheless, in Westland, the teachers are constantly making efforts to connect the school work to the MYP core principle of connecting subjects to each other and events outside of school. The IBO provides teachers with the tools that they need to meet the IBO standards.

For example, every two weeks in science seventh grade students must find an article and answer questions concerning the article and how it relates to the world at large. One of the questions asks to what subject the article relates best out of the five themes of the IBO: Health and Social Education, Environment, Homo Faber, Community Service, and Approaches to Learning. Another instance was in English, when students read the diary of Anne Frank, on the heels of studying the Holocaust in World Studies.

Westland has applied for being an IB school and had its application accepted recently. In February or March 2004, IB evaluators will be coming to review Westland to decide whether to approve its IB Programme.

Sarah Sanne is a 7th grader at Westland Middle School.

BROOKDALE HALLOWEEN EXTRAVAGANZA

-- John C. Kiyonaga

The children of Brookdale had a banner Halloween in Brookdale Park under a provident sun that illumined cowboys, clowns, vampires and Dumbo as well as brilliant Fall foliage.

Abner Oakes flipped the burgers and hot dogs on the grill. Maureen McRaith tended the salads. Bill and Ann Geary prepared an incredible jambalaya. Kiyoshi Nakasaka, John Pirri and Pat Kitchen held the Donut Line and dangled the pinata. Eric Itsweire shot it all on his Leica. The clean-up, recycling, and garbage crew included Kathy Pirri, Margaret King, Tamar Nicholson, and Mikel Moore.

Behind all these tireless providers was the quiet leadership of the CICV (Commander in Chief-Volunteers), Ellie Shorb.

BROOKDALE HOME SALES -- Kathleen McElroy

We had a strong market after Labor Day with further price appreciation due to the low interest rates and continued strong demand for our area. Economists had predicted at the end of 2002 that mortgage rates at the end of 2003 could be as high as 7%. Rates are still hovering around 6% for a 30-year fixed-rate loan, and it is believed they will remain low for several more months, possibly until the end of 2004. If so, that will be very good news for real estate sales.

I just completed a tax valuation of a house bought in this area in 1986 and thought analyzing previous sale prices (where available) on sales this quarter would be interesting. My conclusion: today's sales prices range from 2.5 to 3.5 times higher than in 1986 and this is not due solely to improvements. There is substantial evidence that prices have doubled since 1995/96 which were, I think, the low point in the 30 years I have been selling houses in the Washington Metro area. With

demographic changes, some properties have become more desirable. There is, of course, the effect of proper pricing, presentation and marketing, improvements made, and a degree of luck and timing. There have been some very low sales which can only be explained because little care was taken to market the house properly and/or improper pricing of the house.

Report for 4th quarter of 2003

There are no houses for sale in our area as of 1/1/04. There is one house under contract:

5303 Baltimore was listed for \$650,000, reduced to \$639,000 and sold in 25 days on 11/25. It was previously sold for \$275,000 in Dec. 94.

The houses under contract in the first quarter are settled as follows:

--4855 Park Av. LP \$525,000, sold in 5 days for \$547,500 (minus \$5000 in credits to Purchasers). It sold 6/79 for \$91,500. Owners added a master suite with bath on 2d floor and sold it 10/96 for \$244,000.

--4722 Merivale sold 8/12 in 7 days for \$645,000 (no previous listed price).

The active listings in the 2d and 3rd quarters sold and settled as follows:

--4802 River Rd. LP \$550,000, reduced to \$529,000 and again to \$499,000 and sold in July for \$478,000. It sold previously in May 2000 for \$312,000.

--5006 Dalton Rd., LP \$598,000 sold on 6/18 in 16 days, the contract fell through and it re-sold 7 days later for \$590,000. It sold 7/94 for \$293,000 and 1/2000 for \$335,000.

Listings under contract in last report settled as follows:

--4855 Park Ave., LP \$525,000, sold on 7/2/03 in 5 days for \$547,500 with a seller credit to purchasers of \$5,000.

--4600 Dalton Rd., LP \$829,000 sold on 5/29 in 14 days for \$810,000. It had sold 6/90 (prior to the side addition) for \$370,000.

--4722 Merivale Rd. LP \$649,500 sold 8/12 in 7 days for \$645,000.

New listings sold and settled in this period and not settled at the end of the previous report:

--4603 Cooper La., LP \$629,000 sold on 6/24 in 15 days for \$615,000. Sold in late summer 98 for \$265,000.

--5331 Willard Av. LP \$629,000 sold on 10/21 in 4 days for \$605,000 with a \$15,000 credit from seller to purchaser. Sold in spring 99 for \$284,000.

--5301 Saratoga LP \$649,500 sold in 18 days on 9/24 for \$649,000.

--5215 Andover LP \$739,500 sold on 9/30 for \$806,000 in 8 days. It had six offers. Sold in early 98 for \$300,000.

There was 1 private sale:

--4604 Merivale was settled 6/03 for \$775,000. It sold 5/94 for \$415,000.

Kathleen McElroy is a resident of Brookdale and a real estate agent who provides this information as a service.

Won't You Be My Neighbor?

A Column in the Interest of Being Good Neighbors

-- Sissy Rothwell and Elsa Skaggs

Dogs barking. Cars parking. Leaves falling. Moms calling. These--and many more--are daily occurrences around our neighborhood. For those of us who have lived here well over 20 years, most of the myriad elements that result in "being a good neighbor" have crossed our purview. Either through direct experience or through indirectly hearing other neighbors comment on their neighbor's behavior, ways that neighbors meet each other's needs sometimes resemble the proverbial extended family.

There's the neighbor who comes while you're raking leaves to catch you up on the latest 'news' from up the street. There are those with opinions about trees and cars and pets and trash and construction. The list is long. In fact, scratch any household in our wonderfully eclectic neighborhood, and you're sure to find an

opinion. Most walkers wish drivers would slow down since sidewalks are not available and parking on both sides of the street reduces visibility. Some wish the next-door neighbor hadn't planted that tree quite so close to the line. Others are glad when the lawns are mowed other than early Saturday or Sunday mornings.

The Mr. Rogers Approach

Because we all have preferences for the way our surroundings work and because we don't wish anyone treading on our rights any more than we'd want to tread on others', we've started this column as a clearinghouse. Believe it or not, a few neighborhood issues have gotten so sticky from time to time that our Brookdale president has been asked to intervene--not an item in that job description.

Over the years, the stories have shown what a community of 260+ homes can do to keep the character and dignity it has had the good fortune to enjoy since 1938.

Do you have a story with a happy solution? Or an unexpressed wish that another neighbor had your same preference on, say, really picking up the dog's droppings or keeping the curbside swept? (Yes, we are the committed ladies you see clearing accumulated leaves, dirt, and trash from Saratoga and Westport because we think it looks more inviting to our homes and, hopefully, to the major entrance to the neighborhood.) And we can't help hoping that construction debris and leaves from up the street will get cleared before they come our way during a big rain. Remember, too: clear curbsides assure that emergency vehicles can get through and that house numbers are easily identified. We really are all here to help each other.

Your Story or Suggestion?

We invite you to use this column as a sounding board or suggestion box. Let Sissy (gfrothwell4 -@- webtv.com) or Elsa (eskaggs -@- comcast.net) hear from you about neighborliness. What has or hasn't worked for you? And why? By sharing our concerns and wishes, we can raise consciousness and also help make our neighborhood more secure. The idea is not to try to be our brothers' keepers, but to continue to enhance the best secret just across the District line in Maryland--our delightful, convenient, cooperative, lovely Brookdale neighborhood.

Notices

TRASH IN PARKS

You may have noticed there are no longer trash cans in "our" parks. Last Fall the County decided to remove trash cans from all County parks and to institute a policy requiring users to carry out their own trash. Some of us may choose to challenge this policy through contacting our County Councilmember Howard Denis. Meanwhile it is important that each of us take responsibility to pick up any trash we see when we are visiting either Brookdale or Boundary Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD NEW MOMS' GROUP

Join an ongoing, daytime group of new (and experienced) mothers to bounce ideas off new friends. Meets every other Wednesday 11-1 at participants' homes. Lunch is included. Contact Karen Lambert for details (kclambert -@- att.net).

GARDENING ENTHUSIASTS

The Brookdale Gardening Group will meet February 18th at 10 am at Nancy McCloskey's home at 4709 Overbrook Rd. All are welcome. An evening meeting will be considered for the future. Anyone interested in attending an evening meeting should contact Maryn Goodson at mpgwlg -@- erols.com.

TREES -- *Gwen Lewis*

As a result of Hurricane Isabel, the need for street trees and other replacement trees increased this fall. The Street Tree Committee has requested the County Highways Department to plant 8 trees at the curbside of 7 Brookdale residences during their Spring planting season. Such trees are free to residents. Want to enhance your yard

and the neighborhood through this program? Look on the Brookdale website for information (check the links to "[local resources](#)"), and contact one of the committee members: Fiona Carson (301-986-0574), Pearl Becnel (301-654-1991), or me.

TRANSITIONS

Newcomers

Cindy Pena, Harry Shoffner, their twin daughters, Sofia and Cristina (9) & son Harrison (10), 4717 Merivale

Laura & David Geyer & sons Benjamin (9) & Jonathan (3), 5213 Andover

Sonia Baldia & Kelly Kiser, 5215 Andover

Mike Adlin & Helene Krasnoff, 4600 Dalton

Jason Wiles, Matt McWilliams, Mike Roe, & Brennan Barnes, 4635 River

Angela & Ricardo Silva-Santisteban and their children Alvaro (11), Santiago (8), & Mariana (6), 5305 Sherrill

Michele McNally, Russell Sturm & their children Justin (9), Tevah (7), & Eli (4), 5005 Brookdale

Rachel & Joey Potts & their daughter Kaitlyn (9 mos.), 4501 Cortland

Births

Eric Frank Moore was born to Mikel and Brad Moore, 5304 Westport, on Aug. 5, 2003.

Henry Stephen Baratz was born to David and Karen Baratz, 5325 Baltimore Ave., on

Aug. 7, 2003.

PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

You are invited to "Time Passes: Detail in Form and Texture"

Photographs by Gwen Lewis

February 8-29, 2004

Opening Reception Sunday, February 8, 3-5 pm

River Road Unitarian Church

6301 River Rd,

Bethesda, MD

Hours: M-F 9-4

For information 301-215-9224

TWO NEW BLOCK CAPTAINS ANNOUNCED

Two block captains have taken up duties since the last Bugle was issued. Peg Cothern (301-652-2863) is block captain for Baltimore. Michael Adlin (301-656-2552) is block captain for 4600 to 5017 Dalton. Thanks Peg and Michael!

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

Editor Gwen Lewis (301)215-9224

[Paper] Layout Steve Langer

[Paper] Distribution Britta Glennon

[\[Return to the beginning of this document\]](#) [\[To home\]](#)