

Brookland & Bush Hill

NEWS

A Newsletter for the Residents of Brookland-Bush Hill, in Alexandria, Virginia

March 2004

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BBHCA

Community Meeting

Tuesday, March 9, 2004

7:00 pm

Bush Hill Elementary School

AGENDA

Secretary's Reading
of the Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Second Vice President's
Membership Report

OLD BUSINESS

BBHCA Membership Directory

NEW BUSINESS

Nominating Committee
for slate of officers
Chair: John Neves

Items from the floor

PROGRAM

Chairman of the Fairfax County
Board of Supervisors
Gerry Connolly

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Community Discussion
Adjournment

BEVERAGES AND SNACKS

Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to speak at the next BBHCA community meeting

Chairman Gerry Connolly will be our guest speaker at the March 9, 2004 BBHCA Community meeting at the Bush Hill Elementary School on Westchester St. Chairman Connolly, the candidate, joined us last September in one of our "Meet the Candidates" nights. He returns in March as the newly elected Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Please come to this important event. Don't miss this opportunity to get a first hand report on what's ahead for Fairfax County. Traffic congestion, property taxes, maintaining school quality, commercial and residential growth and crime control are issues of import to BBHCA and its surroundings. What's on your mind? What are the issues of greatest concern to you? Do you have some tough questions you haven't found an answer to yet? Here is your opportunity to put them to the Chairman. Let's fill the room at Bush Hill Elementary on 9 March 04, at 7:00PM, and give Chairman Connolly a resounding "WELCOME TO BBHCA."



Come Join Us!

Larry Carter, *President BBHCA*

If you haven't joined the association yet, it's never too late to get involved. The annual dues of \$3 per person and \$6 per household are very reasonable for a voting position in the affairs of the association and, thereby, the community. We meet at the Bush Hill Elementary School.

Meetings are normally on the second Tuesday of every other month beginning in September and ending in May. The May meeting is our Annual Meeting for the election of BBHCA leadership for the next year.

Come and meet some of your neighbors. Make some new friends. Find out what others are experiencing and see if you can help in some way to make our community just a little better.

Successful Petition on Leaf Collection

Residents on Piedmont Drive have been working a petition process to become a part of the County's leaf collection program. Anna and Charles Keller have been spearheading the petition process. The petition area includes all of Piedmont Drive and Pratt Court, Pratt Street from Ambler Street to Pratt Court, and Ambler Street to Brookland Road. At the last meeting, Anna and Charles presented the completed petition with the requisite homeowner signatures. Hopefully, next leaf season, the efforts of Anna and Charles will be rewarded with County leaf collection along Piedmont Dr. Congratulations go to Anna and Charles for their efforts on this project.

We Need You!

Newsletter Delivery

Exercise with purpose! Deliver the BBHCA News to your neighbors five times a year. We still need your help on the following routes: Gunnell Estates:

● LaVista Drive ● James Gunnell Drive

For more information, please contact Dot Cosby,
(703) 922-7749.

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Michael Fogarty & Sandra Wilkinson

Members of the Brookland Bush Hill Civic Association

BBHCA Membership as of 2/3/04

We're closing in fast on our goal this year for 30% of households to join BBHCA. The current membership count is 214 which represents 28% of households in Brookland-Bush Hill. Thank you for supporting your community civic association! If you haven't joined yet, please take a few minutes to write a check for \$6 (\$3 for single occupancy) to support your civic association. We're here because you're here!

And the Winner is ...

Based on the number of homes on each street and dividing the streets into four groups, we have determined that the following streets have the highest percentage of BBHCA members.

Group A (less than 20 homes) Hopark Drive at 73%

Group B (greater than 20 and less than 40 homes) Jane Way at 46%

Group C (greater than 40 and less than 60 homes) Bush Hill Drive at 35%

Group D (greater than 60 homes) Westchester Street at 42%

Members Homes %			Members Homes %				
Group A			Mayfair Lane	6	23	26%	
Hopark Drive	11	15	73%	Pratt Street	9	36	25%
Westridge Court	8	14	57%	Barbmore Court	6	27	22%
Brookview Court	3	6	50%	Old Rolling Road	3	32	9%
Foldi Street	1	2	50%	Brookland Court	2	24	8%
Larno Drive	5	10	50%	Group C			
Ninian Avenue	6	12	50%	Bush Hill Drive	16	46	35%
Waycross Drive	8	17	47%	Brookview Drive	4	49	8%
Nedra Avenue	2	5	40%	Group D			
Pratt Court	5	14	36%	Westchester Street	25	60	42%
Thetford Place	4	13	31%	Brookland Road	23	71	32%
York Road	3	10	30%	Gunnell Estates*	5	62	8%
Mayfair Court	2	7	29%	TOTALS			
Ambler	2	8	25%	214	762	28%	
Poyntz Place	1	4	25%	*Gunnell Estates:			
Saratoga Street	2	8	25%	Bush Hill Drive	13	62	
Anne Ly Lane	1	5	20%	(5763-5795)	0	N/A	
Trin Street	1	6	17%	Clouds Mill Drive	4	N/A	
Forest Avenue	1	7	14%	Fort Ellsworth Court	1	N/A	
Layne Estates Court	1	9	11%	James Gunnell Drive	0	N/A	
Maplefield Place	0	18	0%	LaVista Drive	0	N/A	
Talbois Place	0	6	0%	Group B			
Franconia Road	0	11	0%	Jane Way	18	39	46%
Lane Drive	0	12	0%	Neville Court	9	22	41%
				Piedmont Drive	8	23	35%
				Sumner Road	8	29	28%

Members Vote on Directory

During the January 13 BBHCA meeting, members were presented with the option of whether to print a membership directory. The last member directory was published in 1997.

Following discussion, members voted in favor of producing a printed directory. Members felt that the directory would be an excellent resource to promote Neighborhood Watch. Guest speaker, Officer Philip Edwards, strongly recommended the publication of a member directory as one of the top deterrents to crime as it enables neighbors to share information and contact each other in the event of suspicious activity.

Accordingly, a directory of members only will be produced this spring and distributed with the May newsletter, pending no unforeseen circumstances. Please keep in mind that this is a volunteer effort. The current Co-Vice President of Membership, Sharada Gilkey, will oversee the project. She has more than 20 years' experience in publication production and currently coordinates the member database from which the directory will be produced.

Based on the production schedule, only current members who opted to be included in the newsletter as of March 1, 2004, will be published. No e-mail addresses will be included in the directory. Any information specifically requested to be excluded from the directory on the membership application form will not be included. As with past directories, it will be organized by street and house number as well as by last name. The directory will be published only in print.

NOTE: Each BBHCA member household is entitled to one (1) vote. Join BBHCA today to be eligible to vote on important issues pertaining to your neighborhood. Voting cards are provided at each meeting for members.

If you have questions about BBHCA membership, please contact Sharada Gilkey (703) 313-8490 or Marti Morris at (703) 547-6705. The BBHCA membership application is available online at www.bbhca.org.

How Walkable is Brookland-Bush Hill?

By Bob Michie

Fairfax County Trails Committee—Lee District

There are a lot of walkers in Brookland-Bush Hill. On the mornings that I ride my bicycle to work, I'll pass a dozen neighbors out for their early-morning exercise. They usually go in a group, and walking for them is a social as well as a physical exercise. This is one of the pleasures of living in an older neighborhood: the street layout protects us from the heavy traffic, and we have varied terrain to enjoy and to challenge us.

The problem is that using feet or bicycles for anything but recreation meets a lot of resistance. Many barriers exist that discourage non-motorized transportation: absence of crosswalks, disconnected sidewalk and trail segments, traffic sensors that can't be triggered by bicycles, and confusing intersections (such as Franconia Road and South Van Dorn Street) where it is not obvious where foot and pedal

traffic is supposed to cross.

It is problems like these that the Fairfax County Non-Motorized Transportation Committee (a.k.a. the Trails Committee) tries to hunt down and solve. Right now, there is hardly any budget available for trails and sidewalks, but we try to get the top problems solved in the context of routine road and property maintenance. That's how the bike lanes were added to Beulah Street and Telegraph Road, and how bike lanes and sidewalks are part of the South Van Dorn Street Extended project. Supervisor Kauffman, in particular, has been very aggressive in seeking out money to tackle the most horrible problems. A recent success was the opening of a walking path along Harrison Lane near Huntley Meadows Park.

For me, I tend to think in terms of "attractors;" places that people want to go. An attractor could be Lee

District Park, or John Marshall Library. Pretty soon, Kingstown will have a sixteen-screen movie theatre opening alongside the restaurants and coffee shops in Kingstowne Center. We are concerned that parking for the theaters may be awful, but do we really need to park? Suppose we walked or rode bikes to the theaters?

I am sure the early morning walkers I often see would not find such a walk physically challenging at all. The distance from Bush Hill Elementary School to the theatre site is only two miles. As for a bicyclist like me, the travel time is fifteen minutes, with a significant amount of that time reserved waiting for traffic lights to change.

I'd like to know about places my neighbors in Brookland and Bush Hill would like to walk or ride a bicycle to. What barriers are in your way? The Robert Woods Johnson Foundation has a resource center on the topic of active living obesity, and nutrition at <http://www.rwjf.org/programs/physicalActivity.jsp>. (You can also find this link by looking for the online version of this story at www.bbhca.org.) Look for the link to the online questionnaire, How Bikeable is your Community? Think of a specific destination that you would want to walk or ride a bike to, and then fill out the questionnaire. Print it out, and get in contact with me at michierw@hotmail.com. Let's see what we can do to get you out of your car. And get in touch with me if you want information about commuting by bicycle. It take about an hour for me to commute to the Washington Navy Yard on my bike, but what the heck: it takes about an hour to get anywhere these days!

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Message from Supervisor Kauffman

Recently, the Washington Post covered the problems of the suburban elderly and projected that by 2010 Fairfax County will have 116,000 senior citizens. People over 55 years of age now count for 18.6 percent of Fairfax County's population. By 2010, that number is projected to grow by 40 percent.

My colleagues and I on the Board of Supervisors must be conscious of these statistics as we make budget decisions over the next decade. Imagine us dangling from a demographic bungee cord as we are whipped by mutually exclusive (and growing) demands for senior services and senior tax relief. (Tax relief is already in place for seniors with low incomes.)

At the local level, we'll soon be playing out the larger drama taking place in Congress where huge budget commitments have been set in motion. It's no coincidence that the new drug benefit is being enacted just as the first baby boomers near retirement age. Unlike the Federal budget, however, Fairfax County is legally obligated to balance its budget. There's no deficit financing option at the local level.

Our first real challenge will be the request to cap County real estate taxes for all seniors, regardless of income. The argument goes that seniors are on fixed incomes; don't have school age children; have already paid their fair share for government services; and can't plan and maintain their retirement in the face of unpredictable and increasing taxes.

Reality is a Hard Master

Today's economic and social realities are not what they were even a decade ago. The poverty rate among those 65 and older has never been lower. Today's seniors are living longer

(and healthier) than in 1935 when Social Security was created as a modest support for those who were soon to pass on to glory.

Today, over one-third of all federal spending is directed to Social Security and Medicare, and that's before factoring in the prescription drug benefit.

Today, almost two thirds of our County budget focuses on services for those under the age of 19. At 27.5 percent of our population today, the youth population is expected to grow by almost double digits during this decade.

When it comes to the County services side of the budget equation, seniors have reason to complain. In the County's FY2004 budget, services to seniors represent only 1.7 percent of General Fund disbursements. While we offer many services, there are long waiting lists for them and our Adult Day Care programs are nearing capacity.

Given the senior population spike, we must re-evaluate County budget priorities in anticipation of calls for even more senior services. This will require creativity and the political will to make tough decisions. Services that are now free should be means tested with charges based on ability to pay. Many programs now offered by different agencies will have to be merged to

keep pace with demographic change and hold our County budget in line.

For example, we can expand how we use existing institutions such as our schools. Currently, it's rare that school buildings are available for County residents and non-school services during the school day. Before this decade is out, it must become the norm. Should the educational establishment shake its collective head and belt out a chorus of 'nays,' let me tell you that this is already taking place in Lee District. Crestwood Elementary School under the leadership of principal Patricia Zissios, has successfully opened its doors to young mothers for English lessons and childcare as well as seniors wanting to learn computers.

Some things-like demographics-can't be spun. There will be winners and losers with every budget decision we make. If some think today's seniors are shortsighted, they haven't seen anything yet. Today's working-age taxpayers assume that whatever benefit is bestowed on today's seniors will be there for them. No one can stick a 'Greedy Geriatrics' label on the Greatest Generation without acknowledging that the 'Me Generation' will be demanding far more than a free cup of Starbucks .

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EXCERPTED FROM:

Fairfax County Police Community Information Newsletter—February 2004

Franconia District Station, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22310
Franconia Station (703) 922-0889/Crime Prevention Office (703) 922-8263

SCAM UPDATE ALERTS

Please heighten your awareness of anyone using a cell phone near you at retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, etc. Criminals are now using the new camera cell phones to take pictures of your credit card or driver's license and obtain vital information that they in turn can use to steal your identity and ruin your credit. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing scams today, and this is just another example of how it can be done.

Be aware of a new credit card scam. Criminals are now calling people claiming to be from the Security and Fraud department of their credit card company. They might claim that your card has been flagged for an unusual purchase pattern and that they are calling to verify your information. The criminals are probably already in possession of your credit card information except for the 3 digit security number from the back of your card. This is what they are trying to get from you to authorize a purchase. If you receive a call like this, hang up and call your credit card company to see if this is actually a legitimate call. More than likely it is not. Credit card companies will NEVER ask for any card information because they already have it. If you find out that they did not call you, advise them of the incident and also make a police report.

MATURE OPERATOR'S DRIVER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (MODIP)

The Fairfax County Police Department offers residents 55 years of age and older enrollment in the Mature Operator's Driver Improvement Program (MODIP). This eight hour course, which provides safe driving information, is sanctioned by the American Automobile Association (AAA) and is presented by certified Fairfax County Auxiliary Police Officers. Upon completion of this course, drivers are eligible for the Virginia State mandated insurance premium reduction (check with individual insurance carriers for the amount). The classes are held the second Saturday of each month at the Franconia District Station. The next MODIP class will be held on Saturday, February 14, 2004, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Subsequent seminars are also scheduled for March 13th and April 10th. Registration is required and can be done by contacting the MODIP reservations line at (703) 924-6588. The fee for this course is \$10.00 per person for books and materials.

RAPE AGGRESSION DEFENSE (RAD)

In the United States a woman is assaulted every 6 minutes. Could you effectively defend yourself if attacked? RAD is a women's self-defense program that teaches realistic self-defense tactics and techniques. The program begins with awareness, prevention, risk reduction and avoidance. It then progresses to the basics of hands-on defense training. To learn more about RAD or to sign up for the course, please call (703) 246-7806.

Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association Officers

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Report from Richmond—Mark Sickles, 43rd District

It's called a "dance" by people on every side of Virginia's current budget debate. The Virginia Senate is poised to pass a two-year budget with well over \$2 billion in tax increases, more than twice the recommended net increase in taxes proposed by the Governor. The House is set to pass what the Appropriations Committee chairman called "draconian" cuts. In about a month, a small conference committee between the two bodies will meet and hash out a deal. Everyday, speeches are made during the Morning Hour about either the need to live within our means, or about the pressing needs of the Commonwealth that cannot be met even with the new revenues that result from our current economic recovery.

In my unscientific sample of Delegates on both sides of the aisle, I find no stomach for further cuts to public safety and our state police, to mental health and nursing homes, or to K-12 and higher education. Interestingly, some legislators strongly opposed to new taxes also have the longest list of proposed spending items. On the revenue side, some legislators are talking for the first time about closing some of the many sales and corporate tax exemptions that were granted during the salad days of the late 1990s before any new taxes are proposed. While that has great appeal, the only way to close these "loop-holes," in my opinion, is to put them into a big package for an up or down vote, an unlikely prospect.

Yesterday, the House passed legislation intended to give Fairfax County more say in keeping Mt. Vernon Hospital open for business in its current location. As a co-patron with Del. Kris Amundson (D-Mt. Vernon), I have observed first hand how hard she has had to work to get this legislation enacted. After a couple of tries at

putting together compromise legislation, a mischievous amendment was offered on the floor that would have given Fairfax County complete authority over the state Health Commissioner, but also would have had the effect of killing the bill. Luckily, the amendment failed on a 47-47 tie vote!

I have also been attending the weekly meeting of the new Sportsman's Caucus. Members of the Caucus are concerned about the programs managed by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Each week provides an opportunity to get a closer look at proposed legislation that affects wildlife management, hunting and fishing. Importantly for outdoorsmen, HB 301 is moving through the House unopposed. The bill allows the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries to control license fees for the Game Protection Fund. A similar bill, HB 1024, for saltwater fishing licenses, sends the money to the Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund. These funds are dedicated for such things as law enforcement, land purchases, boat ramps, educational activities and boating safety. They are protected from raids from the General Fund and will help restore many popular programs that have been cut over the past two years. All of the hunting, fishing and conservation groups, such as Ducks Unlimited, support these bills.

One wildlife issue important to the suburbs of Northern Virginia is the management of overpopulated species—such as deer and resident geese. One bill has passed the House to make it somewhat easier and safer to thin the deer population in suburban areas. There are a few bills addressing the exponentially growing goose population, none of which will solve the problem. Virginia cannot control their growth due to protection under federal

law for migratory waterfowl (even though ours only "migrate" from ball field to storm water management pond).

Finally for this week, the brand new Northern Virginia Community College health care professions campus in Springfield is funded at only 20 percent of its capacity in the proposed budget. In the current and foreseeable future, all of the graduates of these programs are almost guaranteed good paying jobs in the various health care fields. Budget amendments have been filed by senior Members to correct this imbalance but it is just one of many unmet needs that may not be addressed by the General Assembly. If you have friends that are waiting to get in, they might want to contact their Delegate and State Senator.

If you would like to read the first two Reports, please visit my website at www.marksickles.com. Saturday Office Hours will be held the first Saturday of each month starting on April 3, 2004, from 10am until noon at the Franconia Government Center. If you need to reach me, please call (703) 317-0036 or send an email to del_sickles@house.state.va.us.

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