

KPCA News

Newsletter of the Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.

Volume 16, Issue 2 • April 2010

President's Corner

Kenwood Park has survived the winter of 2009-2010 albeit having lost a number of trees to the heavy snow. Our trees are a great asset, and I hope they will be replaced and, perhaps, augmented. See the article "Beautifying Our Neighborhood" in this issue. By the time you read this, the yoshino cherry trees should be blooming soon to be followed by the kwanzans. It will be quite a show.

The KPCA News is our principal means of informing all the residents of Kenwood Park of events that could be of interest to everyone. We also have a website, www.kenwoodparkweb.net, that only residents can access after they are verified. We have stored a number of documents and leads to information that might be of interest. This site is the location to register for our email list that we use a few times a year to remind everyone about neighborhood events. We also use it as needed to communicate emergency information as we receive it. I encourage you to register your email address there.

The KPCA is planning a new phone directory. A listing of the entries is now available on the KPCA web site (www.kenwoodparkweb.net) and listed under publications. The phone listings are preliminary, and the information is the most up-to-date that the KPCA possesses. This preliminary listing will be on the web site until the end of April for checking by anyone who wishes to validate their information or change the listing. The pages cannot be modified nor can any of the files be downloaded from the site. If corrections are needed, please send the correct data to info@kpcaonline.org. The corrected files will be sent to the printer and hard copies of the phone directory will be sent to each home in Kenwood Park. At that time, the preliminary files will be removed from the site.

That's about all for now. I am looking forward to meeting with many of you at the potluck dinner on April 18th. Everyone is welcome, and more information is printed in this issue of the KPCA News.

Ken Rubinson
KPCA President

KPCA Calendar

KPCA Potluck

Sunday, April 18, 6:30-8:30PM
Concord St. Andrews Church
See details inside

KPCA Board Meeting

Contact pres@KPCAonline.org
The "Careers" room, ground floor
Walt Whitman High School

Garden Club

Meeting/event not yet determined.
See inside for contact information

Book Club

See inside for information

CELL TOWER PROJECT AT WALT WHITMAN H.S. CANCELLED

Following is a statement issued by WWHS principal Alan S. Goodwin:

To the Whitman Community,

For the past several weeks, segments of the Whitman community have been embroiled in discussions regarding the possible placement of a cell tower by T-Mobile on Whitman's school grounds. This possibility emerged when I allowed T-Mobile to examine the school grounds to test the viability of such a structure. I did this because for the past several years, I have had some community members express dismay over the lack of service in certain sections of the area.

After T-Mobile made a proposal, I started the established steps that other schools have followed which essentially placed a tremendous burden on our PTSA leadership. The procedure calls for the PTSA to pro-

Cell Phone Tower continued on page 2

Ken Rubinson, President (301) 263-0452 pres@KPCAonline.org
MSS Office: (301) 384-7777 (Hrs: M-F, 9-5) Patrol car: (240) 793-6255
Visit the KPCA web site: <http://www.kenwoodparkweb.net>

Cell Phone Tower (*continued*)

vide open communication about the issue to the school community and to forward emerging opinions to me and ultimately to the MCPS central office. I want to publicly thank them for assuming a challenging task.

The PTSA leadership and I have met several times lately to share the input that we have received, and it is strongly evident that the discussion about the cell tower is causing a great tension among neighbors as persons weigh in with opinions and concerns. The PTSA has done a remarkable job of soliciting and posting both Pro and Con reactions despite not having a range of resources to assist them. As the controversy has moved beyond the boundaries of the Whitman community, it has complicated the PTSA's intent to facilitate a forum for input and a recommendation that accurately reflects its community's input.

I am a strong advocate for civic discourse and for helping our students see a democratic process take place on controversial issues; however, we have several ways to educate our students, and watching portions of the Whitman community lose their collective sense of purpose and commitment to work together to educate our students has become the greater concern.

The possible placement of a cell tower is not worth fracturing the community with such discord, and I have concluded it is not in Whitman's best interest to move forward with placing the cell tower on our campus. Continuing the process will only add to the schism. For that reason, I have asked the PTSA, and they have agreed, to cease the process and cancel Tuesday's meeting. Although this may understandably disappoint some members who wanted to share their views and vote on Tuesday at the PTSA meeting, I am instead asking the Whitman community to step back from this discussion and to refocus and reenergize our commitment to the partnerships we already have in our schools and to enhance them. Let the adult energies move back to volunteering in the classroom, on the playgrounds, in booster organizations, to sharing professional expertise as guest lecturers, to attending extracurricular activities, to helping our students in numerous ways. Let the Whitman community join together to continue to maintain what Bethesda Magazine once called the "Whitman Mystique," a community dedicated to nurturing and promoting educational excellence. Thank you.

Request for Vacation Coverage from the Security Service

The security service operates through the evening, night and morning.

If you want to make a specific request for vacation coverage or other specific service, call M-F between 9 AM and 5 PM before you leave town. Phone **301-384-7777**. A phone number of a local contact with a spare key is most helpful.

For an evening emergency call **240-793-6255** (the patrol car). If there is any problem getting in contact immediately, call 301-384-7777 and ask for the supervisor of the Kenwood Park patrol service.

This service is available to members of KPCA. Non-members can easily sign up by contacting Ken Rubinson by phone or email, pres@KPCAonline.org.



**Kenwood Park
Book Group**

For more information on the next book and meeting date contact sgust@msn.com.

Crime Reports Online

County residents can now track crime reports online, using www.crimereports.com. Small icons representing types of crime appear on a Google map. Users can set the parameters for a search, including a specific time period.

Crime reports are automatically uploaded to the site daily. Each incident identified on the site will have a report number that residents can use to obtain the actual police report at a station.

A County Police spokesperson informed us that another website, www.Connectedcommunities.us, is a very good source of crime statistics. This site focuses entirely on Montgomery County.

Is Kenwood Park Ready for a Neighbor to Neighbor Organization?

Following is a portion of an article from the *Washington Post* of February 8, 2010:

Nearly three years ago, Harry Rosenberg and his wife, Barbara Filner, met with nine of their neighbors about starting an aging-in-place “village” in the Burning Tree community of Bethesda. The idea: If neighbors could help one another with basic services such as transportation and simple home maintenance and with friendly visits, people could stay in their homes longer as they aged. It took 19 months of planning and organizing, but Burning Tree Village accepted its first request for assistance in November 2008: helping an 81-year-old widow take out her trash and driving her to the doctor.

The group is still suffering growing pains. It receives only a handful of requests for help. Like some similar organizations, it charges no dues and it has about 65 “friends”: people who volunteer, people who receive help, people who just want to be associated. It operates on a shoestring \$4,000 budget raised from donations, but it has held a series of well-attended community events, including neighborhood walks and restaurant outings. “We are,” says Rosenberg, 73, “a viable presence in the neighborhood.”

The Washington area has become a hotbed for these villages. There are six in the District, at least two in Fairfax County and eight in various stages of development in Montgomery County, according to a Montgomery County official. “The idea has spread like wildfire,” says Naomi Kaminsky, president of one, Chevy Chase at Home.

Still, organizing a village is difficult, say those who try. It can easily take two to three years before a new aging-in-place community can roll out services. And many groups are still struggling after five years. Fundraising, squabbles over priorities, legal and insurance issues, and the challenges of building a network of volunteers all make the process lengthy and difficult.

“It is a lot of work,” says Nancy Intermill, executive director of Midtown Village in Lincoln, Neb. “You need a group of people committed to the concept and committed to working together.”

Most villages aim to recruit at least 200 members, often 60 or older. The process generally starts with a neighborhood survey, followed by visits to promote it at local schools, houses of worship and community associations. Finally, neighbors are approached one at a time or in small groups. Fliers or e-mail won’t do it, organizers say.

“No one has ever joined unless they were asked by a human being,” says Andrew Mollison, 70, president of the 65-member Palisades Village in Northwest Washington. Still, he adds, when encouraged to join, many elderly neighbors are likely to respond, “I’m not ready yet.”

Nonetheless, village organizers say, people seem instinctively attracted to the idea of neighbors helping neighbors stay at ‘Village’ groups help seniors remain in their homes as they age. Today, there are at least 48 fully functioning villages across the country and more than 600 in development, says Candace Baldwin, senior policy adviser at NCB Capital Impact, an Arlington-based nonprofit that has created an informal association of these groups called the Village to Village Network.

Apropos of the *Washington Post* article, informal discussions on the creation of a Neighbor to Neighbor structure have occurred here in Kenwood Park. The topic has surfaced several times at Board meetings. One of our especially interested neighbors, Gloria Cole, has been advising the Board. She and Herb Stone attended a meeting at which representatives of Bannockburn and Burning Tree described their experiences. They observed that the process of setting up such a community effort takes a long time and starts with a survey of residents to ascertain if “Aging in Place” is really wanted. It takes over two years to get set up. A major problem is liability insurance for volunteer drivers. Other problems include questions of fees and privacy. Forms of assistance can be minor maintenance, and providing a list of service providers. The creation of social get-togethers is also a possibility.

Gloria reports that she already has three volunteers and three or four additional offers of limited help.

Real Estate Advice

Credit Scores and Real Estate

Millions of citizens have “bad” credit scores; some have “debilitating” ones. They pay clearly more for their car loans, credit cards and mortgages with higher interest rates (often ½ point or more). Severe enough and obtaining loans and credit cards with reasonable terms are difficult. And these days, having an excellent credit score is the one sure path to obtaining a competitive mortgage and eventual homeownership.

Keeping Score.

In order to improve your credit scores, it's important to know where you stand currently. The three-digit numbers, which range from 300 (low) to 850 (superb), are the key. Here are tried and true steps to improve your score:

1) Pay down your credit cards. Paying off your installment loans (mortgage, auto, student, etc.) can help your scores, but typically not as dramatically as paying down or off revolving accounts such as credit cards. Good tricks: Get your balances below 30% of the credit limit, pay off the highest-rate card first or a better strategy is to pay down the cards that are closest to their limits.

2) Use your cards lightly. Racking up big balances can hurt your scores, regardless of whether you pay your bills in full each month. What's typically reported to the credit bureaus and calculated into your scores, are the balances reported on your last statements. You typically can increase your scores by limiting your charges to 30% or less of a card's limit.

3) Check your limits. If your issuer makes it a policy not to report consumers' limits, however -- the bureaus typically use your highest balance as a proxy for your credit limit. If you consistently charge the same amount each month -- say \$2,000 to \$2,500 -- it may look to the credit-scoring formula like you're regularly maxing out.

4) Use old cards. The older your credit history, the better. But if you stop using your oldest cards, the issuers may stop updating those accounts at the credit bureaus. Use the oldest cards every few months to charge a small amount, paying it off in full when the statement is due.

5). Be a good customer. The lender might agree to simply erase one late payment from your credit history. Make the request in writing and the chances for an “adjustment” will improve. A longer-term solution for more-troubled accounts is to ask that they be “re-aged”. Complete this action months ahead of shopping for a new home.

6) Dispute negatives. You can continue protesting that the charge was “unjust”, “unfair” or just “wrong” and you can try disputing the account with the credit bureaus as “not mine.” The older and smaller a collection account, the more likely the collection agency won't bother to verify it.

7) Address significant errors. Your credit scores are calculated based on the information in your credit reports, so errors can really cost you. Look for identity theft issues, late payments, and collection issues that aren't yours. Note negative items over seven years or ten years in the case of bankruptcy should be not listed.

Closing an account can't help your scores and may hurt them. Consolidating accounts or transferring them to one credit card can affect your score -- better to have small balances on a few cards. If your goal is boosting your scores, leave these alone. Once you've hit the 700 mark, you know that you are achieving your goals. If your scores are in the “excellent” category, 760 or above, you're probably qualified for the best rates and terms.

*Submitted by Kathleen Ryan
kathleen.ryan@longandfoster.com*

Bridge

Interested in playing bridge or starting a bridge club in Kenwood Park? Please call KP residents Gloria Fitchett at (301) 229-8480 or Christina Lobo at (301) 229-3490. This is just to start the ball rolling, we could start playing in the Fall.

The Garden Club

The Garden Club Co-Chairs, Michael Berg and Carol Logun, welcome ideas for projects and events, and volunteers. Contact Michael Berg at mdberg@verizon.net, or Carol Logun at jclogun@earthlink.net.

**KPCA
POT
LUCK
DINNER**

***Sunday
April 18, 2010***

6:30 to 8:30PM

Concord St. Andrew's United Methodist Church
(Corner of Goldsboro and River Road)

Last name starting with:

A – L: Appetizer

M – R: Fruit/Dessert

S – Z: Main Course

Please bring enough for 8 people. Drinks will be provided.

RSVP: Lucia Gregori (301) 263-0678

lgregori@verizon.net or *potluck@kpcasonline.org*

Need a ride? Call Gloria at (301) 229-6789

Market Update

The Spring market is here! The flowers are in bloom and all those people who were delayed in putting their homes on the market by the winter's snowy blasts are now showing their colors. We are seeing multiple offers in locations like Chevy Chase Circle and downtown DC where residents can walk to shops and restaurants. These homes have been in pristine condition, updated and priced well. In our zip code of 20817 there are 68 detached homes that have come on the market since March 1st. Thirty of those were priced over \$1 million and only 3 of those have sold. But of the 42 under a million, 20 are under contract. So the message is that the million dollar mark remains a psychological if not financial barrier to getting a house sold. Those properties that are under contract sold in an average of 6 days whereas the homes over 1million have been on the market an average of 34 days.

Kenwood Park has three homes currently active on the market. One of those is the new home on Goldsboro Road that is priced at \$3,495,000. Two homes are under contract, the most recent selling in under a week. There is a lot of interest in our neighborhood. Open houses are well populated and our citizens' organization and security patrol are much appreciated assets to the community. Historically ramblers and split levels have been considerably less desirable than colonials in the Washington community and here in Kenwood Park we have many homes of those styles. But tastes change over time and there is an increased appreciation for the amount of space and ease of living that these floor plans provide. With our large lots and spacious homes, a new appreciation of our community has developed and we're now a sought after destination.

*Contributed by Linda Chaletzky
lchaletzky@eversco.com*

Our Web Site

Please join our new website: www.kenwoodparkweb.net. Upon arriving there you will observe a site serving all of Montgomery County, providing a large variety of business and community services. Our local neighborhood site can be accessed by clicking on "My Community." If you are using the site for the first time click on "Register" and follow the directions. The only essential information we need is your name and either address or phone number. Our webmaster can then follow up and ascertain whether or not you are a Kenwood Park resident. We are restricting the Kenwood Park part of the web site to Kenwood Park residents.

You can elect whether or not to join a community listserv, which is a list of e-mail addresses enabling you to send or receive emails to or from other members of the list. On the other hand, you do not have to submit an email address.

We will be increasingly using the web site to announce community events and describe issues of community interest. Back issues of the newsletter will be placed in the site. The site will be especially useful to communicate matters of community interest more rapidly than the newsletter can.

If you are perplexed or uncertain about some aspects of the registration, please feel free to query info@KPCAonline.org.

Neighborhood Services Available

Baby Sitters

Jill Sorcher (Certified) (301) 229-2328
J. Peyser (Certified) (301) 320-2558
J. Flaherty (301) 229-2602
C. Goldman (301) 320-1582
Michelle Dressner (301) 652-5453
Casey Thevenot (301) 263-0999
Kendall Eisenberg (301) 263-9169

(and odd jobs, mother's helper)

Leigh Fishman (301) 229-3650
Alexandra (Allie) Fishman (301) 437-1025
(certified sitter and first aid provider)

Olivia Barber (301) 760-7535
Anna Moulton (301) 229-1661

(pet sitter, dog walker)

Katie Choppin (certified) (301) 229-9139
Anne Charpentier (certified) (301) 320-4310

Leaf Rakers, Snowshovelers, Odd Jobs

Chris John (mowing) (301) 229-2648
Shafi Noss (301) 325-8360
Amber White (301) 588-6474
(apamberpower@gmail.com) (loving and reliable dog walker)

GET LISTED HERE FREE:

Leave name and phone number with Editor, Edward Elson,
at (301) 320-2837 or email news@kpcasonline.org

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Traffic on Our List-Serve

Recently many of our neighbors have used the Kenwood Park list-serve to voice a number of concerns including speeding vehicles in our neighborhood and a desire for sidewalks on certain roads. The Board meetings are an excellent place to make proposals and line up community support for projects that citizens wish the county to undertake. The County views the Board as the representative body which reflects the aspirations of our community, and its deliberations and requests for action carry weight often more so than that of an individual citizen.

Email Notification

The KPCA is now sending out neighborhood information by email about four times a year and also if there is a warning needed about safety issues in the neighborhood. These include if a theft occurs, the presence of aggressive solicitations being made house to house, and if a child has been made uncomfortable by interaction with a stranger in the area. However, only such serious problems will be reported. For example, we will not report lost pets in such emails. Since all our neighbors do not have email or are not registered, we ask that the safety information be relayed by those who do receive the messages to their unconnected neighbors. If you wish to join in and have these messages delivered to you, please enroll on our web site: www.kenwoodparkweb.net and click on "My Community" at the top left. If you prefer typing, use www.kenwoodparkweb.net/association/cahome.cfm

To sign up, click on "register" at the top of the column at the left side.

Beautifying Our Neighborhood

To achieve a number of environmental goals in its ongoing efforts to "green" Montgomery County, the Planning Department has launched a tree planting program to encourage residents to plant trees in their yards.

Leaves for Neighborhoods features a coupon valid at participating county nurseries. The \$25 discount off trees worth \$75 or more is intended to increase the county's tree canopy on residential property, which will bring a host of environmental benefits. The coupon is available online and at selected area nurseries, Park and Planning headquarters and county park sites.

Here is the web site:

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/events/leaves/>

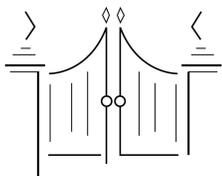
Our "Stats"

We presently have 252 residents subscribing to the security service and 41 social memberships. This newsletter goes to 640 homes in Kenwood Park.

KPCA News

Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.
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Bethesda, MD 20817

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Edward Elson, *Editor*

Kids Art Camp

At Kenwood Learn & Play

Join Laura John (Art Education Masters Student) for one or more themed weeks of art and fun.

Ages: 3 1/2 to 6.

- | | | |
|---------|-------------|---------------|
| Week 1: | June 14-17 | Art in Nature |
| Week 2: | July 19-22 | Photography |
| Week 3: | July 26-29 | Wearable Art |
| Week 4: | August 2-5 | Books and Art |
| Week 5: | August 9-12 | Food as Art |

Camp takes place from 1-3 pm

Call or email Laura for more info:
301-706-6470 laurajohn7@gmail.com