

Neighborhood News

Newsletter of the Clover/College Park Civic Association ♣ October 13, 2007 ♣ Vol. 13, No. 2

Annual meeting Monday, October 29, at BI

Our civic association's annual meeting will be held on Monday evening, October 29, in the cafeteria of Bishop Ireton High School starting at 7:30 p.m. Parking and entry are on the lower level.

President Christopher Tucker will conduct the election of board members for 2007-08. Residents interested in being nominated for the board should call Chris at 751-3318 or send him an e-mail at Christopher.tucker@gmail.com.

Roger Blakeley, deputy director of the city's Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, and landscape architect Ron Kagawa will brief us on the athletic facilities to be built on the east end of the Witter property (see article below).

Deputy Police Chief Blaine Corle will give us an update on the police facility to be located on Wheeler Avenue between Duke and Eisenhower Avenue, behind McDonald's. Captain Al Tierney will review recent minor crimes in our area.

Alexandrian Trish Wootten, representative of the Academic Foundation for International Cultural Exchange, will talk with families interested in hosting a foreign student in their homes.

We will also discuss recent increases in our water/sewer bills. Some neighbors have protested these high bills and received reductions. Most of the increases are due to increased sewer taxes, however, not on the company's rate for water usage.

City to add new athletic fields near our area

Three new lighted playing fields will be built on a 13.7-acre Witter tract south of Duke Street and west of Telegraph Road if City Council approves such plans on October 13. The Planning Commission gave its unanimous approval on October 3. Federal funds that the city received in conjunction with the Woodrow Wilson Bridge project will finance the new fields. Construction is expected to begin in 2009.

Two fields will be the all-purpose rectangular fields needed for sports such as football, soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, and rugby. They will have a synthetic infill turf surface. The other will be a softball/baseball diamond with grass surface.

Access to the new fields will be from Duke Street *to the south only* on Witter Drive, where pet owners turn to get to the animal hospital. A new traffic light to be installed there can accommodate traffic needs and is expected to help improve the flow of traffic on Duke.

Artificial turf was installed this summer on the field at Minnie Howard, behind Bradlee. Artificial turf allows fields to be used year-round and sports schedules may be maintained because the fields are never too muddy to use. Turf is more expensive to install but requires less maintenance and is more durable. The Bishop Ireton field was converted to artificial turf last year.

Welcome, new neighbors!

Tom and Elizabeth Balmer,
310 Cloverway

Erik and Anna Braun, 304
Princeton

Lee and Karen Burbage, 1000
Vassar Road

n Fields and Rose Rice, 303 Skyhill
Road

Carson Fifer and Sarah Sav-
age, 3001 Dartmouth

Alfred Gilman and Mary Jo
Cooney, 408 Skyhill

Martha Manson, 312 Cloverway

Scott McMahan and Michelle
Mrdeza, 812 Vassar Road

Steven and Catherine Mun-
son, 308 Crown View

Deborah Nagle, 408 Crown
View

Gary Olenjniczak and Myrtis
Parham, 407 Cambridge

Kevin and Lisa Porter, 306
Cloverway

Steven Steinberg and Clau-
dia Kalb, 1104 Vassar Road

Halloween parade Oct. 28

Our civic association president Chris Tucker will be Grand Marshall of the annual Halloween parade on Sunday, October 28. We will meet at 3 p.m. at Cambridge and Dartmouth Road.

An Alexandria fire engine will be there for children to climb on – unless it is needed elsewhere. Drinks and cupcakes will also await. Parents are asked to contribute \$1 per child for the refreshments. If you can bring cupcakes, take them to the end of the route before 3 p.m.

For information, call Mary Taylor at 751-0009 or Debbie Heck at 212-7315. More than 100 costumed children and adults participated last year.

College Park resident Ernest McIver recalls its early days

Ernest McIver, 91, is the original owner of a home in College Park. He and his wife Toni lived in Beverley Hills until 1952, but they need-ed a bigger house. During their search, Ernest visited the 1100 block of Trinity Drive. Only three brick ranch-style three-bedroom homes were finished – 1102, 1104, and 1106. The block, which deadends at Yale and at Princeton, had curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, but the street was still unpaved.

Routh Robbins of Hicks Realty lived at 1104. She was the sole agent for homes being built there. After she showed Ernest her home, he agreed to buy an identical one to be built across the street. Over the next year, he visited the site each morning en route to work. On one such visit, he saw a man getting ready to fell one of two tall sweet-gum trees near the front door. Ernest yelled, “Stop! Don’t cut down that tree!” The worker said the plans called for the walkway to come directly from the front door. Alarmed, Ernest sought one of the two contractors and asked whether the walk might curve to pass between the trees. “Of course,” the builder replied.

In February 1952, the McIvers purchased the home at 1103 for \$25,950. It proved a good investment – now, 55 years later, it is assessed at 24 times that amount!

Toni died in 1965. In 1971, Ernest married Nancy Fisher of Balti-more. Ernest had planted young azaleas around the front and sides of the house. Years later he constructed a raised wooden walkway from the front to the back yard, along with an extensive deck.

Nancy is an avid gardener and birdlover. She carefully waters and tends the variety of perennials and annuals of the terraced back yard, which is shaded by three tall gum trees and a dogwood. Visitors to the back porch enjoy the heavy traffic at multiple bird feeders. Nancy can identify each bird. In 1994 the city presented its Beautification Award to the McIvers. The plaque hangs on the back porch wall.

Leaf collections set for Nov. 5 and 24, also Dec. 14

The city’s Solid Waste Department asks us to rake our leaves into piles near the curb or put them in biodegradable bags. These bags are available free after October 16 at City Hall, the Chinquapin Rec Center, or at 3600 Wheeler Avenue (behind McDonald’s on Duke Street).

Plastic bags are *not* to be used since they cannot be recycled in the city’s leaf collection program. From October 29 through January 4, the biodegradable bags will be collected on *Wednesdays* in our area.

Crews will work Monday through Saturday to pick up large piles. Loose leaves may be left until the next pass. Piles should not be located near storm sewers, low-hanging branches, or parked cars. Piles should not contain tree limbs, rocks, bricks, or other debris that might damage the collection trucks.

Put your leaves in piles by: They’ll be picked up by:

Sunday, Nov. 4

Monday, Nov. 5

Friday, Nov. 23

Saturday, Nov. 24

Thursday, Dec. 13

Friday, Dec. 14

Voters to elect state senator and representatives

On Tuesday, November 6, voters will select our state senator and representative to the Virginia General Assembly. Our polling place is the multipurpose room at MacArthur School. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Incumbent Patsy Ticer is running unopposed for the District 30 seat in the Senate. Democrat David L. Englin and Republican Mark S. Allen are on the ballot hoping to represent District 45 of the Virginia House. Call the Registrar of Voters office at 838-4050 for information on absentee ballots.

Around the

neighborhood

♣ We are all invited to the grand opening of the new T.C. Williams High School on Sunday, October 14, noon until 5 p.m. The ribbon-cutting ceremony will be at 2 p.m. in the auditorium. Shuttle bus service will be offered from 11:30 until 5:30 from GW, Minnie Howard, and the parking lot at 2000 North Beauregard. The new environmentally-friendly school recently received a state innovation award.

♣ The yellow poles at Janneys and West Taylor Run have been replaced with rubberized lower-profile surfaces. The city will redo that intersection in three years to improve drainage into the stream from both sides of Janneys.

♣ The 2007 Clover/College Park directory will be distributed before our annual meeting on October 29. Please phone corrections to Dorothy Mulligan at 229-1213 or e-mail her at dmulligan4@aol.com.

♣ Neighbors on Yale Drive can help assure safety for students walking to and from MacArthur around 8 a.m. and shortly before 3 p.m. by simply

being in their yards at those times. Misbehavior is much less likely to occur when an adult is visible.

♣ The new West End Farmers' Market will operate in Ben Brenman Park off Duke Street from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. on Sundays through October. It features home-baked goods and locally grown organic produce.

♣ Jim Butler, former CCPCA president, represents the Federation of Civic Clubs on the city's economic sustainability work-group. He also serves on the advisory group that will help the school board select the next school superintendent.

♣ Enrollment at Bishop Ireton this year is 805. School hours are 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Parking near the school will be hard to find on BI's Homecoming Weekend October 20.

Staples opens near Giant

A Staples Office Supply store is our new neighbor at Alexandria Commons on the level above the Giant. The store opened on October 6 and is seeking full- and part-time employees age 18 and older. Electronic technicians and cashiers are especially needed.

Watch for a grand opening flyer announcing major price reductions starting on Saturday, October 20, says Assistant Manager William Watson.

Maggie Bernasco remembered

Maggie Bernasco, who died December 25 just before her 79th birthday, was a regular contributor to this newsletter. She faithfully read all the obituaries (which she called the Irish comic strips) and reported deaths in our community. She also advised on directory changes. She knew our neighborhood well, having walked it many times on behalf of local Democrats.

As a secretary for the Foreign Service, Maggie lived in Spain, India, Iraq, and Burma. She met her husband Bob in India when both were on vacation. He was an embassy military guard; they were married in Lebanon. Bob died this past May.

Few crimes in our area

Our APD liaison, Captain Al Tierney, reports only three misdemeanors since the April newsletter:

- Between April 21 and 28, someone broke into a home on Princeton Boulevard, ate some food, then stole jewelry and a Jeep parked in the garage. A suspect was arrested and confessed to multiple burglaries, some in our area. Police recovered the Jeep but not the jewelry.
- On the afternoon of May 20 someone pried open a rear door of a home in the 400 block of Cambridge

Road and stole some jewelry.

- On June 21 a resident of the 300 block of Cloverway Drive discovered that someone had tried but failed to pry open the front door.

Many of us contributed funds for re-

Recent home sales in Clover and College Park

407 Cambridge Road	July 27	\$820,000
306 Cloverway	January 5	\$505,000
310 Cloverway	September 15	\$800,000
312 Cloverway	June 26	\$799,000
308 Crown View Drive	April 6	\$680,000
408 Crown View Drive	September 14	\$864,000
3001 Dartmouth Road	April 6	\$785,000
304 Princeton Boulevard	May 14	\$495,000
304 Princeton Boulevard	August 22	\$675,000
303 Skyhill Road	September 12	\$672,000
408 Skyhill Road	June 8	\$700,000
812 Vassar Road	July 27	\$1,200,000
1000 Vassar Road	July 18	\$712,000
1102 Vassar Road	June 29	\$610,000
1104 Vassar Road	July 24	\$730,000

till you are asked to type in the address

lief work in the aftermath of the gulf hurricanes in 2005. If you went to help in that effort, please tell Dorothy Mulligan. E-mail her at dmulligan4@aol.com or phone her at 229-1213. Tell her also of ideas for other newsletter articles.

MacArthur enrollment up, setting a new high

MacArthur has 580 students this year, a new high. The school has five classes for kindergarten, grades 1 and 3, and four classes for grades 2, 4, and 5. Debbie Thompson, now in her 15th year as MacArthur principal, has a new assistant principal, Kelley Organek.

New teachers this year are Danielle Lea, kindergarten; Rebecca Harris, third grade; Emily Porterfield, fifth grade; and vocal music teacher

Lynda Pearson. Other new staffers are kindergarten paraprofessionals Yolanda Wellington and Krystal Webster, engineer Victor Douglas, custodian Dinora Valdovinos, and cafeteria hostess Rhonda Hunt. School hours are the same as last year, 8:20 a.m. until 2:45 p.m.

Guidance counselor Robin Blair is looking for 30 volunteers who can tutor a child for half an hour a week between 8:25 and 2:45. If you can help, please call her at the school, 461-4190.

Christina Lytle is PTA president this year. Parents can reach her at tinalytle@aol.com. The PTA annual book fair will be October 26-30. If you can contribute used books, please take them to the school office. During the summer all the windows in the school were replaced with tinted windows that will be more energy efficient. A new alarm system was also installed.

Sustainability Workgroup gives city suggestions

The 10-member Economic Sustainability Workgroup formed last year issued a preliminary report in June. On September 29, more than 100 citizens participated in a workshop to review that report and make suggestions for the final report. City Council will consider the group's final report at its October 27 retreat.

Vi Saunders spent three weeks volunteering with hurricane relief teams in Texas

On Sunday afternoons it's not unusual for Vi and Julian Saunders to have visitors. Often one of the visitors was a patient at Alexandria Hospital some time during the 34 years Vi was a critical care nurse there. These patients well remember her many kindnesses during a time of great stress.

Vi left her hospital job in 1998 but is anything but retired. One of many current projects is creating 500 tree ornaments for the three Christmas trees to be in the hospital lobby in December. Sale of the ornaments will benefit

the hospital's cancer center.

Two years ago in September she flew to Houston to help refugees suffering from the aftermath of Hurricane Rita, which hit before dawn on September 24. Our local Red Cross chapter trained her and other local volunteers in Cooking 101 and taught them how to interview people to get FEMA debit cards and apply for assistance. Vi took her RN license, however, and worked as a nurse in Texas for three weeks.

Volunteers arrived each Saturday, some to spend a week, some

The workgroup recommended that the city leverage existing assets and restore commercial balance in the mix of tax revenue the city receives. The leveraging suggestions include increasing development around Metrorail stations, developing the water-front and Landmark Mall, improving tourism marketing, and determining the best use for city properties.

The report also suggests including more commercial development to counter residential market forces, restructuring the city/private sector mix of economic development functions, working to attract and retain new businesses, and combating the city's reputation of being unfriendly to business.

much longer. During Vi's first week she worked at the Brown Convention Center, where 2600 refugees slept on cots in a huge hot and crowded room. Some families stacked their cots three deep, one family member staying awake to protect them-selves and their few belongings.

Vi was housed in the Hyatt nearby, sharing a room with volunteers working different shifts.

The Salvation Army provided much-needed baby formula and diapers, sending a truck filled with supplies every day. Babies were there with no identification.

Frantic parents came looking for their babies and frightened old people hovered in groups.

The Houston mayor promised that Houston would help with these twin tragedies of Katrina and Rita. He asked every church to take a quota of refugees, to feed and clothe them, to provide shelter, and to help them get medications, eyeglasses, walkers, and other mobility devices.

Houston hotels each gave up to 150 rooms for refugees and workers. Some refugees had been rerouted from New Orleans where Katrina had left thousands homeless on August 25.

Rescuers in a boat in New Orleans had found a young blind man, Bryan, standing in water. He would have been missed except for the light offered by a gas pipe burning in the water nearby. Bryan was sent from New Orleans to Baton Rouge and then to Houston. There Vi became his eyes and helped him get a white walking stick. FEMA outfitted for him a handicap-accessible unit

in a public housing complex there.

Throughout the Northeast Texas area, Red Cross teams went through neighborhoods giving out blue tarps to cover roofs of damaged homes along with grills, charcoal, and coolers that would enable some families to remain in their homes while cleaning and repairing them. A day's supply of food and ice was brought to them each morning.

Other volunteer teams went door-to-door asking whether families had a garage, a spare bed-room, or an enclosed porch where cots could provide space for refugees. Heating was not a problem – it was still very warm this late in September.

During Vi's second week in Texas, she worked from the basement of a suburban Baptist church. The Red Cross had rented a fleet of cars that were distributed to volunteers on the basis of need plus a lottery. Vi was given the use of a new Hyundai with 34 miles on it, thus she could take team

members to the sites where they volunteered.

The volunteers were told not to take their own money, but oft-en a volunteer would see a need not being met so took a person to Wal-Mart for a necessity. Many of these things were happily paid out of the volunteers' pockets. Wal-Mart offered each refugee a month of free medication for up to seven medicines.

In Week 3, Vi helped set up a clinic near Beaumont, Texas. She and other nurses checked injuries and monitored blood pressure and blood sugar levels. They also helped refugees apply for FEMA debit cards that enabled them to buy food and medicine.

Many clients had been without medicine for up to a month. Blood sugar levels up to 500 and dangerously high blood pressure readings were common. Police escorted many of these refugees to nearby emergency rooms.

Hurricane Rita hit hardest in Orange County, next to the Louisiana line. Vi and a team

of volunteers went house to house there to see whether anyone still living there was sick or needed medication. Using a can of green paint, they sprayed a large X on the door when the house was not habitable.

One of Vi's co-workers, a nurse from Philadelphia, told a woman with severe back pain she should not be sleeping on an army cot; he went to a Wal-Mart and bought an air mattress to put on her

cot.

"So many wonderful people came to help," Vi says. "It was an awesome experience, something I will never forget."

Vi grew up in Tidewater, Va., near Williamsburg, and earned her RN degree in Richmond. She and Julian and sons Doug and Scott moved to Vassar Road in 1963. Vi learned about volunteering from her mother, who made hot rolls and vegetable soup every Thursday to take to acquaintances on happy

and sad occasions such as weddings, birthdays, illnesses, and deaths.

Vi has knit thousands of caps for newborns both here and in Africa since 1971. Medical advances now enable even tiny pre-mature infants to survive so Vi uses a lime to size some caps. She also makes blankets and other items for charity organizations and is active with the Board of Lady Managers at Inova Alex-andria Hospital.