

Bannockburn Citizens Association

Newsletter

Vol. 03, No.6

Bethesda, Maryland

June 2004

President's Column

Stuart Brown

What happened to spring? Cold March rains continued well into April and then changed dramatically to 90-degree heat and thunderstorms. One-week gardeners worried about frost, and then suddenly it was hard to work outside in the heat of the day. Somehow, we seem to have missed the gradually increasing warmth of spring that prepares us for the long, hot Washington summer. But, maybe the perfectly temperate spring exists only in our memory and – like the good old days – never really happened.

Apart from the weather, the most notable recent events for our neighborhood have been the three anti-abortion protests at the corner of River Road and Nevis Road. These protests have disturbed many of us not only because they include graphic pictures and harsh rhetoric, but also because they single out one of our neighbors for condemnation. The first demonstration took us by surprise and we weren't sure how to react. But since then, we have had time to think about the situation, to talk among ourselves, and to consult with experts on this type of activity. Let me summarize what we have learned:

First, BCA is not taking a position in the pro-choice vs. pro-life debate. This is a multifaceted issue, touching political, social, ethical, moral, religious and medical issues, far outside the scope of what we can deal with as a neighborhood organization. I know we have neighbors who feel strongly on all sides of the issue.

At the same time, however, BCA is committed to protecting every family's right to live in our neighborhood without fear of harassment or intimidation. To this end, I have expressed BCA's support directly to the doctor who is the target of the demonstrators. I told him that he and his family are not facing this alone and that BCA wants to do whatever we can to help them continue to enjoy living in our neighborhood. Several other neighbors have also written the family to express the same sentiments. In response, the doctor told me his family is very attached to the neighborhood and they truly appreciate all these expressions of support.

BCA General Meeting

**CONCORD SCHOOL
Thursday, June 3rd**

**7:30 PM - Refreshments
8:00 PM - Business Meeting**

**Special Guest Speaker:
Mr. Ali Khan,
MNCPPC Project Director
"Plans for Concord Local Park"**

Discuss Other Neighborhood Issues!

**Meet Your Neighbors!
Make New Friends!**

Second, we have spoken with a variety of experts to see whether there is anything we might do to prevent the demonstrations from continuing. Their consistent advice has been that the demonstrators appear to be acting within the law and exercising their constitutionally protected right to free speech, however much their tactics or posters or rhetoric might be offensive to some. In fact, the doctor who is the target of the demonstrations told me directly, that he is glad to live in a country where the demonstrators are free to express their views – even though they are using this freedom to criticize him personally.

Finally, we have established better communications with the Montgomery County police. The commanders of the Bethesda District Station are aware of our concerns about the impact of these demonstrations on our community, and their officers are committed to monitoring these

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events closely to be certain that the demonstrators continue to obey the law. For example, when one of the protestors parked a van in front of the doctor's house – in violation of the Montgomery County ordinance against picketing a private residence – I alerted the officer monitoring the demonstration and he directed the driver to move.

By the same token, the police will protect the demonstrator's right to express their point of view within the bounds of the law. Thus, during the most recent demonstration, there was apparently a "fender bender" accident involving 3 cars and a delivery truck on River Road. Regardless of whether a driver may have been distracted by the signs, the police officer who came to the scene reminded everyone that it is the driver's ultimate responsibility to drive carefully even when there are distractions.

We have no idea if there will be additional demonstrations. I realize that the graphic posters are particularly disturbing to parents whose children are too young to understand the situation. However, as long as the demonstrators continue to obey the law, we must respect their right to express their views freely, openly and peacefully. In my opinion, we should all be proud and grateful to live in a country that allows such freedom of expression.

Stuart Brown, President slb7110@comcast.net

BCA Web-Site

WWW.BANNOCKBURNWEB.COM

REGISTER

CHECK IT OFTEN

**RECEIVE NEIGHBORHOOD
NEWS**

E-MAIL BCA COMMITTEES

E-MAIL YOUR BOARD

Neighborhood Crime

An incident in our neighborhood this spring provides some useful lessons in keeping your home safe from intruders.

In mid-March, a man approached a house claiming to be a WSSC employee. He quickly flashed some type of identification, but the homeowners weren't able to read it. He said WSSC would be doing maintenance work on their street and started asking questions about who lived in the house. He stayed approximately 30 minutes but left quickly when another adult appeared.

Two days later, the house next door was robbed by an individual who broke a glass windowpane and opened a locked door while no one was home. The police suspect the two incidents might be related. The police also said that they are aware of individuals who pretend to work for WSSC, PEPCO, or other utilities in order to approach houses without raising suspicion and then gain entry to the houses if no one is home.

Three lessons from this incident:

1. Do not allow anyone to enter your house until you are absolutely sure who the person is.
2. If a stranger "flashes" an identification badge, you should insist the person actually hand the badge to you. Ask the person to wait outside -- with the door closed -- and take your time to read the badge carefully. Write down the name and ID number on the badge. If you are still unsure, call the utility company to verify that the person is really an employee.
3. Never tell strangers who lives in your home. Senior citizens should be especially careful not to reveal that they live alone.

Starting in June 2004, the Bannockburn Trash pick-ups will be done much earlier in the morning. Everyone should be sure to put out both trash and recycling debris by 7:00AM or else risk missing the collection truck.

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Reminder for Pet Owners

Now that spring and summer have finally arrived, adults, children and pets are spending more time outside. As a courtesy to everyone who shares our neighborhood, we are reminding pet owners of some of the Montgomery County animal control regulations. Section 5-203. Public Nuisance and Other Violations.

(a) Violation. An owner must not:

(1) Allow a dog or unaltered cat to be at large.

(2) Allow an animal to damage or defecate on property outside the owner's property. An animal may defecate on public property or the common area of property in which the owner shares an interest if the owner immediately removes and disposes of the feces by a sanitary method approved by the Division.

(6) Allow an animal to cause noise that is loud and persistent enough to disturb another person's quiet enjoyment.

(7) Allow a dog to be on public school grounds on a day when school is in session, or in a public recreation area during an organized activity, unless the dog is controlled by a leash or similar restraining device

For a summary or the complete text of Montgomery County animal control laws, you can visit the following website:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/siteHead.asp?page=/mc/services/police/animal/animalhp.htm>

For further information, or to report a violation of animal control laws, call the Animal Services Division at 240-773-5960 or 240-773-5925; for after hours emergencies, call 240-773-5900

Household Hazardous Waste Collections

**Sunday June 6 -- Shady Grove Road
Transfer Station**

Saturday June 19 -- Westland Middle School

Saturday June 26 -- Poolesville High School

**All Collections Open 10AM to 2PM –
For More Information Call 240-777-6410**

Free Mulch Available

**You can get as much free mulch as you
want (or can carry)
From
Shady Grove Transfer Station
at Rockville Pike and Shady Grove Road**

Volunteer Opportunities – Parks & Recreation

Montgomery County has many opportunities for citizens (adults and teens) to volunteer to help their community. If you're interested in parks or recreation, here are two places to contact:

Parks: MNCPPC uses volunteers to perform many different tasks, from cleaning parks and streams to providing garden tours, to counting butterflies. Individuals are welcome to volunteer alone, or BCA could coordinate a neighborhood effort enough people are interested. To find out more about these

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opportunities, go to www.mncppc.org/team or contact Jayne Hench, Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 301-495-2504 or jayne.hench@mncppc-mc.org.

Recreation: The Montgomery County Department of Recreation runs a large number of summer camps, and has opportunities for volunteer counselors ages 13-17. These opportunities include "Counselor-in-Training" at a variety of camps, as well as "Mainstream Companion" and "Summer Camp Assistant" at more specialized camps that serve children and teens with disabilities. For more information contact the MCRD Youth Services – Volunteer Office at 240-777-6961 or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec and click on "Volunteer".

A Suggestion For Neighborhood Watch

The start of the BCA Neighborhood Watch has helped us all be more aware of unusual activity in the neighborhood. A good way to keep suspicious people at bay is to walk up to them and ask how you can help them. Sometimes a person who seems suspicious may only be lost. But if the person really does have criminal plans, he will know that he has been "photographed" and can be more easily identified -- and hopefully he will decide to go somewhere else. If possible, it's a good idea to have a friend with you when you approach a stranger, and you should never approach someone you think may be dangerous. Remember, the police can act only after the fact -- but alert and friendly neighbors can both deter crime and also help visitors who just need directions.

Geert Van Brandt Past President, BCA

Deer Damage Prevention Bonnie Garrett

On April 22, BCA's Bonnie Garrett and Stuart Brown discussed concerns about deer in our neighborhood with

Ron Gibbs of the MNCPPC and Joan Kleinman, head of Congressman Chris Van Hollen's Rockville office. Here is a recap of the meeting:

-- Stuart Brown explained that our neighbors were voicing an increasing number of complaints about the deer population and that in our recent survey of member priorities, deer control was high on the list of "most important" priorities. Stuart also stated that many of our neighbors had been in contact with Mr. Gibbs over the years but felt that his responses were most often just an explanation of why nothing can be done.

-- Bonnie Garrett emphasized that deer cause a variety of problems, including damage to gardens, traffic accidents, and the spread of Lyme disease. She also reiterated BCA's previous suggestion that installing a final section of fence between the existing fences along the Cabin John Parkway and the single lane bridge on MacArthur Blvd. could be a partial solution to our problem. This final section of fence would deter deer from following the small stream bed that leads from Booze Creek into our neighborhood.

-- Ron Gibbs acknowledged that deer are a serious problem throughout Montgomery County and said he, too, was frustrated by his inability to provide solutions. He told us that Lyme disease has now spread into the local chipmunk, squirrel and mouse populations so that even keeping deer away will not eliminate the problem. He offered to provide a presentation about how homeowners can make their gardens deer resistant (e.g., plant selection, deer fencing, etc.) And finally, after some discussion, he agreed to reconsider the possible construction of a connecting fence near MacArthur Blvd. He indicated that he receives many requests from neighborhoods all over the County for fences to be installed at the boundaries of County parks to prevent deer from foraging into residential areas but MNCPPC doesn't have the resources to install fencing everywhere.

What will happen next? We expect to hear back shortly from Mr. Gibbs about whether MNCPPC will consider installing the fence. In addition, if enough people are interested, we can arrange a presentation about how to make gardens deer resistant. If you would like to have such a presentation, please contact Bonnie Garrett (bonnie.garrett2@verizon.net). For more information on deer in Montgomery County, go to the MNCPPC website (www.mc-mncppc.org/) and search for "deer".

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Telephone Numbers to report Roadway issues

Issue	State Roads	County Roads
Burned-out street lights	800-323-MSHA	240-777-2190
Potholes	800-323-MSHA	240-777-ROAD
Abandoned cars	301-424-2101	301-840-2454
Missing street signs	800-323-MSHA	240-777-2190
Badly timed signals	800-323-MSHA	240-777-2190

Vacation Tips and checklist

Vacation season is finally here! If a trip away from home is in your plans, remember these tips to keep your home safe and secure while you are gone.

1. Suspend regular deliveries.
2. This includes newspapers, milk and diaper service deliveries. Ask the post office to hold your mail until you return and notify UPS if you are expecting a package.
3. Set timers on lights and radios.
4. Choose timers tested for safety. You can create the illusion that you're at home by setting the timers to turn lights on and off in different areas of your home throughout the evening. If you choose to leave a radio on, please lower the volume so that it cannot be heard from outside your home.
5. Ask neighbors to watch out.
6. People you know and trust can often be your best defense. Inform your neighbors if you will be gone for an extended period of time.
7. Securely lock all doors and windows.

8. Did you know that in almost half of all completed residential burglaries, thieves simply breezed in through unlocked doors or crawled through unlocked windows? And don't forget to secure any vehicles you leave behind.
9. Leave curtains and blinds in their normal positions.
10. If you are concerned about leaving blinds or curtains open on the nights that you are away from home, leave them closed. It is more common to have closed blinds during the day than to have them open at night.
11. Unplug countertop appliances, home entertainment equipment and computer equipment.

To prevent a fire hazard, coffee makers, toasters, hair dryers and irons should be left unplugged. Unplug all TVs, VCRs and computers to protect against power surges in the event of a power outage.

Changes in Trash Pickup in Bannockburn

At BCA's March meeting we heard a presentation about trash and recycling in Montgomery County from Jim Fustero of the Department of Public Works and Transportation, Solid Waste Division. While he answered a number of questions about trash and recycling services generally, Mr. Fustero's primary message was that a new contractor will take over collections in our neighborhood starting in June 2004, and the pick-ups will be done much earlier in the morning. Everyone should be sure to put out both trash and recycling debris by 7:00AM or else risk missing the collection truck.

For more information, questions or comments about trash and recycling services, you can contact DPWT Customer Service by telephone at 240-777-6410, send email to: "recycle@montgomerycountymd.gov", or go the website: www.mcrecycles.org.

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Saving Money on Travel

Summer vacations are just around the corner. These tips will help you save some money as you hit the road.

1. Travel in the off-season or on off-peak days (not weekends).
2. If flying, watch for deals on tickets and be ready to buy them right away.
3. Always ask for the lowest rate available for airfare, hotels, or car rentals.
4. Be wary of hidden charges. Room taxes, in-room movies, and long distance charges can add up.
5. If driving, tune up your car before you go, to help avoid expensive repair bills.
6. Stay in out of the way places.
7. Pack your own picnic and keep a cooler in the car with beverages and snacks.
8. Look for free attractions.

Check the Visitors' Bureau or local Chamber of Commerce for information on inexpensive attractions and to get discount coupons.

BCA General Meeting

**CONCORD SCHOOL
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**7:30 PM - Refreshments
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Adding Street Lights in Bannockburn

With warmer weather coming soon, our neighborhood will begin a program to revisit street lighting in Bannockburn. During the past years, since the lighting was originally placed, the trees and shrubs have grown, diminishing the intensity in our little streets. Sue Mason has done yeoman service, weaving through the bureaucratic Montgomery County Government, and has provided a basic outline of the procedures for adding streetlights, for which we are all appreciative. Here's the way to make your request for more street lighting.

The request should include:

Name and address of the petitioner

Number and location of utility poles

Signatures and addresses of affected contiguous neighbors

The neighbors have to decide where they want the lights; i.e. on which utility poles if poles are present. There has to be a 2/3 majority consent from those neighbors directly adjacent and across the street from the light (if 4 residents are affected, 3 must sign the petition). A request must be mailed to: Mr. Pat Bradley, 101 Orchard Ridge Drive, 2nd floor, Gaithersburg MD 20878 Just for the record, his telephone is: 240-777-2160.

Please contact Sue and Dwight Mason, who have agreed to head up our street lighting effort. To get the format for the data, including a locator diagram please contact dnmason@juno.com, We will have this data, with instructions, on our website, for downloading. www.bannockburnweb.com Ed

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Bannockburn Citizens Association
Officers, Directors And Committee Chairpersons

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Secretary	Douglas Bonner	229 3296	dbonner@llqm.com
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Director and Block Captain Ctte	Bonnie Garrett	229 8754	bonnie.garrett2@verizon.net
Director	Maria Acebal	320 7734	mfacebal@alumni.duke.edu
Street Lighting Committee	Sue & Dwight Mason		dnmason@juno.com
Noise Abatement Committee	Ken Rubin	229 7613	kennetharubin@aol.com
Concord Park Committee	Josephine Roberts	229 4281	JoRoberts@webtv.net
Social Activities Committee	Renee West	229 5691	Renee_west@knoll.com
St. Bart's Addition Committee	Hal Epstein	263 0533	Hal.Epstein@verizon.net
New Neighbors Welcoming	Maria Acebal	320 7734	mfacebal@alumni.duke.edu
Community Liaison	Walter Sherwin	229 9649	wjsherwin@erols.com
Traffic Committee	Gary Himelfarb	588 9641	garyh@rasrecords.com
Web-Site and Newsletter	David Weiss	229-4550	dk.weiss@verizon.net
Meetings Coordination	Movita Hercules	229 2594	mherc@aol.com
Bannockburn Lore	Mary Jane Pates	229 3639	mjpates@erols.com

Attention All Grown-Ups!

2d Annual BCA Wine and Cheese Garden Party

**It's Pot Luck –
Bring A Bottle of Wine, Or Some Crackers and Cheese,
Bring Whatever You Like, (Or Nothing At All)
Just Come Yourself – Please!**

**Stuart and Diane Brown's Garden
7110 Crail Drive**

**Saturday May 29, 2004 -- 4:00 to 6:00 PM
[Rain date: Sunday, May 30, 2004]**

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