

Brookland & Bush Hill

NEWS

A Newsletter for the Residents of Brookland–Bush Hill and Gunnel Estates in Alexandria, Virginia

January 2005

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Ready or Not

Sharada Gilkey, *President BBHCA*—president@bbhca.org

Ready or not the holiday season is here with the new year just a few strides further. We have been fortunate that this past year has been mostly uneventful for our community. Although certain concerns come up again and again, like speeding, crime, commercial vehicles on the street, the occasional poorly kept property, etc., our community and Fairfax County continue to be one of the safest in the country. Although we always take them seriously, the above concerns pale in comparison to many other communities.

In fact the biggest proof of the success of our community and Fairfax County is also our nemesis—increased traffic. Fairfax County is such a great place to live that everyone wants to live here. The location of our community makes traffic a particularly thorny issue. We have six entrances/exits, but all connect to only one road, Franconia, which has evolved from a dirt road, to a two lane road, to a four lane thoroughfare over the last 60–70 years.

Over the past ten years we have tried, as a community, to get a light placed at one of those entrances/exits. Unfortunately, it took a terrible accident involving a young girl to get a light placed at Edison, immediately adjacent to Brookland Road. Despite diligent work on the part of the Lee District Supervisor's Office and

numerous traffic studies by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), including one concluded this past October, we have not been approved for a light. Although there is lots of traffic swirling around us, VDOT has concluded that the community does not have enough traffic to justify a light. But just as with other issues and concerns that make the rounds, the future will likely bring renewed life to this one as well.

Although we won't be getting a light at present, VDOT has listened and responded to a number of other concerns, major and minor. New signs will be posted at the three pedestrian crossings along Franconia (Westchester St, Edison High School, and the Van Dorn intersection) stating that drivers who do not yield to pedestrians in the crosswalks may be fined \$100-\$500. We hope that this will make clear to drivers that there is a law requiring them to yield to pedestrian using the crosswalks along Franconia. Please take extra care when approaching these pedestrian crosswalks.

VDOT also quickly fulfilled two other safety-related requests during November:

We asked that the crosswalks at Brookland Road and Westchester Street, adjacent to the Bush Hill Elementary School, be repainted. When the road was nicely repaved

BBHCA Community Meeting

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2004

7:00 pm

**Bush Hill Elementary School
(Cafeteria)**

AGENDA

- **Approval of Nov. 9 Meeting Minutes
(See page 5)**
- **Board and Committee Reports**
- **New Business**

PROGRAM

**Emergency Preparedness
The Red Cross**

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approximately two months ago, the lines and "SCHOOL" lettering on the street were covered over. This was a concern because this intersection is adjacent to the elementary school, many young children cross here, and traffic is heavy in the mornings.

Another safety and convenience issue was the overgrowth of grass along the sidewalks at two locations along Franconia, for which we understand the County is responsible for maintaining. The sidewalks needed edging where the grass had overgrown to such an extent that less than two feet of sidewalk remained for pedestrians, including children walking to and from school. Specifically, between:

- Bush Hill Drive and Jane Way

President's Message

Continued

■ Old Rolling Road and half-way to Westchester

(Due to the fallen leaves, I have not been able to determine if this request has been completed to date.)

January 11 Meeting

Randy Bowman, Chair of Neighborhood for BBHCA, has solicited the Red Cross to present at the January 11 meeting on emergency preparedness. Are you prepared for a major emergency? Do you know what to do? Do you have a plan? These are all serious questions that will be addressed at our next meeting by a representative from the Red Cross.

Five key aspects of emergency preparedness will be reviewed in detail:

1. Making a Plan: Planning ahead is the first step to a calmer and more assured disaster response. We will cover communication plans for your family and friends, communications from Fairfax County Emergency Management Officials, communication plans from the County Schools, picking meeting places, etc.

2. Building a Kit: What you have on hand when a disaster happens can make a big difference. Plan to store enough supplies for everyone in your household for at least three days. We will cover the recommended emergency supplies to have on hand.

3. Getting Trained: Learning simple first aid techniques can give you the skills and confidence to help anyone in your home, your neighborhood and your work. We will describe different Citizen Corps and Red Cross programs that give you this training.

4. Volunteering: Strong communities are better able to respond and recover from disasters. Volunteers strengthen ties and relationships within the community. We will cover different Citizen Corps and Red Cross

volunteer needs in your community.

5. Giving Blood: Blood is needed in times of emergency, but the ongoing need is great.

I believe this is one of the most important meetings we have ever scheduled. Although Fairfax County is one of the safest counties in the nation, it was also home to five of the terrorists who brought down the world trade centers. I have no reason to be afraid, but I have every reason to be prepared in case of an emergency, because emergencies come, ready or not.

In order to accommodate as many as possible, the Tuesday, January 11, meeting will be held in the Bush Hill Elementary cafeteria. I look forward to seeing you there at 7 pm. ■

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Membership Report

Darrell Meyer, *Vice President—Membership*
membership@bbhca.org

BBHCA has a total of 233 members as of 12/1/04. Thank you to all who have renewed and welcome new members! Your support is valued and appreciated. Remember that we are here for you.

Of the total, 78 are new members (or were not members during the previous membership year). Sixty-five (65) members from the prior membership year have not yet renewed. Last year we had a total of 223 members.

Streets with the highest percentage of members are:

Category	Street
< 20 homes	Hopark Drive (53%)
> 20 and < 40	Jane Way (59%)
> 40 and < 50	Bush Hill Drive (30%)
> 50 homes	Westchester Street (45%)

You can find membership application included on page 9 of this BBHCA newsletter or you can down-

load a copy from the BBHCA Web site at www.bbhca.org.

Dues are less than the cost of a deli sandwich, but membership in BBHCA is more than just about paying your dues. Membership is about being connected to your community. The other part of your dues is reading this newsletter, watching out for your neighbors, taking responsibility for your property, driving the speed limit, attending meetings once every two months for one and a half hours, picking up after your dog, reducing noise, stopping to say hello, and other priceless everyday activities that make us all want to live here.

Finally, still need volunteers for the survey, awards & scholarships, and summer yard sale. All ages and levels of experience accepted! Bring a buddy—you'll be pleasantly surprised that volunteering is fun and great experience. Looks good on your résumé too! ■

Neighborhood Watch Update

Randall Bowman—*Neighborhood Watch Coordinator*
(703) 922-9334 bowmanrand@verizon.net



Hope everyone had a safe and pleasant holiday season. It's still early December as I write this, and the police have provided some personal safety tips for the holidays when you are out and about, but these tips are applicable at all times.

■ Pay attention to your surroundings, and walk with an air of confidence

■ Avoid risky situations such as elevators and parking garages when suspicious persons are present. Trust your instincts.

■ When walking to your car, have your keys at hand so you can get in quickly

■ Carry a cell phone and keep it charged in case you need it. And keep it handy and not buried in the bottom of your bag

■ Do not carry large sums of money, and avoid carrying a purse when possible. If you do, wear it diagonally across your shoulder and

hold it in front of you

■ If using an ATM, find one that is used often and in a well-lit area.

We have continued to have a few thefts from cars in our neighborhood. As a reminder, please remember to always lock your car, and not leave any valuable items in plain view. If possible park in a lighted area. We also had one incident of vandalism, with several tires punctured on two vehicles.

If you see any suspicious activity in the neighborhood, including people, trucks, cars or noises, call the **Fairfax County Police Non-Emergency number, (703) 691-2131**. In the past I've heard this number can be hard to get through to. But I recently called to report a suspicious vehicle and they answered right away and were very responsive, and sent a car right over to check on it. I encourage you to call this number if you feel something isn't right. As always, in the event of any situation that is life-threatening

or immediately damaging to property, you should call 911.

As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, our January 11 meeting program will feature an Emergency Preparedness Clinic presented by the Red Cross. Topics will include planning, preparing an emergency kit, and information on first aid training and other programs, including (surprise!) blood donation. Hope to see you there! ■

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Bush Hill School's 50th Anniversary Memory Walk

**To celebrate Bush Hill's
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the school. The bricks will be
engraved with your specified
information, ie., name, birth
date, graduation date, etc.
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for any occasion!**

*Companies or organizations
giving donations of money,
goods, or services valued at
\$50.00 or more in support of our
50th anniversary celebration will
receive a brick in the Patrons
Section of our memory walk.*

*Bricks are \$35 and \$40,
depending on amount of copy.
Brick purchases must be made
by Jan 3, 2005. For more
information and to download
the order form at*

[www.fcps.edu
/bushhilles/50th.html](http://www.fcps.edu/bushhilles/50th.html)

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1235 or NascarLisa@aol.com

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Monday—
Saturday
9:00 am–5:00 pm

Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association Officers

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Secretary's Report Membership Meeting, Nov. 9, 2004

Prepared by Robert Michie

Present: Sharada Gilkey, Judi Connelly, Darrell Meyer, Robert Michie (Substitute Secretary), Michael Fogarty, Roy Rice, Randy Bowman

Call To Order: 7:07 PM

Reports and Announcements

- Minutes of September 14 Meeting: Approved.
- Treasurer's Report (Attached): Current balance \$18,201. Approved
- Membership: 206 Paid Members as of tonight. 64 brand-new members.
- Newsletter: Now being mailed to BBH residents. 30 Certificates of

Appreciation given to the former delivery team.

- Next Meeting: January 11 2005.

Subject: Emergency Preparedness.
Speaker: American Red Cross.

New Business

The following donations were approved by Voice Vote:

- \$100 for Koinonia
- \$100 for FCPD CAC (Lee District)
- \$100 for Franconia Volunteer Fire Department
- \$100. for Bush Hill Elementary School
- \$100 for Friends of John Marshall Library

Winners of Gift Drawing for Completing Membership Survey. Winners received gift certificates donated by Red, Hot, and Blue, a Kingstowne restaurant.

- Carol Render and Susan Sommers - \$50
- Greg Dudding - \$40.00
- Jim and Susie Bersch - \$20.00

Volunteers needed:

- Awards and Recognition Committee
- Newsletter Advertising Coordinator
- Survey Coordinator
- Yardsale Coordinator

South Van Dorn Street Phase III Opening Delayed until January 2005

By Robert Michie

The long awaited Van Dorn Street extension to Telegraph Road is not quite ready to open at press time. A problem with the design of the lane striping threatened to interfere with pedestrian passageways on the east side of Telegraph Road, says Jeff McKay, aide to Lee District Supervisor Dana Kauffman. There is still hope that the road itself will open in December, but the official opening will be in January 2005.

Van Dorn Street Extended has been noted for its delays since it was first proposed in the 1970's. In its original form, it was called the Lockheed Boulevard Extension, and the intent was to drive the road straight through Hunley Meadows Park all the way to Route 1. Fortunately, that part of the plan was killed in 1990, and Hunley Meadows Park was preserved.

A strange three-part partnership was formed to build the connection from Franconia Road to Telegraph Road: Halle Enterprises (the developers of Kingstowne) teamed with Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County Department of Public Works to build the road, now known as South Van Dorn Street Phase III. Construction actually began in 1989, but was stopped almost at once by the Army Corps of Engineers. Halle Enterprises did not acquire the proper wetlands permits. An environmental assessment followed that identified many impact mitigation needs. The mitigation features (wetland replacement property, water control ponds, and road reengineering) had to be put in place before construction could begin. The closest neighbors, Tartan Village, also wanted certain features

incorporated into the design to protect their neighborhood.

Construction finally commenced in 2002, but was slowed by two years of particularly heavy rain. What finally took shape was a four lane divided highway with a control signal at Telegraph Road. Because of wetlands preservation concerns raised by the Corps, noise concerns of Tartan Village, and the universal desire to protect Dougue Creek and Hunley Meadows Park by everyone, the road is routed through an extremely narrow channel. Unlike many other Lee District roads, this one has no room for sidewalks or even bicycle lanes. Priority was given to greenway restoration instead.

On the other hand, the new Van Dorn Street provides superior access to South Kings Highway, and Telegraph Road. The expectation is

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Van Dorn Street


Continued

that the connector will take pressure off of Rose Hill Drive. It also opens up new routes to Lee District and Hunley Meadows Parks. Pedestrian signaling at the Telegraph Road intersection, unfortunately, does not help foot traffic to cross Telegraph Road. Time will tell if the road in its present state is too hazardous for pedestrians and bicyclists to use.

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Message from Supervisor Kauffman—Resilience

The last months of the year are a time I've always found conducive to reflection. As a private citizen I focused on personal and family issues; as an elected official, my thoughts range somewhat farther afield. My sense in the waning days of 2004 is that we've been through a lot and we're a little frayed around the civic edges. Frayed-not torn and that's an important distinction. It's a mark of our resilience and our community spirit that we continue to be the Lee District where folks want to live and work.

Perhaps, in the way of people who just roll up their sleeves and get going on those big and small projects that have to get done, you don't see yourselves as exceptional. Consider, though, what we've gone through in just the last few years and how we've continued to thrive.

In 1999, the rollover to the new century threatened a world-wide computer meltdown.

In 2000, the first year of the new century brought us the hanging chad election and a presidential uncertainty we'd never seen in our lifetime.

In 2001, our world and our security were shaken by the terrorist attacks of September 11.

In 2002, another September brought the horrors of the sniper attacks.

In 2003, Hurricane Isabel said 'Oh, so you think you're out of the woods-think again! She took aim and we were months recovering from the flooding and the downed trees.

In 2004, we went about our daily lives with the background noise of a hard fought presidential election, vague but insistent hints of more terrorist attacks, and the shocking news that flu vaccine was almost nowhere to be found.

So, why is this elected official smiling? Because through it all, we have hung together, worked together, fought our way through a maze of complicated issues, and done our

darndest to make our community a good place to live, work, and raise our families.

Speaking of the Flu. . .

As I write this column, the County's Department of Health has just received 10,000 doses of adult influenza vaccine from the Virginia Department of Health. Our local health officials have been working with the private medical community to determine the number of people at high risk for medical complications from flu. Based on information provided by County private physicians, the Health Department will distribute vaccines to primary health care physicians most likely to care for high risk patients.

During this flu season, our County Health Department will have the latest vaccine information. You can reach the Health Department's information line at 703-246-2411.

Shaping Our Own Landscape

My town meeting last month focused on land use—a subject that directly affects our quality of life. Speakers discussed the many elements that go into land use planning, including County planners, transportation, the Planning Commission, and the citizen-led Lee District Land Use and Transportation Advisory Committee. This is a timely subject since in 2005, this area of the County will be revisiting the Comprehensive Plan, the document that guides land use. The Comprehensive Plan is not a guide for developers in search of opportunities. It's a statement crafted by citizens today looking out for what the community should look like in the future.

If you were not able to attend the town meeting and are interested in the subject, I have tapes of the presentations. If you would like to borrow one, please call my office at 703-971-6262. ■

2005 General Assembly Session Unfolds

Delegate Mark Sickles

The every-other-year, six-week “short” session of the General Assembly begins on January 12. As always, budget politics will permeate almost every debate. State “general fund” revenues have grown at a pace even greater than the rather positive budget forecasts of a year ago. Despite these unplanned surpluses, the continued substantial growth in the K-12 population, the demand for seats in our public colleges and universities, our aging population and the growth of our stringent-eligibility Medicaid program will eat up most, if not all, of the unplanned revenue. In fact, Senate Majority Leader Walter Stosch (R-Henrico) has stated “there is no surplus” despite the fact that upwards of \$900 million in general fund revenue will be allocated this winter in the mid-course adjustments to our two-year budget.

Defense and homeland security spending has produced the hottest economy in the country here in Fairfax County. It is fueling the demand for housing that continues to drive up real estate prices, a familiar subject that now dominates every cocktail party conversation in the 43d district. While the Board of Supervisors is poised to lower the tax rate once again, it will very likely not be enough to keep real estate tax bills from going up to pay for needed services generated by our growth. Part of the coming tax rate cut is made possible because the General Assembly bit the bullet last year and made some difficult but necessary decisions to get our fiscal house in order. For example, the state is now paying a somewhat larger share of Fairfax County’s K-12 budget, the place where 53 percent of your local property taxes is also invested.

Transportation, left out of last year’s budget mix, will get some long overdue consideration during the upcoming session. There will be proposals, from the Governor on down, to give a one-time infusion of cash to the transportation trust fund for road construction. In earlier flush times, attempts were made to use “general funds” for transportation (during bad times, the opposite occurred). Unfortunately, each time there was an attempt to send “general fund” revenues to VDOT, revenues would soon disappear in an economic downturn. That is why many of us believe that any surpluses should not be used to underpin a new base for ongoing programs, but be used for capital expenditures, e.g., transportation improvements.

Like most states, Virginia depends on “user fees” to produce “non-general” funds, mostly the gas tax, to support the highway construction program and to maintain our heavily used roads in good condition. At this point, nobody expects our relatively low gas tax (41st in the nation) to be raised, even to the level imposed by our immediate neighboring states. Nevertheless, I will be re-introducing a modest bill to simply restore the purchasing power of the gas tax to its 1986 level *subject to the passage of a constitutional amendment* that will prevent transportation “non-general” funds from being raided for “general fund” purposes. Since 1989, the General Assembly has borrowed “non-general” funds three times. Passage of this amendment is important to build credibility with the citizens about the management of their user fees.