

# BANNOCKBURN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

Volume 06, Number 3

Bethesda, Maryland

December 2006



## President's Column

As I write this column just before Thanksgiving it seems we have seen that last warm weather for the year. You can feel winter is close when even the brightest sun never fully warms the chill of morning and evening begins by mid-afternoon. During the last years of his life, my father would carefully note the times of sunrise and sunset and the hours in between, as though the shorter days of winter were designed to deprive him of daylight and the longer days of summer were a gift just for him. I wonder if some day I will feel the changing seasons so personally.

**Neighborhood Events.** Our neighborhood has been relatively quiet for the past several months. We were fortunate to escape the hurricane season without a single serious storm; even the usual thunderstorms seem not to have caused as many electric and CATV outages as in past years. We have also been fortunate to avoid major incidents of crime or vandalism; even the flurry of questionable door-to-door magazine vendors seems not to have caused any real harm.

The September 17 reopening celebration at Concord Park was a wonderful success. Well over 100 neighbors – including more children than I have seen here in many years – enjoyed the food, fun, games and prizes. We unveiled plaques honoring David Weiss and Jo Roberts for their contributions to the neighborhood and the renovation of the Park. We were so pleased that Jo herself and Sharon Weiss and many of David's family were able to be present. We owe special thanks to Karen Lesser and Lisa Sorkin who took the lead in organizing this event and we

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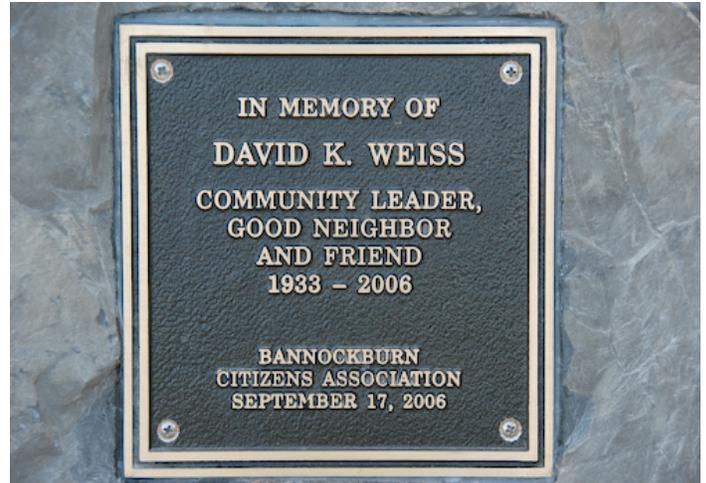
**BCA General Meeting**  
**Thursday December 14**  
**7:30 PM**  
**Concord School**  
**Meet your neighbors**  
**Discuss the latest news**

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# Concord Park Dedication September 17

This summer's dedication and re-opening of the Concord Park was a beautiful occasion. Here are some pictures taken by Eddie Shapiro - Sharon Weiss's son-in-law.



## A Special Thanks!

Those of you who attended the celebrations for the completion of Concord Park on Sept.17th know that it was a very happy occasion. I was not only happy but grateful to the community for their dedication of the park to David Weiss and me. Seldom in one's lifetime is one honored in this way, and I want to thank all of you for this most generous act.

My special thoughts go out to David's wife, Sharon, and their family, who attended the ceremony. David's love of family and spirit of community will live on in our hearts and memories for many years to come. The plaques at the entrance to the park, that are engraved with our names, are beautiful as are the rocks they are mounted on. Thank you.

Josephine Roberts



## Neighborhood Opinion Survey: Guidelines For BCA Covenants

(Note: Covenants can be read on the BCA Website [www.bannockburnweb.com](http://www.bannockburnweb.com))

1) General Approach. Montgomery County zoning rules include a number of restrictions relating to issues such as rear lot line set backs, maximum lot coverage, and maximum building height. Montgomery County also has “forest preservation” rules. The Bannockburn covenants do not expressly address any of these issues. In considering a request for approval of construction -- (Choose (a) or (b))

(a) BCA should attempt to persuade the owner to construct a home that reflects neighborhood values such as preserving trees and not building too big a house, even if that would impose more limits on the owner than required by Montgomery County rules or the Bannockburn covenants.

(b) BCA should not attempt to persuade the owner to agree to restrictions beyond complying with Montgomery County rules and the Bannockburn covenants.

2) Covenant Set Back Requirements. In addition to set backs established by Montgomery County zoning laws (generally 40 foot front; 12 /13 foot side), the Bannockburn covenants establish a 65 foot front set back and a 15 foot side setback. The Bannockburn covenants also provide that BCA can waive these limits (but not the County rules). In general, how should BCA respond to requests for a waiver? (Choose (a), (b), or (c))

(a) Rarely, if ever, grant the waiver.

(c) Usually grant the waiver.

(d) Decide each request individually, without a predisposition to either grant or deny the waiver request.

3) Subdivision of Lots. Subdivision of property in the BCA neighborhood generally requires approval from BCA (as well as approval of Montgomery County). In considering a request to approve a subdivision, BCA should (Choose (a), (b), or (c))

(a) Rarely, if ever, grant approval for a subdivision that would increase the number of “buildable lots” (i.e., more houses) in the neighborhood.

(b) Usually approve any subdivision proposal that is approved by Montgomery County.

(c) Decide each request individually, without a predisposition to either approve or disapprove the subdivision request.

4) Any Other Comments or Suggestions?

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appreciate the MNCPPC and County officials who came (and brought with them a very large Park Police horse). For several weeks following the celebration, an informal playgroup of between 10 and 30 mothers/fathers/children gathered at the Park on Saturday afternoons; I hope they will reconvene in the Spring.

**Covenant Guidelines.** As part of our continuing effort to respond to real estate development activity in the neighborhood, the BCA Board of Directors and five members of the covenant guideline drafting committee met together in early November. We had a lively discussion that in many respects mirrored the reactions of neighbors at the several BCA meetings where this subject has been discussed. Following this meeting, two points were clear to me: (1) everyone sincerely wants to do what is best for the neighborhood, and (2) different individuals have different opinions about what is best.

For example, some individuals believe that BCA's primary objective should be to limit "mansions", and that the covenant guidelines should be drafted to strengthen BCA's ability to "persuade" property owners to limit the size of houses they build and to preserve as many trees as possible. In particular, they suggest that BCA should attempt to negotiate limitations on matters such as building height, building footprint, lot coverage, rear set backs, and tree preservation – even though the covenants do not specifically address these issues. On the other hand, other individuals would give greater deference to the wishes of individual property owners; they suggest BCA should not attempt to apply "neighborhood values" to construction projects that comply with the express requirements of the covenants.

This is a situation in which I believe BCA will benefit by having input from as many neighbors as possible, but I have to admit that I am confused by the input we have received thus far. At the first few meetings where this topic was discussed, the clear majority of neighbors spoke in favor of having BCA doing whatever it could to limit the size and scale of new homes and to preserve trees. These sentiments were clearly reflected in the draft of covenant guidelines that was discussed at the September meeting. At that meeting, however, it seemed to me that a majority of neighbors who spoke suggested that the draft covenant guidelines might have gone too far and that BCA should limit itself more closely to what the covenants expressly require.

**Survey.** In order to better understand what the majority of neighbors want, there is a brief survey

included in this newsletter. This survey is not a final vote on anything, and it is not the last time you will have an opportunity to express your views – but it is a chance for you to influence the work of the covenant guideline committee as well as the decisions of the BCA Board of Directors. The more responses we have now, the better we will be able to tailor our work to your wishes, so I encourage you to complete the survey and mail it back as soon as possible.

**Dues.** It is time to pay your dues for 2007. The amount is the same as last year: \$35 per household or \$50 if you would also like to make a voluntary contribution. You have a choice to pay with your credit card using the BCA website or to pay by check mailed to our Treasurer Anne Peay. Remember, even though we welcome everyone to our meetings and activities, only dues paying households are "members" of BCA, and only members can vote on BCA matters.

**Next Meeting.** The next BCA General Membership Meeting will be **December 14** at the usual place (**Concord School**) and usual starting time (**7:30PM**). However, we want to make this meeting a little different. We will not have an extensive business agenda; instead we want to make the meeting a bit more festive – in the spirit of the holiday season. I especially hope that those of you who are new to the neighborhood will come and meet new friends. I look forward to seeing you there.

Happy Holidays!

## Bannockburnweb.com

Go to the BCA website at [www.bannockburnweb.com](http://www.bannockburnweb.com). While there you can see the BCA officer roster, newsletter archives, the BCA Constitution, By-laws and Covenants, and even pay your BCA dues. More information about the resources will be included in a future newsletter.



# From the Editor

by Chris Hull

Here is my second newsletter as editor. There is not much content in here, and I am counting on you - the neighborhood - to provide abundant articles for future newsletters. You can email these to me at [chull@multum.org](mailto:chull@multum.org).

Also, as Webmaster, I am responsible for our community website - [www.bannockburnweb.com](http://www.bannockburnweb.com). I am looking to revamp this site, but I have not yet found the time for this undertaking. Instead I have been devoting my free time to convincing my 1 and 3 year-old daughters to go to sleep - not much success there. If you have any comments or suggestions about the website (or putting toddlers to sleep), you can just email them to me or catch me at the next meeting.

## Bannockburn Email List

Have you received any messages from Stuart Brown or Chris Hull, that were addressed quite personally, such as "Dear Dave,". These may have been sent via our website

and its mailing list functionality.

If you register on the [www.bannockburnweb.com](http://www.bannockburnweb.com) website and have entered a valid email address, then you may have chosen the "E-Mail me civic news for my area" option. This includes you as a member of of the Bannockburn community email listserve. To see if you are a member of this list, you can visit the *Update Your Profile* link.

The website provides a mechanism for sending emails to all who are subscribed to the civic news; this is accessed through the Forum link. Alternatively, you can send an email from your mail program to:

[BannockburnListserv@CommunityWeb.org](mailto:BannockburnListserv@CommunityWeb.org). Your email message will be forwarded to all of the member of the list. If you do not wish to receive these emails, you can modify you profile to remove this option.

Please note that even if you are not subscribed to the civic news, you will still receive occasional emails from the BCA president or other officers.

So, if you have any news or questions that you want to share with the entire community, use this convenient mechanism. But please use common sense and discretion in these emails - several hundred of your neighbors are listening.