

Brookland & Bush Hill

NEWS

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

November 2004

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What Did You Miss?

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

Wow! What a great meeting! We had a turn out of more than 50 BBHCA members and residents at the September meeting. Thank you to all who participated, especially our guest speaker, Dana Kaufman. Special thanks also to Randy Bowman and Darrell Meyer for coordinating the purchase of new meeting notice signs. The budget for meeting beverages and snacks was sacrificed for the signs.

Highlights

- Congressman Jim Moran's stopped in briefly for a surprise visit
- Introduced new and returning 2004-05 BBHCA Officers
- Reviewed and approved the proposed BBHCA 2004-05 budget (also on the Web)
- Announced Bush Hill Elementary School's 50th Anniversary and upcoming events (see listing on the Web)
- Welcomed Gunnell Estates Home Owner's Association President, Jim Bersch, as a BBHCA member
- Lee District Supervisor Dana Kauffman reviewed local issues and answered questions.

As promised, we kept the meeting short, adjourning at 8:20. To those who couldn't make it, the draft Minutes are published in this newsletter and on the Web at www.bbhca.org.

Get Involved Today!

We need your help with the following new initiatives. Please contact me if you would like to participate.

- *Awards & Recognition Committee:* We need several members to take part in this important new committee. Whether you have been a resident for six months or more than 30 years, your perspective is needed. Proposed awards include community service awards and a BBHCA scholarship. Help recognize those who have made a difference in your community as well as give back to the community.
- *Advertising Coordinator:* Most of the work has been done, but we need someone to coordinate advertising for the newsletter and the Web. (1-2 hours a month)
- *Survey Coordinator:* We need someone to tally the results of the survey answers over the next 2 months. (4 hours total)
- *Yard Sale Coordinator:* We need one or two people to coordinate this neighborhood event held in early June 2005.

Bring History Alive!

Mark your calendar now...the next BBHCA meeting is November 9 (Tuesday) in the Bush Hill Elementary School Library. We have the great pleasure of welcoming the Franconia Museum Association to give us a vibrant history of our neighborhood and tell stories that will interest all

BBHCA Community Meeting
Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2004
7:00 pm
Bush Hill Elementary School
(Library)

AGENDA

- **Approval of Sept. 14 Meeting Minutes**
(See page 5)
- **Board and Committee Reports**
- **Nominations for Donations**
- **Call for Volunteers**
- **Survey Drawing**

PROGRAM

Franconia Museum
representatives

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ages. This is a family event and you are encouraged to bring your children. History from a book can be dry, but history from a living person is magical. Meet us at the Bush Hill Elementary School library for an evening of exciting tales.

Have a suggestion for a speaker for future meetings? We want your ideas. The topic must be broad enough to interest the majority of residents. The speaker has 30–45 minutes to make their presentation followed by 15 minutes of Q&A. ►

President's Message

Continued

BBHCA Newsletter

Notice anything different with this issue? Ever since the first issue, the Brookland-Bush Hill newsletter has been hand delivered to every resident within the civic association's boundaries. However, with 831 homes currently served by BBHCA, hand delivery has become a challenge. Therefore, this issue marks the first to be mailed (bulk rate). The cost was included in the 2004-05 budget which members approved at the September meeting.

Special thanks to Dot Cosby, Bill Connery, and Peter Marmagen who

have coordinated the delivery of the newsletter over the years, as well as the approximately 20 individuals who trekked from house to house to hand deliver copies to every resident. Thanks also to Howard and Ruth Marler for the donation of their time to count, sort, prepare, and disseminate the newsletters for distribution.

The newsletter will continue to be available via the Web site at www.bbhca.org. In fact, due to the size of this issue, we could not include everything we wanted, including an article by Delegate Mark Sickles. If you wish to read Delegate Sickles' report, you can readily find it on the Web site.

See you on Tuesday, November 9th!

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Membership Update

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

Send in Your Dues

Welcome new and renewing members! BBHCA has 154 members as of October 8. Membership is up 33 percent from this time last year. Thank you for your support! If you haven't renewed your membership for 2004-05 yet, please take five minutes to complete the attached membership application.

Remember, your modest membership fee supports this newsletter, the Web site, donations to community services, and most importantly, gives you a vote in important issues affecting the neighborhood. In addition, the clout and the experience offered by the BBHCA Board and Committees in working with local officials to resolve issues is worth far beyond the dues for membership.

Community Survey

Participate in the BBHCA community survey and qualify to win a \$50 gift card to Red, Hot & Blue! Submit the survey before the November 9 meeting. The survey was published

in the September newsletter, but due to space limitations we could not print the survey with this issue of the newsletter. However, you can find it online at www.bbhca.org. We really want to hear from you!

And There's More

In addition to the \$50 gift card, Red, Hot & Blue (Landsdowne) has donated two gift certificates for \$40 and \$20. These will be given to two additional members at the November meeting. Plus, in case you haven't already noticed, a \$5 discount coupon for Red, Hot & Blue is included in this issue of the newsletter.

Thank you to all the advertisers who offset the cost of the newsletter. If you use any of their advertised services, please be sure to let them know you saw their ad in the *BBHCA News*.

Members Only

Receive e-mail notification and reminders of BBHCA events and news. Simply include your e-mail

address with your membership application or send an e-mail to membership@bbhca.org. *This is a member-only benefit.* Note that after the November meeting, members who have not renewed for 2004-05 will be removed from the e-mail list.

Community Donations

Every year, the BBHCA donates to several community organizations that provide services which help keep us safe or simply help make us a better community by their presence. Nominations for donations will be heard at the November 9 meeting. If you wish to make a nomination, please send an e-mail in advance to membership@bbhca.org. Include the name of the organization, contact person, address, phone, purpose, a short paragraph on the reason for the nomination, and the amount recommended. Traditionally, donations range from \$50 - \$200. A total of \$500 was approved for donations in the 2004-05 budget.

Neighborhood Watch Update

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



Hope everyone has been having a good fall and enjoying the weather. I'm not aware of any recent major incidents in our neighborhood as of this writing, but there continue to be numerous thefts from vehicles parked on our streets. Please remember to keep your cars locked and don't leave valuable items

in sight. Also, there were a number of car windows broken out or shot out with a BB gun.

Please do report any such incident or other vandalism to the Fairfax County Police Non-Emergency number, (703) 691-2131. Also use this number to report any suspicious activity in the neighborhood, includ-

ing people, trucks, cars or suspicious noises. Of course, in the event of any situation that is life-threatening or immediately damaging to property, you should call 911.

BBHCA is looking into the possibility of holding an Emergency Preparedness Clinic. These are offered by the Red Cross, in cooperation with the Fairfax County Citizen Corp. This would be about a two hour session covering such topics as what are the different kinds of emergencies and how to prepare for them, how to make an emergency kit, and how to prepare a communication plan for your family. There will also be information about Red Cross first aid training programs and blood donation. Watch for further information about the scheduling of a clinic in this newsletter and/or the BBHCA Web site.

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Be Aware and Save

The following information comes from the Fairfax County Police:

Our FCPD friends from the West Springfield District Station are conducting a ZERO-TOLERANCE ENFORCEMENT along their portion of the Fairfax County Parkway. They have signs along the Parkway informing drivers of that fact. One of the signs says, "50 MEANS 50!" That means, you are liable to be stopped for speeding if you exceed the speed limit by only two miles per hour. It is unknown how long this strict enforcement will continue, however, it concerns all of us because speed is a major factor in traffic deaths and injuries. Being forewarned is being forearmed. Save your life and save a lot of money!

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Secretary's Report

Membership Meeting, Sept. 14, 2004

Congressman James Moran made a surprise visit to the Civic Association during his attendance at Back-to-School Night.

The Brookland Bush Hill Civic Association meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM. All the officers attended the meeting: Sharada Gilkey, *President*, Judy Connell, *Vice President*, Darrell Meyer, *Vice President*, Michael Fogerty, *Treasurer* and Helen Gettys Michie *Secretary*. Michael Fogerty read the treasurer's report. Because the minutes had been published in the newsletter and on the web site, the reading of the minutes was dispensed with.

Jim Biersch, president of the Gunnell Estates Homeowners

Association attended. A representative from Bush Hill Elementary School announced the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the School and distributed a calendar of activities.

This year, the newsletter will be bulk mailed, not delivered by volunteers.

Mike Forgarty presented a proposed budget for the next operating year. Robert Michie will be reimbursed for the expense of the BBHCA Web page once he gives the bill to the Treasurer. It was moved and seconded from the floor.

Dana Kauffman, Lee District Supervisor was our speaker. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

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Message from Supervisor Kauffman

Volunteering Makes a Community

Not so long ago when most folks lived, worked, and raised their families in the same place, community wasn't something that needed to be built—it just was. Today, most of us grew up far from where we call home today. We might know our neighbors; we might not. We work hard keeping our family and work on track and if we are really lucky, we manage to find some time for recreation. As the demands on us increase, participating in civic activities becomes just another chore to be shoehorned into our crowded schedules. Or not—and that's a problem.

More than a few scholarly articles have been written about the loss of community and civil society. It doesn't take an advanced degree to recognize the downside of living in fragmented neighborhoods and that community involvement gives people a sense of place and shared civic values. Without consensus on what is important in our communities, we're just accidental neighbors with little incentive to include the common good in our personal goals.

This brings me to my pitch for volunteering—not only because it's

the right thing to do but because, as Ben Franklin is reputed to have said at another dangerous time in our history, "We must hang together, or surely we shall hang separately." A good place to start is with some of the community volunteering activities offered by the Fairfax County Citizen Corps and Volunteer Fairfax.

Through the Fairfax County Citizen Corps (part of the United States Freedom Corps), individuals can volunteer to help their communities prepare for and respond to emergencies. Here in Fairfax County, the Citizen Corps has something for anyone who is interested in supporting local law enforcement, emergency medical services, fire departments, disaster relief efforts, and community health programs. Volunteers are needed to serve on emergency response teams, as medical volunteers, in administrative roles, and for disaster recovery, computer tasks, and community education. You can find more information about the Citizen Corps at www.fairfaxcountycitizenscorps.org or by calling 703-246-3460.

Volunteer Fairfax works with community-based organizations that rely

on volunteers to help build stronger communities. Active in the County for more than 25 years, it connects volunteers with more than 700 local organizations. Last year, Volunteer Fairfax listed more than 10,000 volunteer opportunities. The organization lists all of its volunteer opportunities online and also publishes a quarterly list.

Not all volunteer projects need a major time commitment. For folks whose lives are a thicket of family and work obligations but who still want to give back to their community, Volunteer Fairfax runs Volunteers for Change, a weekend and evening program for busy, working adults. You might pack emergency food kits for families in crisis, tutor adults in alternative learning programs, socialize with homebound seniors or nursing home residents, and plant trees to prevent erosion.

For information about Volunteer Fairfax and its programs, visit the Volunteer Fairfax website at www.volunteerfairfax.org or call 703-246-3460.

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Remember Our First Responders This Thanksgiving

Delegate Mark D. Sickles

703-317-0036

For many, Thanksgiving is the beginning of an extended holiday season—a season when we take stock of the wonderful people in our lives and the good fortune to live in a land of great opportunity. This year I hope you will make an effort to remember a special group of public servants that help make our community safe, now commonly referred to as “first responders.” Every day our State Police, Fairfax County Police, and our Deputy Sheriffs, keep our region safe by patrolling our roads, responding to calls for help, and operating the County jail, among many other duties. Every day our firefighters and EMTs save someone’s life, or clean up hazardous waste dumped on a highway. Just recently, Fairfax County’s professional firefighters prevented a tragic and deadly fire from spreading to a second building in Manchester Lakes by arriving within minutes of a call. I am sure that we are all grateful for the work they do. All of these well trained professionals could be working in other vocations, but have chosen to provide these essential services in our community.

In a long term trend that is accelerating due to the value of our real estate, these public safety personnel are no longer likely to live in the communities they serve. Almost all of our younger law enforcement and public safety personnel live in another county. Increasingly, they commute here to work from Stafford and Spotsylvania counties, or further, where housing is much less expensive. As our real estate values continue their steady rise, moderate income housing and compensation issues *are* law enforcement and public safety issues.

Thankfully, Fairfax County has one of the lowest crime rates anywhere in the United States which allows, in part, for the lowest number of police per capita for any jurisdic-

tion our size. The consequences are clearly evident. As the police prioritize their work, for example, there are never enough patrol cars to adequately enforce speed limits on neighborhood streets. About a fifth of the cost of our local police force comes from State appropriations.

At the state level, the Virginia State Police are some of the best trained law enforcement officers in the country. Too often, however, we train them and after graduation from the academy, they leave for other law enforcement agencies where they receive substantial raises. Their workload has also grown with our population. Indeed, we have essentially the same number of troopers today as we had when Virginia had more than 1.5 million *fewer* residents. In the recent past, other spending priorities and the economic downturn prevented the General Assembly from funding a pay increase to stop the exodus. In the historic two-year budget passed earlier this year, the State Police finally received a raise that will hopefully be enough to bring troopers *above* the level that qualifies a family for food stamps, and begins to end the salary crunch whereby a new recruit is paid almost the same as an experienced officer.

During the holidays, please take the opportunity to thank our public safety professionals for all they do to make our community a place we want to live. I know they will appreciate your kindness.

It is the time of year to begin putting together a legislative package for the winter session. If you have any ideas, please let me know. If you need assistance with a state related issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office. We can be reached at 703-317-0036, or del_sickles@house.state.va.us. I wish you the happiest of Thanksgivings with your family and friends!