

THE BROOKDALE BUGLE

Edited for the web

Brookdale Citizens' Association Newsletter April 15, 2000

Brookdale Citizens' Association Annual Meeting

May 24, 2000 at 7:30 p.m.

Westbrook Elementary School Multipurpose Room

Special Topics: Elections, Brookdale Park, Community Policing,
Development Update

County Council Special Election

by Bill McCloskey

Didn't we just do this? Yep, but it is election time again. Tuesday, April 18, there is a special election to fill the seat being vacated by Montgomery County District 1 Councilwoman Betty Anne Krahnke.

Candidates for the post were nominated at a primary election just a few weeks ago. They are Pat Baptiste, a Democrat, and Howard Denis, a Republican. Both have run unsuccessfully for the Council in the past. Both live in Chevy Chase and are long-time down-County residents. Krahnke, a Republican who is resigning for health reasons, endorses Baptiste.

For a complete discussion of the candidate positions on key issues, voters can visit the candidate web sites. <http://www.votedenis.com/> and <http://www.patbaptiste.org/>

There are differences -- some subtle, some profound -- between the candidates on the growth and development issues that the Brookdale Citizens' Association has been focused on for years.

The nine-member Council frequently splits its vote 5-4. Thus, the newly elected member can be instantly a swing vote. For example, the current majority opposes a

new road that would connect I-270 and I-95 north of the Capital Beltway, known as the Inter-County Connector or ICC.

Baptiste: Opposes the ICC;

Denis: "The Inter-County Connector or Cross-County Parkway remains on the Master Plan and should be completed assuming relevant environmental laws are satisfied."

Turnout is seen by the candidates and observers as the key to a successful campaign because there are no other candidates or issues on the ballot on Tuesday. Brookdale citizens vote at the Westbrook Elementary School on Allen Road. Polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

The Brookdale Citizens' Association does not endorse candidates.

OUR TREES!

by Fiona Carson

Last year, on Father's Day, my children and I took their Dad for a brief helicopter ride around the D.C. area. What surprised us the most, (apart from not being terrified!) were the vast expanses of beautiful greenspace and trees. In a prominent metropolitan area, where land is at a premium, somebody somewhere, intelligent and important, understood that the necessity of maintaining these grassy areas and elegant trees would outweigh the need for more industry and financial gain.

So let's take a leaf (no pun intended) out of this enlightened person's book. Sadly, our own "original" Brookdale trees are passing their 50th and 60th birthdays, and many already have been hard pruned or cut down. To maintain the shape, atmosphere, and intimacy, of our unique neighbourhood, particularly as the inevitable threat of noise, dust, and pollutants from the dreaded upcoming development draws ever closer, we need to replace, where appropriate, the trees that we are losing or have lost.

The great news is that Montgomery County has a Street Tree Program administered under the Department of Highway Services. We may, as a neighborhood, request street tree planting, or individual residents can request trees for their own property. In the case of county-owned property, the nearest resident may make the request. With no sidewalk, and with our street widths, trees are planted about four to thirteen feet from the street edge. Size of tree (major or minor) is selected depending on circumstances such as the location of overhead wires. Minor trees are planted about 30 ft. apart. Major trees about 45 ft. apart. We are able to request a variety of trees under each category. Actual planting will take at least one year because of lack of county funds and their prior allocation. Replacement of trees cut down by the county takes priority over planting of new trees.

Nancy McCloskey, a Brookdale resident and employee of American Plant Food Co., suggests not planting maple trees, as their large surface roots can cause so many problems to front yards. Three of her favorite varieties for street tree planting are: 1) Little Leaf Linden (*Tilia Cordata*). Strong, salt resistant, a good shape, pretty leaves, and a nice Fall color. 2) Japanese Zelkova (*Zelkova serrata*). A great replacement for all the Elm trees lost to Dutch Elm Disease. Grows to about 40' tall and has a nice spread. 3) Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*). Fast growing to about 30'.

To find out more information go to the Street Tree Program's website at www.dpwt.com/PubWksDiv/tree.htm or link through Brookdale's Website.

If you would like a street tree, but not the hassle of requesting one yourself, please call me at 301-986-0574. Any decisions made would be with your cooperation, approval, and, hopefully, input. If anyone is interested in joining a Tree Task Force, please call me at the phone no. above.

AMERICAN PLANT FOOD CO. - RETURNING TO THEIR ORGANIC ROOTS

by Fiona Carson

Mitch Baker, Vice President of the American Plant Food Co. must have read the January 15 issue of *The Bugle*!!! His March press release reads:

"American Plant Food Co. is moving in a new environmentally friendly direction. We have made the decision to remove from our shelves nearly all chemical pesticides and replace them with safer organic, natural, or less toxic alternatives. We feel it is our responsibility as part of the community to offer the safest products available, and to promote their proper use. Our goal is to educate our staff and our customers about sound horticultural methods, and when necessary, the use of these alternative products.

"We've made this decision for the health and well being of our staff, our customers, and our environment."

Prior to this statement, Mr. Baker writes a short note to the press explaining his reasons for the press release:

". . . It's become clear to all of us at American Plant Food that the use of hard chemical pesticides over the years has damaged our waterways, our soil, our health, and the ecological balance. And at the same time we've seen increased public concern about the safety and use of these products. Therefore, we will be changing the way we do business."

Thank you, Mr. Baker!

President's Message

by Allison Fultz

Since my second term as President is coming to an end, this column will be my swan song. I will continue to represent Brookdale as a member of the Joint Task Force on Friendship Heights/Chevy Chase with regard to the potential development on our doorstep.

By far the largest number of questions I get have to do with development, so here's the latest:

CHASE TOWER began construction early in the year. The Hills Plaza is now closed off, and will be realigned before being reopened in about 18 months.

GEICO has continued to be quiet. I spoke with their attorney last month, who informed me that, at present, the company is not acting on any development. The workforce in the building has been increasing, however, so parking on Brookdale streets may become an issue again.

CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY is awaiting pending decisions regarding its re-zoning. The Village of Chevy Chase and the Citizens' Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights filed suit to object to the Planning Board's approval of increased density on the Wisconsin Circle portion of the site. Arguments in that case have not yet been heard. Brookdale resident Norman Knopf is representing the community and was successful in obtaining a delay so that County Council's actions on the remainder of the site can be taken into account -- see below.

With regard to the new retail buildings along Wisconsin Ave. and development of the parking lot, administrative judge Philip Tierney issued his decision in February. He has recommended that County Council deny the re-zoning unless the Land Company submits up-to-date traffic data. He also called for the Land Company to evaluate more intersections than they had done originally. The Land Company has not indicated any willingness to revise their traffic information. At this point, it is County Council's turn to act on Tierney's recommendation. Both the Land Company and the community have requested the opportunity to submit oral arguments before County Council; the Council will vote on April 12 whether or not to hear oral arguments. [This shows one of the many good reasons to vote in the special election April 18 to ensure you are represented well on the County Council.]

It is difficult to predict a time frame for resolution of the Chevy Chase Land Company issues. HECHT'S has been moving ahead with their plans to build. They intend to file for site plan approval this spring. Since their proposed plans differ slightly from those approved last year, they may first have to file revisions before proceeding. If approvals move quickly, New England Development (NED, Hecht's' developer) says they could begin construction within a year.

NED discussed management of the proposed community center with both the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the YMCA. Currently, NED is negotiating a contract with the YMCA, which has assembled a sample program of classes and activities.

I have been asked why "Rec" will not be running the center, so I turned to Bob Cope, Brookdale resident and chairman of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, for insight. Bob is primarily responsible for securing a substantial community center as part of the development. He explained that, because of operational funding constraints, the Dept. of Recreation has been reluctant to take on management of community centers. The current trend in the county is for private groups (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs) to run centers on a contract basis. Those centers that are run by the Dept. of Recreation were "adopted" by community groups who lobbied County Council for an increase in Rec's budget to allow for the additional staff. In this case, although construction of the community center was recommended by the county, the center is being built by a private entity and so is not a county facility. Bob noted that the Rec was reluctant to become involved at all, whereas the YMCA was extremely interested.

BROOKDALE CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS: Moving away from development, I would like to invite interested residents to run for office. The Executive Committee consists of the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and four Vice Presidents, one from each geographical region of Brookdale. There will be at least two vacancies on the Executive Committee this year. The nominating committee members have not been confirmed as we go to press, but if you would like to run or nominate someone, please call Jean Junior (301-951-6371) who will put you in touch with the nominating committee.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to be your Association President - I offer my best wishes and hearty support to my successor and other members of the Executive Committee. I look forward to continuing to serve Brookdale in a less formal capacity. Working with the Association is a great way to meet other members of the community, and I strongly encourage everyone to get involved.

Tait Park

by Bill McCloskey

A new neighborhood group has been incorporated to maintain and beautify a triangle of land just across the street from Brookdale -- Tait Park.

Tait Park is bounded by Western Ave., Ellicott St., and 48th St., all in northwest Washington. The land is often the site of an ad hoc soccer field, erected by neighboring parents. In previous years, debris from trees damaged by storms often laid untended by public works crews for months on end. Now, thanks to efforts by nearby citizens taking an interest in their neighborhood, the debris is gone and the grassy area is frequently mowed.

The purpose of "Friends of Tait Park, Inc." is to beautify this sliver of green at the border of D.C. and Maryland. To that end a landscape architect has been engaged to advise on future enhancements to the parcel.

Western Ave. Speed Reminder

by Bill McCloskey

At the request of the Western Avenue Citizens' Association, Metropolitan D.C. Police placed a "speed trailer" on Western Ave., N.W., between River Road and Westmoreland Circle for several days in late March. The device is designed to flash the speed of the nearest oncoming vehicle on an electronic sign as a notice to speeders and law-abiding drivers.

"It serves as a reminder" that the neighbors are serious about wanting drivers on Western Ave. to maintain a safe speed, said Lucia Leith, a former president of the citizens group. "We're very pleased that we could have it. We have a standing request," she said. "You can definitely tell the difference (in speeds) when it is there."

The posted speed limit on Western Ave. is 25 miles an hour.

Leith also told *The Bugle* that her association is working with District and Montgomery County police to increase their cooperation along Western, which is the boundary line between the two jurisdictions.

Ft. Bayard Park Improvements

by Bill McCloskey

Citizen activists on the D.C. side of Western Avenue have entered talks with the National Park Service to cooperate on making Fort Bayard Park at River Rd. and Western Ave. a safer and more pleasant place for kids to play, dogs to walk, and neighbors to congregate.

Maria Vasquez, newly elected president of Friends of Fort Bayard Park, Inc., said it will be even more important to have "some nice green space" once the development on the GEICO and related sites eliminates some existing grassy areas.

The group, which meets monthly at the Tenley-Friendship Library on Wisconsin Ave., N.W., envisions updated (and safer) playground equipment placed on a rubber matting laid on a cement base. The organization would pay for the equipment and the Park Service would install and maintain it, under the plan being proposed.

The current facility uses wood chips as a base and the wood chips must constantly be replaced.

Working with the Park Service has been a challenge, Vasquez says. "They say they are in the business of preserving parkland, not the business of providing recreational equipment." Nevertheless, she finds the Park Service staff assigned to the project friendly and interested.

"We understand their bigger issues and we appreciate their help," Vasquez said. "We

want to sign a contract with them and get moving."

"We would be required to keep the current footprint" for the updated playground, Vasquez said. The project is complicated by the fact that Fort Bayard is a Civil War era fort, one of several that surrounded Washington, D.C. Because of the National Historic Preservation Act, "we would have to do an archeological dig in order to move things," she said.

Residents who use the park are also looking for simpler improvements to make the area "more neighborly." Benches, trash cans, and more plantings are amenities on the shopping list.

But even simple changes need to conform to laws governing use and maintenance of historic sites. The Park Service specifies only native plants may be grown on the property. So, even a proposed donation of 1,000 bulbs by the America the Beautiful Foundation will need to be scrutinized to make sure the plants meet the guidelines. The Park Service has assigned a landscape architect to work with the citizen activists on plans for the site.

Once completed and agreed to, plans will be examined for environmental compliance and submitted to D.C. City Councilwoman Kathy Patterson and eventually the U.S. Commission on Fine Arts.

While all of that is going on and even before any work is done, neighbors are hoping the Park Service will do its part to keep the existing facility as nice as possible by being a little more careful about the way its maintenance workers treat the grounds. Crews often drive their trucks on the wet earth leaving tire tracks.

Seed money to get the organization incorporated came from the D.C. Advisory Neighborhood Commission. A fund-raising campaign is also on the drawing boards.

The next meeting of Friends of Fort Bayard Park is slated for Saturday April 15 at 4 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Tenley-Friendship D.C. Public Library. Meetings are held monthly. "We'd love to have more participation from folks

from the Maryland side," Vasquez told *The Bugle*.

Street Sweeping

When signs appear that announce street sweeping "in a few days," please make a special effort not to park on the street until the sweeper truck comes through. Ask neighbors to comply. The street sweeper is not required to do any block if cars are parked there! That's why the April sweep missed so much of our area. The sweeper is scheduled to return in June.

Brookdale Association Update

Officers: There is a new Vice President for Orcharddale: Diane Shea. Welcome, Diane!

Permit Parking: The three blocks that previously requested permit parking need to identify the hours of operation desired for the permit parking to become effective. Otherwise, if you would like to initiate permit parking on your block, contact your VP.

Brookdale Park Concerns

Feeling concerned about the state of Brookdale Park's landscaping and play equipment? Now that the lease and transition for the parkland has been completed, the county is responsible for its plan and maintenance. The person in charge is Gary Harman. To express your concerns write or call him at
Cabin John Maintenance Facility
7700 Tuckerman Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
301-299-0024

School Volunteers

Hands-on-Science

The Hands-on-Science (HOS) program (sponsored by the Montgomery County Council PTA Educational Programs, Inc. and previously funded in part by the National Science Foundation) provides supplementary science after-school programs in many Montgomery County elementary schools, including Westbrook. HOS provides training and a small stipend for adult leaders. Leaders range in age from graduate students to retirees and in background from mothers and fathers with an interest to scientists. Next year the curriculum covers Structure and Change with three 8-week terms in Anatomy, Chemistry, and Earth Science. Small groups of children (10-11) in grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-5-6 explore science topics together with a leader. Sometimes children who register must be disappointed for lack of enough leaders. You can make a difference! If you would like to be trained in the curriculum for this program in the fall, now is a good time to contact Michele Abraham 301-929-2330 at HOS.

Volunteer Tutors Wanted

Westland Middle School, located on Massachusetts Ave. near Little Falls Pkwy., 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 call Nancy Wolfe.

Want guidance on the schools within Montgomery County most in need of volunteers? Sally Marchessault, Coordinator of Volunteer and Community Resources on the Montgomery Co. Public Schools would be pleased to help. You may contact her at 301-279-3065 or Sally_Marchessault@fc.mcps.k12.md.us.

Brookdale Home Sales

by Kathleen McElroy

In the first quarter of 2000, there has been one settled sale in the Brookdale area: 4806 Dover Ct., which sold for \$400,000, reflecting an appreciation of just under 30% since August of 1997.

As of April 2, there are no houses for sale in our neighborhood, but five are under contract.

4725 River Rd, listed at \$259,500 and on the market for 13 days

4804 Park Avenue listed at \$349,500 and on the market for 9 days

5225 Baltimore Avenue listed at \$450,000 and on the market for 5 days (this house had been on the market last year for 96 days)

4805 Dover Ct listed at \$479,000 and on the market for 20 days

5327 Baltimore listed at \$274,500 and on the market for 0 days.

The market is very brisk and there is enormous demand for houses in this area. Clearly, most of the appreciation has occurred since 1997. The houses on Park, Baltimore, and at 4805 Dover have both sold once or twice in this decade and show solid appreciation.

Transitions

compiled by Kathleen McElroy and Gwen Lewis

Newcomers

John Regan

4723 River Road

Wayne Davis and Janet Sorel

4627 River Road

James Rose and Yonina Smuckler

4719 River Road

Behnaz Tallaeiminaei

5321 Willard Ave.

George Korengold

5014 Dalton Road

Tricia and Richard Rubenstein
4704 Dover Road

Paul, Martha, and Sam (2 yrs.) Grove
4802 Dover Court

Michele Herman
5328 Saratoga Ave.

Felipe and P. R. Floresca
4724 Merivale Road

Bill, Ann, and Evelyn (2 yrs.) Geary
5205 Murray Road

Births

Ella, daughter of Paul and Martha Grove, born November 25, 1999.

Barbara, daughter of Amy Kemper-Santos and Dario Santos, born February 15, 2000.

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 Gwen Lewis. *The Brookdale Directory* is useful in helping you navigate around the neighborhood. If you need a copy, contact Joy Sexton. Give Doug Pearson your names, phone numbers, address, e-mail addresses to add to the next update of the directory.

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