

THE BROOKDALE BUGLE

Web edition of the distribution for April 2014

Photographs, addresses, personal emails, and phone numbers are omitted. Look to your paper copy!

Vice President's Report

– Dan Byerly, VP Brookdale Citizens Association

Dear Neighbors,

As I write this in late March, I am still looking out my window at snowy lawns and bare trees. Hopefully, as you read this, we will be peering out our windows at cherry blossoms and dogwood blooms. While this winter did not rival the meteorological absurdity of Snowpocalypse 2009 - 2010 or the record-breaking cold of 1994, it certainly made us wish we had never heard of an arctic vortex.

Fortunately, we had plenty of activity in Brookdale to keep us busy and warm. In February, Bethesda neighbor Ted Alden from the Council on Foreign Relations spoke about the political debate around immigration reform at a neighborhood wine and cheese.

Our new Yahoogroup listserv is up and running. Thanks again to Dave Montgomery for helping to set up the group and thanks to all the neighbors who have signed up so far. This listserv is a critical tool for communication in our neighborhood.

Two news stories that have been lighting up our listserv lately: safety at the Willard/River/Greenway intersection and the proposed development at Westbard.

At the beginning of the year, I reached out to the State Highway Administration (SHA) to join a conversation between the state and Westbrook Elementary principal Jennifer Lane. The SHA had asked Ms. Lane for a count of the number of students who cross River Road at Willard/Greenway as they walk to school each day.

I wanted to express our neighborhood concerns about this intersection. A neighborhood child was struck crossing the road last year and the crossing is used not only by Westbrook students, but also by middle school and high school students to access bus stops for late "activity" buses, children traveling to the pool over the summer, and other neighbors. I asked the SHA to consider steps to make the intersection safer for all neighbors.

In February, I received a response from the SHA. The reply stated that the intersection complies with national guidelines, which assume that our neighbors move at a brisk 3.5 miles per hour and can get far enough into the intersection in 7 seconds that turning cars will see them and avoid them. They also noted that the intersection will be improved to add warning signs, curb cuts, and "audible" pushbuttons and signals.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that these will calm traffic or enable safer crossing of this frightening intersection. I will follow up with the SHA this spring, but first, I would like to collect the opinions of our neighbors in an online survey. Please weigh in on traffic and pedestrian safety throughout our community at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DC3FHVS>.

Up River Road from this intersection, the new owners of the Westbard shopping center are beginning to share their vision for the future of this property. They have been inviting neighbors to share their ideas and feelings at a series of meetings. I would encourage all neighbors to attend these events with Equity One.

The Citizens Association will continue to support the Citizens Coordinating Committee of Friendship Heights (CCCFH), which will work to ensure that Equity One's final plans are in keeping with the residential character of the neighborhood and the needs of the community.

Enjoy the warm weather. I will see you all on May 7 at the annual meeting!

Sincerely,
Dan Byerly
Citizens Association Vice President

Transportation and Pedestrian Safety **– *Campbell Graeb***

The long delay in enforcing illegal parking on the GEICO side of Willard Avenue and Friendship Blvd is about to come to an end. In February, the Friendship Heights Transportation Management District Advisory Committee (TMD) unanimously agreed to request the installation of parking meters in those areas.

Montgomery County's Office of Parking will recommend times, durations and parking fees. Their staff will patrol the area, a function the police held was beyond their resources to enforce. In addition, the county will study the feasibility of installing meters along both sides of Wisconsin Avenue between Somerset Terrace (south of Dorset Avenue) and Willard Avenue

Undoubtedly, this will have an effect on Brookdale. Fringe parkers using Metro and nearby employees will be looking for free all-day parking in our neighborhood.

Fortunately, Brookdale is zoned to have restricted parking for residents. If a majority of block-face owners submit a petition, the county will install "Resident Permit Parking Only" signs. It is up to the residents to monitor violators, perhaps first with a friendly notice on the windshield of a parked vehicle, and then with reports to the police non-emergency number.

In other transportation news, there are now two Capital Bikeshare stations near us, one on Friendship Boulevard and one at the Metro bus station on Wisconsin Avenue.

The county is installing 51 bikeshare stations with 450 bikes. Capital Bikeshare can be joined for a day, three days, a month or a year. Bikes can be checked out from any of the 250+ stations in the area and returned to any station near the end of the trip. For information call 1-877-430-BIKE.

Also, the TMD has expressed concern about pedestrian safety issues, including improving crosswalk markings, lighting the bus shelter on Western at Cortland, and correcting the tripping hazard caused by the raised curbs at the northeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Wisconsin Circle.

Brookdale residents who have suggestions for improving traffic and pedestrian safety should contact Campbell Graeb.

Appreciation for Helping Hands – Ken Guenther

Three times this winter after a heavy snow there was a knock on the front door with a much-appreciated offer to help. With a cheerful, entrepreneurial spirit, Brookdale's teenage boys were helping neighbors cope. And they do a fine job--each time a different boy from the neighborhood showed initiative and each time the job was well and thoroughly done.

I particularly remember this young giant coming to the door--a boy from Dalton Road--he was 6'4" and somewhat timidly asking whether \$10 was too much? He's a sophomore at B-CC. Plays basketball.

It is neat and cool that the young are out there providing a helping hand to neighbors whose best snow shoveling days are over. It helps establish intergenerational understanding and equity.

Hot Times, Summer in the Hood – Bob Cope

This summer, things may well heat up on the land use front. Currently, Bethesda is in the middle of another sector plan, and the County Council may vote on April 1 to begin the Westbard sector plan in September. So put on the safety belts; even more development may be just over the horizon.

The Bethesda situation is interesting. In the early '90s, the Bethesda sector plan limited much of the height within the Woodmont Triangle (Old Georgetown to Battery Lane to Wisconsin and back to Old Georgetown) to about five stories.

Then the county turned to Friendship Heights in the late '90s, and approved construction up to about 12 stories. And so, with this new standard in mind the County returned to Bethesda with

another sector plan in the early 21st century that raised heights in the Woodmont Triangle to 18 stories.

Not to be outdone, White Flint sent out a clarion call for its own sector plan: Well, I will see you 18 stories and raise you another 12 stories. So the height limit in White Flint was set at 30 stories.

But the story does not end there. An aging Bethesda resident, an old cavalry trooper, took out his trusty bugle and sounded recall. The troops immediately reassembled in Bethesda, and we currently find ourselves in the midst of another Bethesda Sector Plan.

What is interesting is that no one in Bethesda seems interested in raising the ante above the White Flint limit of 30 stories. No sir, we in Bethesda are reasonable people; we are willing to settle for 30 stories. Will the height be raised again in Bethesda? Stay tuned; we should know something this summer.

While Bethesda has seen three sector plans in 20 years, poor, old, neglected Westbard has not seen a sector plan in more than 30 years (1982). But on April 1, the County Council is expected to instruct the Planning Board to start the sector plan process for Westbard either this September or at the very latest in September 2015.

Since Westbard does not sit on top of a subway station, it would seem that Bethesda densities and heights are inappropriate. Although some lone voice will surely call for a Purple Line station in Westbard, there is currently no support at the county and state level for expansion of the Purple Line.

Equity One has purchased the Giant site along with the adjoining properties, and they have held several community charets seeking support for redevelopment, which they state will also include some residential.

And keep in mind that the Sector Plan will not only study all of the properties along Westbard Avenue; it will also study all commercial properties along both side of River Road.

Any redevelopment in Bethesda and Westbard will certainly put more traffic on the streets. But, more to the point, such future development will place intense pressure on the B-CC school cluster and the Walt Whitman school cluster.

Although certain types of residential development, such as very expensive town homes or condos (empty nesters moving to Little Falls Place or Somerset House), do not generate large school populations, inevitably the residential mix will include less expensive condos and cheaper rental apartments (younger families) that will increase the school population.

The current policy for schools is fairly simple. Nothing happens until school capacity hits 105 percent. And by school capacity we do not mean the capacity of your local elementary school.

Rather, school capacity means the total capacity of all the elementary schools in the cluster. If there is more than one middle school then it means the total capacity of the two middle schools. Since there is only one high school in the cluster, school capacity means the capacity of the high school.

School capacity is measured separately for each of the three school levels. Once total school capacity hits 105 percent, development may proceed but the developer must pay (pay and go) into the school construction fund. Once total school capacity hits 120 percent then a building moratorium is imposed.

But rarely is a moratorium imposed since all similar schools in the cluster are counted in determining capacity.

So what happens when all the elementary schools in the cluster are not at 120 percent but your local elementary school is busting at the seams?

Well, the bad news is portables, but the good news is that portable classrooms do not count toward increasing classroom size for the cluster. Only brick and mortar counts toward increasing school capacity. And so generally by this time the county has already budgeted for expansion.

The bottom line is that even though local elementary schools have been renovated, the Bethesda and Westbard sector plans must be monitored closely in order to make sure there is a real plan for handling an increase in school population. If there is not a real plan, then there should not be real development. In addition, the time has probably come to adopt a policy that limits the use of portables.

Update on the new Brookdale Listserv – *Dave Montgomery*

We have set up a Yahoo Group as the neighborhood electronic medium to exchange information. It replaces the old comjet listserv. More than 110 people have subscribed to the new Group, and it is active.

As a summary of the process printed in the last Bugle: To subscribe, please go to the website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/BrookdaleCitizens>. You should see instructions to join the group, BrookdaleCitizens. If you already have a Yahoo account, you can use your existing account and add BrookdaleCitizens. If you do not have one, you will have to open a Yahoo account.

Once you are fully subscribed, you may post a message by e-mailing brookdalecitizens@yahoogroups.com. Only subscribers can post; that is, you must send your message from the e-mail account that the computer recognizes as a subscription.

Speaker addresses immigration issues

– Tino Calabia

Brookdale's Winter Meeting Feb. 6 featured Edward (Ted) Alden, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). A former Financial Times Washington bureau chief, Alden first became interested in immigration issues after 9/11, which led him to write "The Closing of the American Border: Terrorism, Immigration, and Security Since 9/11," published in 2009. Also in 2009, the CFR Independent Task Force on Immigration Reform, which Alden directed, issued its report.

Co-chaired by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and Thomas (Mack) McLarty, former President Clinton's chief of staff, the 19-member task force reached consensus on recommendations, "a lot of which are pretty relevant today," said Alden.

Before discussing them, he noted that the challenge for countries that are magnets for immigrants is the setting of quotas. Canada's and Australia's quotas are relatively flexible in that their quotas increase or decrease depending on the fluctuations of their economies and the kinds of skills immigrants bring with them.

In contrast, U.S. immigration quotas are set by Congress and change infrequently. The major changes in the last half of the 20th century took place in 1952, 1965, and 1990. A minor adjustment occurred in 1986, with passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), the attempt by the White House and Congress to fix the problem of undocumented workers.

Alden pointed out that the U.S. accepts about 1 million immigrants per year, more than the next four immigrant-admitting countries combined. In terms of percent of the population, immigrants in the United States make up about 12.5 percent, about the percentage that was here in 1910. But World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II sharply reduced the level to about 4 percent by the late 1950s.

The reforms since then resulted in today's higher percentage of 12.5, somewhat similar to the percentage in France and the U.K., and just below the percentage in Germany. On the other hand, the percentage in Canada is about 18 to 19 percent and around the same in Australia.

Admittance to the United States has been determined by family ties, that is, an applicant is related to a citizen or legal permanent resident here. The mid-1960s assumption was that assimilation would be facilitated by one's ties to family. A key question now is whether or not to favor admittance on the basis of skills and education. Some research indicates that such a criterion would make better sense in today's economy.

For example, suggested Alden, it is "not much of an exaggeration to say that Silicon Valley was created by smart Indian and Chinese immigrants." Foreign-born students tend towards science and engineering professions, and two-thirds of those on track for computer science Ph.D.'s in American universities are foreign born.

At the same time, said Alden, newer immigrants in the United States tend to cluster at both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum. While the highly educated new immigrants who are admitted for employment can be found in America's Silicon Valleys, the least educated, lesser skilled immigrants are often found laboring on American farms or in hotels and restaurants. Most Americans fall into the middle: skilled with some college education.

Now the rising number of Latino voters has put immigration reform "front and center in political Washington" for in 2012, 70 percent of Latinos cast their votes for Obama, while the Republicans lost Colorado, Florida, New Mexico, and other states. The Senate passed its bill by a bipartisan 68 votes.

The House of Representatives Republican leadership has also been "seriously considering the possibility of doing major immigration reform legislation," said Alden. After a recent party retreat, House Majority Leader John Boehner announced a set of reform principles, but the principles were quickly sidetracked by House Tea Party members' objections. Boehner explained the turn-about by saying that President Obama cannot be trusted in dealing with the principles the leadership laid out.

Nonetheless, outside of Congress, in an unusual development the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the AFL-CIO came to agree that the number of low-skilled immigrants admitted should vary depending on the health of the economy. When the rate of unemployment is significantly high, few low-skilled immigrants would be admitted. Conversely, when the rate of unemployment is low, as was the case in the late 1990s, then more such immigrants would be admitted.

Still, many view reform with skepticism. The 1986 IRCA law had attempted to stem the flow of undocumented workers. It led to the building of 700 miles of fences along the Mexican border, new towers, an increase in border patrol agents from 3,000 to about 20,000, plus manned flight and drone surveillance. Despite all those measures and expenses, illegal crossings, though fewer, are still attempted, resulting in human rights abuses and even scores of deaths in the desert and elsewhere.

Silhouettes in the Window Frame

– *author*

The dark silhouette is illuminated starkly before the golden glare of the late afternoon sun. Shoulders hunched, talons digging into the worn wood, eyes unblinking, the ominous figure calmly surveys its territory from the frame of the upper window of the circa 1910 barn-shed in Bob Cope's backyard on Park Place. The black vulture and his mate have returned to this dilapidated establishment - where Bob stores his trash cans and gardening supplies - every spring for the past four years.

Black vultures range across the eastern and southern United States, though they have been seen as far north as New England in recent decades. They live year-round (though some will migrate

short distances with the season) in forested areas, choosing to nest in dark cavities like caves, hollow trees, or abandoned buildings.

Their diet consists primarily of carrion, which they locate by keeping an eye on the lower-soaring turkey vultures. Black vultures have a weak sense of smell, so they rely on their sharper-sensed relatives to lead them to the next meal. They also lack voice boxes, so their vocal expression is limited to the occasional raspy hiss or grunt.

Being very social birds, black vultures like to roost in flocks. They maintain strong bonds with family throughout their lives. Pairs are monogamous. Two or three light gray-green or blue-white eggs are laid sans nest, right on the ground surface of their dwelling, and incubation by both parents lasts for about 40 days. Once they hatch, fledglings remain in the nest for about 80 days.

Come early March, the vultures appear in the window-frame of the barn-shed. Until June, they will occupy the second floor. In April, two or three naked gray heads with sporadic tufts of baby fluff will begin poking out the window. Their scrawny, grizzled bodies will take position in the window frame, perched in wait for the return of their parents with the next meal. Then one day come June, the family will leave their window-perch and soar on steady, silent wings into the distance.

And so the vultures silently reside over Brookdale every spring - the next time you walk up Brookdale Road, be sure to look for the dark silhouettes in the second-floor window of the circa 1910 barn-shed.

Annual Spring Stream Clean-up and Garlic Mustard pull! **– Mikel Moore**

Saturday, April 12, 10 am - 2 pm

Come help protect your local watershed and beautify our county parks!

Every Spring, the Little Falls Watershed Alliance joins forces with the Alice Ferguson Foundation to help clean the entire Potomac River watershed. Thousands of pounds of trash will be pulled out of the River, its tributaries and feeder creeks, during this month-long event.

Garlic mustard is an aggressive plant taking over our parks and crowding out native wildflowers. Along with cleaning the creek, we are pulling this herb and bagging it for disposal. Last year, we pulled over 1,000 pounds!

We'll have bags, and gloves to share. Come prepared to get muddy! Bring grabbers if you have to reach trash in trees and other hard to get spots.

Pre-approved for Student Service Learning (SSL) hours for Montgomery County Public Schools.

Sign-in stations:

Willard Avenue Park, at Willard Avenue & River Road.

Little Falls Parkway, between River Road & Massachusetts Ave.

Park at the Mass Ave. gravel parking area and walk North.

Bethesda Pool, at the corner of Hillandale & Little Falls Parkway

Real Estate Listings

– Phyllis Wiesenfelder

The start of the New Year has been very quiet for real estate in the neighborhood. As is true elsewhere in the close-in Chevy Chase neighborhoods, listing inventory has been low and demand continues to be very high.

- 5009 Westport Road was listed for \$1,129,000 and it settled for \$1,115,000 in January 2014, selling in 27 days. It is a colonial built in 1960 with 4 bedrooms and 4 full baths.
- 5308 Baltimore Avenue has been listed for rent for \$3,400. It is a 2 bedroom, 2 bath colonial built in 1947.

Phyllis Wiesenfelder, Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc. Office: 301-907-7600 Mobile: 301-529-3896

Transitions

Birth

- Sara Gustafsson and Alex Matos welcomed daughter Ella on October 7, 2013.
- Katia Casademunt, Brian Berry, and big brother Sebastian welcomed baby boy Camden on October 5, 2013.
- The Nielsen family has a new addition, Martha Lea, born Jan. 20. She joins her parents, Charlotte and Jakob, brother, Lukas, and sister, Rebekka.

Moves

- Erica Payne and Gene Haigh moved in October 2013 from New York. They work in national politics and originally hail from North Carolina.
- The Havens family will be moving to Connecticut in June. We wish them the best!

Deaths

- Martha Livdahl Grigg died at her home on Merivale Road Saturday, Feb. 22. Many neighbors will remember her as a walker, hand in hand with her husband Bill, of their shy dog Daisy. (Often these walks were near midnight after a symphony or play they had enjoyed.)

A prize-winning writer and editor, Martha had been in and out of hospital and rehab since Christmas for fluid buildup related to a uterine cancer diagnosed seven years ago. (She was a survivor of malignant melanoma and two breast cancers.)

Never happier than when giving a party, she also for 25 years organized a "Phantom Dinner" which people subscribed to knowing there would be no real event. The "dinners" raised about a million dollars for the House of Mercy, a Washington charity est. 1882 to help unwed mothers but which by the '70s, as needs changed, supported the Rosemount model preschool program for inner-city kids.

In 1991, when the "Phantom of the Opera" came to town, Martha sold out a night's performance for the charity and organized a real dinner preceding the show.

She was the director of GEICO's employee communications-- editing a prize-winning magazine and many pamphlets. She walked to work, giving her executive parking place to a coworker and arriving precisely ten minutes late- "you could set your watch on her," a friend there joked.

She wrote "Breast Cancer and You" and a Gothic mystery, "The Bethnal Inheritance," articles for the Post and Star, and a bestselling government publication explaining studies of breast implants. She was president of the Intl. Assoc. of Business Communicators/DC Metro and of the House of Mercy.

Husband William Grigg, two stepsisters and many cousins survive.

Notices/Classifieds

Party Entertainment

The Party Masters. Character-themed Parties. Face Painting. Balloons. Games & Magic. See some of our characters at www.thepartymasters.com. Master's Degrees in Drama and Education. New offering: TEA Party with a Princess, Tea and savories, plus dress up, manners lesson, and selected activities. Brooke is a drama teacher at Georgetown Day School, a Sag, AEA member and a new mom who grew up in Brookdale.

Beach House Rental

Beautiful N. Bethany home available to rent. Brookdale family home. See pictures at <http://www.ucsidata.com/beachhouse>. One back from Ocean with sweeping ocean views from 3 levels. Four bedrooms, 2 full 2 half baths.

8mm, camcorder, vhs to dvd and dvd duplication

Transfer your cherished memories to dvd. Or duplicate dvds for your business. First dvd \$15, each additional \$7. Brookdale neighbor and owner of Universal Conversion Services Inc. in Fairfax can be reached at 703-289-3005 for questions during business hours.

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Visit Brookdale online at <http://www.brookdalenews.org>

The deadline to submit articles, notices, and ads for the September 2014 issue of the Brookdale Bugle is 9pm August 25. Don't delay. Be early.