

THE BROOKDALE BUGLE

Web edition of the neighborhood newsletter

Scheduled for delivery April 2004

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Annual dues

Enclosed in this issue is an envelope for you to use in paying your 2003-2004 dues. Please send your check for \$20 payable to the Brookdale Citizens' Association. For answers to any questions, contact Regina Reed Crosson, Treasurer.

Nominating Committee

Please suggest nominees for Brookdale Officers to members of the Nominating Committee:

Mike Makuch (Brookdale N), chair (301-718-9134 ; 4615 Merivale)

Steve Heyman (Orchardale) (301-654-1468; 5300 Sherrill)

Barbara Ingersoll (Brookdale S) (301-229-2897; 4838 Park Avenue)

deLancey Webster (Wohlshire) (301-657-4790; 5106 Westport)

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

With trees budding and the sun growing stronger daily, spring is in the air, and that means the Brookdale Citizens' Association annual meeting is approaching. Not by chance do we convene in May - a time of renewal - to elect officers and discuss issues affecting our community.

Our annual meeting will be held at Westbrook Elementary School on May 11 at 7:30 pm. The nominating committee, headed by Mike Makuch, invites all residents to participate in the association's election by forwarding names of candidates.

Importantly, in addition to electing officers, we will have the opportunity to hear, first hand, about the development activities of the Chevy Chase Land Company. Our neighbors Ron Tripp, chair of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, and Bob Cope, a member of the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District Advisory Committee, will give a presentation that should answer many of your questions.

At our annual meeting, you also will have the opportunity to pay your once-yearly dues of \$20. What, in fact, does your \$20 buy you? A lot. To begin with, *The Bugle*, which keeps you apprised of critical activities that may affect the value, comfort and well-being of your home. Every issue carries articles by your neighbors on a variety of topics. In this copy are pieces that address the control of "McMansion" expansion, security issues, transportation, and the land development activities launched in Friendship Heights.

Your dues also support social activities that benefit all members of your family. The Halloween Party and July 4th celebration are not to be missed by anyone who enjoys having a good time socializing with established and new neighbors and nibbling happily through the festivities. The annual Block Party has become an anticipated event, noted for international foods, great music and, again, relaxed socializing.

We are fortunate to live in this vibrant and convivial neighborhood. All of us have a stake in maintaining its beauty, safety and friendliness. Please participate in the citizen's association. You will benefit from it.

Sue Bruser
Acting President

AGREEMENT REACHED ON PARK AVENUE DEVELOPMENT--Barbara Ingersoll and Nancy La Vigne

As reported in the January and April 2003 issues of the *Bugle*, Brookdale residents joined together to resist "McMansionization" of the neighborhood and, after much time, money, and hard work, their efforts have met with success.

To recap: several residents whose properties abut 4811 Park Avenue retained legal counsel to oppose subdivision of that property into two buildable lots unless the two homes constructed were of an acceptable size and design for the neighborhood. When the initial developer withdrew after learning of potential neighborhood opposition to the subdivision, Douglas Monsein of Douglas Construction Group purchased the property. In March, 2003, Mr. Monsein met with the neighborhood group and their attorney, Norm Knopf (a Brookdale resident and past-president of the Citizens' Association) to present artist's renderings of the kind of homes he proposed to build. In a subsequent letter, he expressed a willingness to work with the group to "determine the most likely and comfortable footprint in width, length and height, maintaining an element of reasonability."

Residents hoped that an agreement could be reached prior to a hearing before the Planning Board, initially scheduled for April 10, 2003. Unfortunately, the process dragged on for many months. Frustration levels escalated when the developer failed to provide the specific information about the size, design, and set backs of the two houses he planned to build--information that was necessary to effectively negotiate with him, as well as to legally bind him to certain size and design restrictions. In a last-ditch effort to avoid a lengthy (and costly) legal battle, Mr. Knopf drafted an agreement based upon assumptions about the footprints of the two homes, as well as their heights, setbacks, and landscaping. This document became the basis of negotiations with the builder and was signed by all parties and filed on December 8, 2003. On January 6, 2004, the Planning Board approved the builder's request for a subdivision provided that he abide by the signed agreement.

The agreement was a victory for both Park Avenue residents and the neighborhood at large on a number of counts. First, the homes that will be built will be significantly shorter, smaller, and more attractive than those the builder had originally planned to build. In addition, the builder has agreed to provide landscaping in the form of mature trees and shrubs on both new properties, which should make them more aesthetically pleasing. Overall, this victory sends an important message to other builders considering tear-down work in the neighborhood: if you are going to build in Brookdale, be prepared to work in

collaboration with residents or go elsewhere.

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT DISTRICT--Robert L. Cope

Several local Montgomery County Committees advise the County Executive and County Council and make recommendations on matters relating to Friendship Heights. One of these organizations is the Friendship Heights Task Force, on which Mike Makuch represents Brookdale.

Another such organization is the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District (TMD) Advisory Committee. The TMD includes the Friendship Heights Metro Station and the buses that service the station. I sit on this committee for the Citizens' Coordinating Council on Friendship Heights along with representatives from Chevy Chase Village, Somerset, Somerset House, Friendship Heights Village, and local employers. Our main focus has been to distribute subsidized subway passes to local employees, which is a policy I do not support wholeheartedly since the Federal tax system already subsidizes the purchase of transit passes by employers. We are currently reviewing pedestrian access to the subway station, possible expansion of ride-on bus service, and traffic flow on Wisconsin Avenue. The Friendship Heights TMD Advisory Committee will issue its annual report shortly. I will provide you with the computer link when it becomes available.

When the new Chevy Chase Land Company building is completed on Wisconsin Circle, a Metro Transit Store will be located on the first floor level. The TMD will distribute brochures about its activities from the store.

You may not be aware that the Friendship Heights Metro Station is one of the County's big success stories. Silver Spring and Shady Grove, with their massive parking and bus facilities, lead the County stations in ridership. However, following right behind is Friendship Heights, which has more riders than Bethesda. We are monitoring closely the Chevy Chase Land Company and Hecht's construction sites because we do not want construction to discourage Metro rail use.

Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, at 8:30 AM, at the

Bethesda Service Center offices on Edgemoor Lane. Please join us if you are interested.

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULES FOR CHEVY CHASE LAND COMPANY AND HECHT'S SITES

Chevy Chase Land Company

February, 2004 All retail closed except Giant, Blockbuster, and Chevy Chase Bank. Demolition began on vacated buildings. The office building above Clyde's is to be removed leaving a one-story building.

April, 2004 The sidewalk and two lanes of Wisconsin Circle are closed, making the Circle a one-way street from Wisconsin toward Western for one year.

Summer, 2004 Giant, Blockbuster, and Chevy Chase Bank close. The entire site is under construction.

June, 2005 Clyde's reopens.

Fall 2005 Two high-end retail buildings open on Wisconsin Ave. between Clyde's and Saks.

February-June, 2006 New office building opens with neighborhood retail located on first floor.

Hecht's

June, 2004 Digging begins on the parking lot. Hecht's remains open until a new building is completed.

Fall, 2006 New Hecht's opens, along with a few adjoining small retail stores. Demolition of the old Hecht's building begins along with excavation on the remainder of the site.

Spring, 2008 Opening of additional small retail stores, community center, apartment building, and office building.

BROOKDALE HOME SALES, FIRST QUARTER OF 2004 -- Kathleen McElroy

There has been one sale in the neighborhood: 4844 Park Ave was listed for \$459,500, went under contract in 6 days on March 3. The house was previously sold in March 2003 for \$435,000.

There are two new listings in the neighborhood:

4721 River Rd., listed at \$825,000

5025 Brookdale Rd. listed at \$749,500

The weather may have had something to do with the lack of inventory this quarter which is true for a great deal of the Washington area. Interest rates have been fluctuating in a small range all quarter and buyers are still plentiful and eager to purchase a home.

PUBLIC SAFETY IN BROOKDALE--Nancy La Vigne, VP, Brookdale South*

Concerns about public safety in the Brookdale community tend to ebb and flow from season to season, with interest in crime peaking after a highly publicized criminal event or a series of troublesome offenses, and waning during a relatively crime-free period. In February, the Executive Committee became aware of two attempted car break-ins on River Road. In discussing the implications of these events for public safety in our neighborhood, the Committee determined that Brookdale citizens would benefit from our reporting crimes in the *Bugle*. We considered but rejected the idea of reporting only crimes that had been reported to the police. Such incidents would not include the types of low-level victimizations that we usually experience, such as broken windows/attempted entries, theft of lawn equipment, and vandalism, because such crimes are rarely reported to the police. We also felt it would be valuable to use the block captain system to disseminate crime information. For this to work, we ask residents to report any victimizations block captains, and them to report the incidents to the area VP. This method will increase awareness on the parts of both block captains and VPs about emerging crime problems - however small - so that they can spread the word for residents to be on guard. We want to emphasize that our purpose in publishing crime incidents is not to elevate anxiety, but rather to increase awareness so that residents can take extra precautions. It is our hope that this column will take very little space in the *Bugle* (i.e., that there is little or no crime!) and that most of it will be dedicated to providing helpful crime prevention tips to residents. Here are a few starters on preventing burglaries.

Most burglars are opportunists. They don't necessarily start the day planning to commit a crime, but opportunities present themselves that suggest the crime will be relatively easy to commit, the risks of apprehension are low, and the pay-off (in terms of cash or stolen items) is worth the effort. Taking a few simple steps to reduce the opportunities presented to would-be criminals can be an effective crime prevention strategy. Thus, preventing burglaries is as simple as increasing the effort to commit the crime, increasing the risks of the criminal being detected and apprehended, and reducing the rewards of a successful burglary.

Increasing the Effort

Increasing the effort usually involves what's called "target hardening"--insuring that adequate locks and other security devices are on all access points to your house and property. Having a deadbolt lock on all your doors may seem like common sense to you, but residents often overlook access points to other valuable items, such as lawn equipment and bicycles. Thus, it's important to lock your garage, your shed, and your fence if you have one.

Increasing the Risk

Increasing the risk of a burglar being caught can be as simple as providing adequate lighting in and around your house and keeping shrubs low so that they do not obscure your home and provide cover to a criminal who is trying to gain entry. We can all play a part in increasing the risk by looking out for one another. Tell neighbors if you are leaving town and ask them to pick up your newspapers and mail for you. (Better yet, cancel your papers--papers left on door steps are tell-tale signs to burglars that nobody's home.)

Reducing the Reward

Burglars are often enticed to a particular home because they believe that it will be a lucrative venture. One great way to be victimized is to leave empty boxes from electronic goods curbside for trash pickup. Burglars are known to target homes with such boxes under the assumption that inside the house there is brand new, valuable equipment for the taking.

Most of these crime-prevention tactics are common sense, but with our busy lives it's often easy to forget to practice them. We hope you will take some time to do so, and will share--through your block captains and VPs--any information you have that will enable us to make Brookdale as safe as possible.

*Nancy holds a Ph.D. in criminology from Rutgers University, where she concentrated on crime prevention and the geography of crime.

CRIME ALERT

Recently, we learned that a Brookdale residence on Western Avenue has experienced, on three separate occasions, an incident whereby a man has run toward the front door of the home attempting to gain entry. The residents refused to open the door, and the man ran away. Each of these events involved a different perpetrator, suggesting that this is a new tactic employed by a number of offenders and/or that the home is a highly desirable target. We're following up with the police and will provide more information as it becomes available. In the meantime, it's best to keep your door locked and not to open it to strangers.

LOST AND FOUND on Wednesday, March 3rd--Fiona Carson

Below is a list of the items I collected today on my walk through Brookdale Park.

Bag of dog poop
Empty bag of Orville Redenbachers popcorn
Empty Dannon Yoghurt pot
MacDonalds paper cup
Empty plastic bottle of OFF Insect Repellent
Empty bag of Rip Rolls Candy (Strawberry flavor)
Clementine peel
Used and soggy paper towels
Squashed can of Natural Ice drink
Empty bag of MacDonalds French Fries

'nuff said!

TIP FOR A GRUBBY GARDEN--Nancy McCloskey

Several weeks ago the "Brookdale Planters" sat around my dining room table discussing the winter weather and other plant-related themes. One hardy planter who had actually been outdoors looking at her winter-weary plants mentioned a problem. She had holes in her grass. Something had been digging and literally removing the grass from her lawn. What was the problem? After some questions, I think I know. She had grubs in her lawn and probably moles, voles, raccoons, opossums and maybe even skunks digging for them. These animals call the grubs food when they are hungry. (This has since been verified by the capture of 2 raccoons in the yard.)

What are these grubs? There is more than one kind of grub in our soil; some are all white, some are white with black heads, and some are white with red heads. All are a nuisance, but the worst is the red head. It is known as the Japanese Beetle Grub. This grub over winters in this part of the country as a partially grown grub in the soil below the frost line. In the spring the grub resumes feeding, primarily on the roots of grasses, and then pupates near the soil surface. Adults begin to emerge between the third week of May and the end of June, depending on warmth of the soil.

You will be familiar with these adults. They are very shiny, flying critters who land especially on your roses, but also on almost any other thing you are trying to grow and will want to eat. By the time they reach the flying stage their skeletons are very hard, making them almost impossible to get rid of by using a spray. So the best way to rid yourselves of them is to pick them off and put them into a plastic bag that holds water with some Clorox in it.

If you want to be a smart gardener, use "Milky Spore." Milky spore are naturally occurring microorganisms that reduce grub populations. I could go into more detail about this, but don't think you need it. Just go to your favorite store and ask for "Milky Spore" which is sold under that name. You simply put one teaspoon 4 feet apart all across your lawn, flower beds and other property. It takes about sixteen months for it to fully work. Then you're set for the next twenty years. How's that for simple? If you can get your neighbors to do the same thing, you'll never be bothered with the Japanese Beetle again. Just think. We can have a Japanese Beetle Free Zone.

One more thing. Don't worry about Brood X of the Cicada. They are really harmless; just noisy. If you are worried about protecting very young trees, don't use cheesecloth. Cheesecloth will look terrible after the first rain (believe me I have tried it). Instead, buy a light plastic screen that is used to cover ponds. It has small holes and will keep the Cicadas' out.

Come to our next meeting to learn more exciting solutions to your gardening problems!

LYME DISEASE ALERT--Fiona Carson

In December 2003, one resident became seriously ill with Lyme Disease which caused meningitis, and involved a two-week hospital stay, a further six weeks off work, and an antibiotic drip for that length of time. He believes that the disease was contracted in the Brookdale neighborhood.

Lyme Disease is caused by the bacteria transmitted by an infected deer tick, and can be extremely serious if left untreated. The good news is that it can be prevented, or treated with a course of oral antibiotics if caught early enough. Simple precautions should be taken to avoid a tick bite, such as wearing pants tucked into socks in wooded areas, and checking our bodies daily for ticks and removing them correctly. Visit the American Lyme Disease Foundation Website at <http://www.aldf.com/> for more information on prevention, symptoms, and treatment.

BLOCK CAPTAIN ANNOUNCED: Anne Lewis is now block captain for the 5300 block of Saratoga.

INTERVIEW WITH PRINCIPAL OF WESTBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL -- Gwen Lewis

Mr. Michael Thomas is completing his 7th year as principal of Westbrook Elementary School, our local public school for grades K-5. Prior to becoming principal, he served as Principal in Training at Westbrook and then Assistant Principal at Rachel Carson Elementary School. He is married and has two sons in the Fairfax County schools.

The Westbrook school community consists of 290 students, 26 full- and part-time teachers, 6 para-educators, 2 administrative staff, 4 full- and part-time custodians, and the principal. It is one of the smallest elementary schools in Montgomery County. It serves not only Brookdale, but also Crest View, Glen Cove, Green Acres, Spring Hill, West Gate, West Haven, and Westmoreland Hills.

The foremost concern for Mr. Thomas on March 11, when we first spoke, was the loss of one of the school's leading teachers, Mrs. Kristi Meyer. Mrs. Meyer, until her untimely death from cancer, was a first grade teacher and led the Community of Caring at Westbrook. Many staff and children have been strongly affected by losing her. The school has provided supportive activities recently to help them cope with the situation.

Issues of accountability and assessment impact Westbrook, as well as other schools around the nation. As a whole, Westbrook children have performed very well on such tests as the Maryland School Assessment, used each year to test children in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades in math and reading. Teachers regularly use these test results to provide additional support to help all children excel.

There are three goals for local school improvement: (1) writing proficiency, (2) math improvement, and (3) character education to improve the environment for learning. These goals are foremost in Mr. Thomas' agenda for the future. He plans to use technology as a teaching tool and integrate it throughout the curriculum.

When asked about recruitment of teachers, Mr. Thomas indicated that due to its reputation Westbrook has no problem attracting and retaining fine teachers.

The school building was modernized in 1990. He does not anticipate further physical improvements in the near future. The county has committed to building gymnasiums at those elementary schools, like Westbrook, that do not have one. It will be 7-8 years, however, before Westbrook has such a facility. Recently, the County improved drainage of the school's playing fields so that they can be used sooner after rains. Last year the playgrounds were redesigned to be more accessible to wheelchairs.

Mr. Thomas feels that the level of parent volunteerism makes Westbrook a uniquely excellent school. There are a number of activities that parents carry out that could be expanded to include other interested adults, in particular, the Spring and Fall campus cleanups and volunteer work assisting students and teachers. He is working on incorporating the community at large into school efforts and will be informing us as to how Brookdale residents may become more involved in helping the school. Stay tuned!

SENIORS GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL, 2004

Bethesda-Chevy Chase

Christina Avila, Overbrook Rd.

Jonathan Bruser, Merivale

Richard Freeman, Dalton

Coy Garrison, Andover

Britta Glennon, Dalton

Christina Hui, Western

Jessica Kurtz, Dalton

Hilary Levine, Westport

Joe Norton, Harrison

Mark Pathe, River

Holy Cross

Kathie Nickel, Cooper

Georgetown Visitation

Stephanie Cope, Brookdale

Holton Arms

Sophie Meissner, Brookdale

Sidwell Friends

Andy Sovonick, Brookdale

Washington Waldorf

Nina Blustein, Cooper

NOTICES

BROOKDALE BLOCK PARTY

This year's Brookdale Block Party will be held Sunday, May 16 from 4 to 7 pm at the

corner of Andover and Merivale. All residents are welcome. Please bring food or beverages for 6-8 people. Suggestion: A-G desserts; H-Q appetizers/entrees; R-Z beverages. (This is guidance only. If you have a specialty, bring it!)

The rain date is Sunday, May 23, 4-7 pm. If you have questions or wish to help, contact Nancy Wiegand, 301-654-0634.

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.

GARDENING ENTHUSIASTS

Next Event: Trip to Hillwood Gardens

To join us, contact Nancy McCloskey, organizer
301.652.7583

NEWCOMERS

Anne Lewis & Tom Blanton and their daughters Katie and Caroline have settled in at 5304 Saratoga.

Bob and Sam Olins, 4626 River Rd. arrived recently from Chicago.

BIRTH

Jacob Dzvi Nicolson was born to David and Tamar Nicolson, Merivale Rd., on March 3.

A WESTBROOK UNDER THE SEA CARNIVAL

Come to Westbrook's 60th annual Spring Carnival, Friday, May 7th 3:00 to 7:30 p.m., rain or shine. All are welcome to this wonderful community event that is fun for all ages. Admission is free. The school is at 5110 Allan Terrace. Carnival attractions include a moon bounce and giant slide, a dunk tank, an obstacle course, karaoke, super chance, face painting, spin art, and games for all ages. In addition, the carnival features white elephant and bake sales, and

book nook, as well as food concessions.

LADIES' TENNIS!

Anyone interested in forming a Brookdale Ladies Singles Tennis Ladder? The ladder will run through the spring, summer and fall seasons. Participants on the ladder will challenge other players, and play a match at mutually agreed upon date, time and location. Please send your name, address, email address, phone number and approximate skill level (beginner, early intermediate, intermediate, advanced intermediate, advanced.) to Regina Reed Crosson. I will send out complete playing rules and challenging procedures once we have an initial roster of players.

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 sweep where cars are parked, and they will not return!

WANT ADS

The Brookdale Bugle is soliciting help with the following jobs beginning in the fall: **distribution** and **reporting**. To volunteer call Gwen Lewis, editor.

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

Editor Gwen Lewis
[Paper] Layout Steve Langer
[Paper] Distribution Britta Glennon

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