

# ***THE BROOKDALE BUGLE***

Web edition of the distribution scheduled for January 20, 2007

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## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

If you're like our family, the 70-degree weather in January nearly tricked you into thinking that Brookdale would soon be filled with forsythia and daffodil blooms and the sounds of children running through the parks. While I am sure that there will be a snow day soon enough, the warm weather was a welcome reminder of how special the parks in and around Brookdale are to our community.

When the flowers do finally begin to bloom, the staff of the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission ("Park & Planning") will begin the long-awaited and much-discussed replacement of the existing playground equipment in Brookdale Park. I am pleased to report that thanks to the efforts of so many in our community, and based on the input from many, many residents, Park & Planning is putting the finishing touches on plans to replace the old playground equipment with new equipment by June 2007. Based on the vast majority of the comments and feedback from our neighbors, the Executive Committee voted to recommend that the new equipment be located on the same side of Dalton Road as the existing equipment. There were many opinions and lots of interest in achieving the perfect balance of getting new and improved playground equipment while protecting green space (and trees), ensuring that our children have a safe place to play and maintaining a park for all the generations within Brookdale. Hopefully we have achieved these objectives. Orcharddale Vice President Marina Bowsher is continuing our discussions with Park & Planning staff on the final designs and timing for the equipment renovation. (See [Marina's article](#)). We will post updated information on the Brookdale website and on the Brookdale Listserv as soon as the plans are finalized. Thanks to all who took time to call, write or stop us in the street with your comments.

Park improvements are also underway in the other park located within Brookdale. In fact, if you walk along Western Avenue from River Road towards Park Avenue, you may have noticed two new holly bushes and three new evergreen trees. Further along Park Place, thanks to the efforts of the residents along Park Place with the Brookdale Citizens Association and the staff at Park & Planning, several new trees were planted and a few dead trees (and their stumps) have been (or are being) removed in Boundary Park.

Just outside of Brookdale, the District of Columbia has nearly finished work on a complete renovation of playground equipment at Fort Bayard Park. Finally, Park & Planning indicated

that they plan to replace the playground equipment in the park located at the corner of River Road and Willard Avenue in the next couple of years. We have asked Park & Planning, and they have agreed, to work with Brookdale in designing that new and improved playground. We are fortunate to have so many great parks within walking distance of any home in Brookdale!

\* \* \*

While parks help make Brookdale a wonderful place to live, sometimes our proximity to the ever-urbanizing area around us poses special challenges. As those of you who are on either the Brookdale or Westbrook Listservs are well aware, there has been a rash of car thefts and car break-ins in and around Brookdale (Greenacres and Westmoreland Hills) over the past year. There have also been more burglaries reported in and around Brookdale over the past 12 months than I remember in recent years. I have talked to the Montgomery County Police Department ("MCPD") and urged them to step up their patrols in our neighborhood. We are also working on setting up a community-wide meeting with the Police to be held in early February at Westbrook Elementary School. We will send out an announcement about this meeting on the Brookdale Listserv, so if you are not already signed up, I encourage you to sign up at [http://comjet.com/mailman/listinfo/brookdale\\_comjet.com](http://comjet.com/mailman/listinfo/brookdale_comjet.com).

In the interim, the Police have urged us to remain vigilant to help eliminate the prevalence of car problems in Brookdale. If you see something suspicious, err on the side of caution and call the Police. In addition, at the risk of stating the obvious, the Police remind us all to take simple steps to secure our cars, such as:

1. Do not leave any valuables (or things that look like they could contain valuables) in your car even if it is parked in front of your house under a streetlight.
2. Lock your car.
3. Report any suspicious activity (or actual and attempted thefts) to the Police by calling 911. MCPD does track crime patterns and rely upon data from calls to generate increased patrols in particular neighborhoods.

We will continue to work with County Police on efforts to keep our community safe.

\* \* \*

Finally, thanks to all of you who sent your 2006-07 dues to Suzanne Richman. Your continued support of the Brookdale Citizens Association makes it possible for us to fund community-wide events such as the Fourth of July parade, the Halloween party, the biannual Brookdale directory and, of course, The Brookdale Bugle. Of course Brookdale is your neighborhood, so if you have suggestions about ways we can strengthen and celebrate our neighborhood, please call me or anyone on the Executive Committee.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, safe and successful 2007!

- Steve Heyman

### **Area Development Update**

- Bob Cope Chair, Friendship Heights Transportation Management District

The Friendship Heights Transportation Advisory Committee, a formal Montgomery County Committee, has been urging Metro to open the bus station at Friendship Heights. At our

meeting on November 14, 2006, Metro basically informed us that their new compressed natural gas buses would not fit into the newly renovated bus station, and that they did not intend to return to the bus station. We told them that this was unacceptable and immediately began a letter-writing campaign. Various associations belonging to the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights wrote letters to Metro. In addition, we asked Montgomery County Ride On to return to the bus station, which it did within two weeks. One week later, Metro informed us that they would be returning to the bus station with older buses. At our December 12, 2006 meeting, Metro informed us that the move back to the bus station was temporary and that they would need to find a new solution by December 2008 because they were scheduled to receive large number of compressed natural gas buses in the first quarter of 2009 and at that time they would be retiring many of their older buses. Metro is studying the situation and is attempting to arrive at a permanent solution. Interestingly, Metro is now accepting bids from developers looking toward constructing a five- to eight-story condominium above its bus garage located at Jenifer and 44th streets. We have asked Metro to look into the possibility of constructing a proper bus garage on this site.

The Hecht's construction is now progressing. The sidewalk drop-off and Metro entrance in front of Hecht's will be closed in early January. The second phase of construction will last until the end of 2008. We previously reported on the types of buildings that will be constructed on the Hecht's site, and on the 24,000- square-foot recreation center that will be built on the site. We now want to report that New England Development, Montgomery County, and Metro recently agreed on major transportation and pedestrian improvements for the site. These improvements will require that the sidewalk and Metro entrance on Wisconsin Avenue be closed for probably well over a year. The improvements are as follows:

- o A median, with trees, will be constructed down the middle of Wisconsin Avenue from Western Avenue to Willard Avenue.
- o An additional right-turn lane will be added for southbound traffic. This lane also will permit limited drop-offs but will not permit temporary waiting (similar to what occurs at an airport). We have been pushing for the limited drop-off in order somewhat to replace the drop-off that currently exists on Wisconsin.
- o The total number of southbound lanes along Wisconsin Avenue will thus be four: a dedicated left-turn lane, two through lanes, and a right-turn lane.
- o A canopy will be placed over the new Metro entrance on Wisconsin Avenue.
- o Although Hecht's is not returning, the old entrance into the Hecht's basement from the Metro level will be reconfigured so that when you walk through the new door, you will enter a new parking garage, which will contain 20 covered short-term spaces for dropoff and pick-up of Metro riders (Kiss and Ride).
- o A more expansive sidewalk will be constructed along Wisconsin Avenue.

Every 20 years or so, Montgomery County studies various Commercial Business Districts (CBDs) within the county, to decide on appropriate zoning for the next 20 years. In the early 1990s, Montgomery County began its study of the Friendship Heights Commercial Business

District. As a result of that study, the zoning on the Chevy Chase Land Company site and the Hecht's site was increased to permit additional development. The construction that has taken place on the Chevy Chase Land Company site and that is now taking place on the Hecht's site are a direct result of the sector plan study that started in the early 1990s.

In the second half of 2007, Montgomery County will begin a study of the Westbard Commercial Business District. The Westbard CBD includes all of the commercial businesses located on both sides of River Road and on both sides of Westbard Avenue, extending from Little Falls Parkway to Ridgefield Road. It is anticipated that the current industrial and commercial zoning will be changed to permit some mixed-use development (business use on the first floor with housing located on the floors above). There are basically two issues: how many new buildings (density) and how high. From the initial discussions that have taken place at meetings of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, it appears that practically every landowner will be shooting for an eight-story building. Thus, as always, height and density will be the main focus of the committee that is chosen to study the Westbard Commercial Business District.

#### **Update on Brookdale Park Playground**

*- Marina Bowsher*

After more than five years of effort on the part of many community members, Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning ("Park & Planning") is scheduled to replace the Brookdale Park playground equipment by late June of this year. With the community's input as to location, the Brookdale Citizens' Association voted to maintain the playground in the same site where the playground currently stands, on the western side of Dalton Road. The specific play equipment for the new playground is in the process of being finalized. Park and Planning has advised that the replacement of the equipment will take approximately three weeks from start to finish, during which time the playground and immediate surrounding area will not be available for use. While the playground is being renovated, residents can enjoy the new playground that is being constructed at the corner of Western Avenue and River Road, or the playground located on River Road immediately north of Willard Avenue.

#### **Park Avenue Block Party Great Success**

On the last Sunday in October, residents of Park Avenue gathered under sunny skies and fall foliage for a Halloween block party. Organized by Liz Hopkins and Chris Lawrence, the party featured a bountiful potluck buffet, music, games and face-painting for the youngest residents, and an opportunity for the older residents to spend time with old friends and meet new ones. Good weather, good food, good fun, good neighbors who could ask for anything more? Thanks, Liz and Chris!

#### **Ghosts and Goblins Invade Brookdale**

*- Stacy Yochum*

The heavy rains disappeared and the sun shone through the falling leaves as Brookdale held its annual Halloween party on Sunday, October 28. Angels, princesses, and superheroes made

friends with ghosts, goblins, and other dark spirits as they munched on bagels and cupcakes. While neighbors chatted, the youngest participants paraded around the park and then the big events started. Children lined up to swing at the piñatas. No parental hacksaws or hammers were required; the strong swings by baseball-bat-wielding children did the trick. Goodies showered down and everyone shared in the scramble for treats. The annual donut-eating contest followed. This year, the organizers gave the children a break. Only unglazed cake donuts hung from the line no powdered sugar! At the signal, the feeding frenzy began with mouths only no hands allowed!

Many thanks to Laura and Rik Leishman, Deniz Ergener, and Laurie Sparling for organizing the event and to all the neighbors who brought snacks to share. Let's do it again next year!

### **Brookdale Home Sales: 2006 Year End Report**

by *Gaye Gunes*

*New activity since last report:*

5005 Westport was listed 9/15 at \$725,000, was reduced to \$699,000 in 28 days and sold 10/20 in 36 days for \$660,000, minus a seller's subsidy to the buyer of \$20,000.

*Old listings:*

5200 Westport was listed 7/12 for \$690,000, went under contract in 11 days and sold for \$805,000. The new owner rented it for \$3,200 per month.

4703 Overbrook, a new house, was listed May 9 for \$1,835,000 and is still on the market after more than 240 days. It is also for rent for \$5,500 a month.

5020 Park Place, listed for \$1,645,000 in early 2006, was reduced to \$1,545,000 and sold after 216 days for \$1,500,000, minus a seller's subsidy to the buyer of \$1,300.

4609 Overbrook was listed 6/9 for \$885,000, was reduced to \$859,990, and sold in 53 days for \$850,000.

4721 River Road was listed 7/10 for \$989,000 reduced to \$899,000, and sold in 25 days for \$860,000, minus a seller's subsidy to the buyer of \$7,000.

4710 Dover was listed for \$885,000 on 7/19 and sold in 6 days for \$935,000.

4601 Merivale Road was listed 9/6 at \$950,000 and sold in 8 days for \$935,000.

The sellers called the shots for the past few years but that is no longer the case. The market has cooled, slowed down, and normalized.

Since Brookdale has "location, location, location" and is a vibrant neighborhood with good schools, many purchasers still are looking to call this area home. As inventories grow and days on the market increase, sellers must be aware that what makes a house salable is pricing it right. Most sellers are still trying to get 10 percent more than the house down the street brought last year.

In 2005, nine houses were sold in Brookdale; the minimum and maximum closing prices were \$625,000 and \$1,250,000. The median days on the market: 16. In 2006, 12 houses have been put on the market with minimum and maximum closing prices of \$660,000 and \$1,500,000. The median time on the market is 45 days. Location, price, and condition will always be a

factor in any market. However, prices are falling and the days on the market are increasing. Most experts agree that housing prices are likely to continue to rise at a more normal level of 5-8 percent; sellers must be prepared to be very competitive in terms of price and condition of their homes.

<b>Home Sales Activity for 2005 and 2006 for the Brookdale Neighborhood</b>			
	List price	Closed price	DOMP*
<b>2006</b>			
Min	960,000	660,000	6
Max	1,835,000	1,500,000	240
Average	1,073,615	988,750	59
<b>2005</b>			
Min	625,000	625,000	1
Max	1,249,999	1,250,000	43
Average	790,555	807,111	16

\*DOMP = "Days on the Market of the Property"

*Gaye Gunes is a resident of Brookdale and a real estate agent who provides this information as a service to Brookdale.*

#### **TRANSITIONS**

- Sarah Jessup

#### **NEWCOMERS:**

Stephen and Jen Dobson have moved to 4628 River Road.

Jack and Cynthia Morton and son Jake have moved to 4609 Overbrook Road.

The Latiffs at 5208 Western Avenue returned on January 7 from India, where they have been since September.

Christina and Martin Bergmann and their 11-year-old son, Nils, are moving into the house at the corner of Merivale and Westport (5200 Westport) in February. They are coming from Bonn, Germany. Christina is the Washington correspondent for German International Radio

and Martin is an IT consultant.

Meanwhile, the Potts family at 4501 Cortland and the Matthews family at 4503 Cortland have left the neighborhood. Both were Geico families and have relocated to Virginia.

#### **BIRTHS:**

Joseph Thomas was born to Susan and Jimmy Minichello of 4609 Merivale on June 28.

Judy Baker and Peter Selfridge of 4602 Overbrook had a boy, Andrew, on October 23. Andrew joins his older sister, Sarah, age 18 months.

Karen Lambert and Janusz Mrozek (and big brother Tad) of 5004 Dalton Road welcomed Colette Ruth Mrozek on November 30.

#### **DEATH:**

Gayle Bartlett, 86, of 5210 Saratoga, died on January 2, 2007 after a fall she suffered during the holidays. She was an original owner of her house. Mrs. Bartlett's husband, Frank, and his brother Bud built the house, and the Bartletts moved in on May 31, 1951. Mrs. Bartlett came from Wisconsin to marry Frank, who worked for the Navy, where she also worked. The Bartletts had two children, Debbie, who lives in Baltimore, and Roy, who was killed in a car accident. Mrs. Bartlett was active in her church community at the Fourth Presbyterian. At the memorial service held for her on January 9, Dr. Rob Norris, the minister, remembered Mrs. Bartlett as "a loyal, gracious, and deeply religious person." Mrs. Bartlett is buried next to her husband and son. We offer our deepest condolences to her family.

#### **Kids' Holiday Happenings**

*- Abner Oakes*

It seems that Brookdale kids, at least on the west side of River Road, had a busy few weeks around the holidays. Dover Court's Helen Saxenian wrote that daughter "Nina was in the Washington Children's Chorus holiday concert," and it was "her first year singing with the group." In fact all three Saxenian girls - Nina and sisters Natalie and Sylvia "were in a strings concert at Grand Oaks Retirement Center in November. Nina and Sylvia play the violin, and Natalie plays the viola."

Joan Christie, on Dover Road and mother of Will and Annie Christie, wrote to say that her cherubs "had the good fortune of spending the holidays with their grandparents in London and cousins in Hare Hatch, a small village west" of that city. She went on to say that their "cousins live in a 16th century cottage known as the Old Poste House," and that Annie and Will "spent their time going for long hikes to country pubs, much to the enjoyment of their parents."

Lastly, Dover Road resident Leif Eskesen wrote that daughter Anabella was quite busy over the holidays, her appointment book bursting. Leif said that she "enjoyed her first plane ride to LA, where we spent a splendid first Christmas with family. Anabella also witnessed her greatgrandparents renewing their wedding vows after 50 years of marriage." And Leif finished by saying that while he and Ali, Leif's wife and Bella's mum, "were off celebrating, Anabella rung in the New Year with grandma in Palm Desert."

## **NOTICES**

*Brookdale Playgroup:* Young children and their parents or caregivers have been gathering each Wednesday afternoon between 3:30 and 5:30 at Brookdale Park, weather permitting. Informal playgroups often are formed during winter. Contact Marina Bowsher, 301-215-7667 or marinabowsher -AT- comcast.net.

*OASIS Moves:* The OASIS program for mature adults (55 and over) has been conveniently located inside the Lord & Taylor store for many years. Neighborhood folks have been able to enjoy a variety of learning opportunities within easy walking distance. Due to the change in ownership of the Lord & Taylor Company, OASIS has consolidated two venues and is relocating to the Macy's Home Store in Westfield Shopping Mall at Democracy Blvd. (Montgomery Mall). The timing of the move is not yet set. OASIS members will be notified of the move; others may watch for an announcement in local newspapers. January classes continue to be held in the original location.

*Wohlshire Volunteers Needed:* Eric Wallgren, Area VP for Wohlshire, is seeking volunteers for the position of area liaison. Duties include delivery of the Brookdale Bugle on your street, and keeping me aware of goings-on local to where you live. Wohlshire includes 4701-4724 Merivale Road (from Westport to the alley paralleling Saratoga Avenue), the north side of River Road from Western Avenue to Willard Avenue, and the 5000 and 5100 blocks of Westport Road (from Saratoga Avenue to Merivale Road). Please reply to ewallgren -AT- gmail.com. Thanks.

### *Brookdale Electronic Bulletin Board*

Join the secure electronic bulletin board established for Brookdale eyes only. Become a member of the group by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Brookdalecitizens/> and following instructions. If you join the group, you will be able to share e-mail addresses and read posted messages from other members.

### *Brookdale Listserv*

The Brookdale Citizens' Association Listserv is another way to communicate. Simply send an e-mail with "subscribe" (no quotes) in the subject line to: Brookdalerequest@comjet.com to join.

## **Classified Ads Services:**

Margot Sanne, babysitting and pet care (experienced and reliable)

Annika Glennon, dog walking, babysitting, and pet sitting.

Emily Carson, babysitting, dog walking, and pet sitting.

Katherine Potocka, certified babysitter,

Pet Sitting: Brookdale school teacher will care for your dog or cat in your home. Will walk dogs, clean litter, take in mail, newspapers, security check up while you are gone, water

plants, and vary curtains and lights. Reasonable rates from an experienced pet sitter right in our neighborhood. Overnight sitting also available. Call Brooke at 301 907 6853 or 202 714 0303.

The Party Masters MFAs in Theater and Education "Highly skilled entertainers for your Child's next party" See our site: [www.thepartymasters.com](http://www.thepartymasters.com); call 202 714 0303 or 301 907 6853. Also consider us for dinner parties and meetings, so your guests and members can bring the kids. Lifelong Brookdale residents.

*For Sale:* Indoor & wrought-iron garden furniture, art & garden decorations, books, etc. Prices negotiable. To see, call Grazia at 301-210-3183.

*The classified section of the Brookdale Bugle is provided as a service to Brookdale residents, who may place ads free of charge. A fee of \$15 will be charged for ads placed by nonresidents, and all ads are subject to approval by the Brookdale Citizens' Association Executive Committee.*

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

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*Bugle Deadline:* The deadline to submit articles, notices, and ads for the April 2007 issue of the Brookdale *Bugle* is 9 p.m. March 28th. Please e-mail your submission to Gwen Lewis, [glewis-AT-alumni.reed.edu](mailto:glewis-AT-alumni.reed.edu), and/or Deborah Kalb, [deborahkalb-AT-yahoo.com](mailto:deborahkalb-AT-yahoo.com).

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