



West Mt. Airy Neighbors
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WMAN NEWS

LATE FALL 2008 | VOLUME 8 NUMBER 3

WMAN: Opportunities for Change

WMAN is eagerly anticipating some changes in how our city government works, including technological developments that will enhance our access to information. Take a moment to read about what's coming, and how WMAN will work with these new improvements.

HELP! IT'S NOT AN EMERGENCY

On December 31, 2008, the eagerly awaited Philadelphia 311 system is scheduled to start operation. This new system promises "one-stop shopping" for non-emergency city services, such as pot hole repair, a raucous car alarm that won't stop, or a missed garbage pickup. Callers will be given a tracking number so they can follow the progress of their requests. Chicago, Houston, and Baltimore are among the cities that have already implemented a version of the 311 system. Based on their experiences, the system should alleviate pressure on the 911 emergency system, improve services to city residents, and allow the city to more accurately measure the performance of its departments.

While we wait for the 311 system to be activated, WMAN offers the services of Milt Cohen, our Community Relations Specialist, who was introduced in our last Newsletter. Milt will continue working with neighbors during the transition to a fully-functional 311 system, and has already begun working with neighbors on larger issues. Some issues can't be resolved with a single phone call: arguments between neighbors, on-going problems with some of the institutions in the community. If you need Milt, he can be reached at 267 286-8174 or wmanhelp@hotmail.com.

ZONE DEFENSE

In the Primary Election held in May, 2007, nearly 80% of the voters supported the creation of an independent Zoning Code Commission to review and recommend reform of Philadelphia's complex and out-dated zoning code. The Commission has been appointed and is working on a more rational plan for zoning and land use. WMAN's own active Zoning Committee meets monthly, and provides a venue where neighbors have input into local zoning matters, and its recommendations have been respected by the Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Committee's Zoning Protocol is available on WMAN's website, <http://wman.net>. For more information on the Philadelphia Zoning Code Commission, see www.zoningmatters.org.

When WMAN first made a commitment to help residents gather and share information on

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RENOVATIONS ON
TRACK

For more information about safety, crime, and city initiatives, visit these websites:

WMAN:

<http://wman.net>

**Philadelphia Police Department
Crime Maps:**

<http://www.ppdonline.org/>

EveryBlock Philadelphia:

<http://philly.everyblock.com>

Mt. Airy Safety Network:

<http://mtairysafetynetwork.org/>

Philadelphia 311:

<http://www.phila.gov/311/>

Zoning Code Commission:

<http://www.zoningmatters.org/>

PLEASE SUPPORT WMAN ANNUAL GIVING!



This has been quite an extraordinary autumn, when turbulent events nationally and internationally have put us on “news overload.”

At home in Mt. Airy, however, things seem pretty peaceful. Our community serves as a haven from the upheavals beyond, and for that I am grateful. In times like these, I look for peace in my own backyard, because I know I won’t find it in the news. Where do you go to get away from it all? If you’re like me, you like to take a walk in Fairmount Park or around our community’s beautiful streets. When you’re walking, you might be checking out your favorite gardens around the neighborhood. Maybe you like to catch dinner out at one of our neighborhood restaurants, or stroll with friends on Germantown Avenue on Mt. Airy First Friday.

If you are like me, you like to be home. Home in Mt. Airy.

That’s where West Mt. Airy Neighbors comes in.

All year, we work to make this community a great place to live. Through our Quality of Life Committee, we solve a host of problems that affect our neighbors, and through our Zoning Committee we enable residents to have input on zoning issues that affect their blocks. We keep you informed through this newsletter and our e-newsletter and weekly WMANewsflash.

Our volunteers make Mt. Airy more beautiful and more green. Just this past year, volunteers working with WMAN have cleaned up and installed a new fence at the Allens Lane/Lincoln Drive intersection, completely renovated Ned Wolf Park and Emlen Circle, and planted nearly 100 trees.

I am asking you to support those volunteers’ efforts, and the work of our small staff, in making your community a better place to live. Please participate in our Annual Giving campaign this year. Use the coupon on page 7 of this newsletter to send your contribution today.

We know that you have many claims on your philanthropic dollar this year. We only ask that, in making your year-end giving decisions, you set aside something for that irreplaceable part of your life – your neighborhood.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Jarma J. Frisby
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WMAN: Opportunities for Change

NEW TECHNOLOGIES, NEW SOLUTIONS

crime and safety issues through our Mt. Airy Safety Network, telephones were about as high-tech as we could get. For a long time, the Safety Network consisted of a phone line on which neighbors could call in details of crimes, which were then shared with the 14th District Police at a monthly meeting. This was before the police had access to computerized crime mapping, which has since made organized, scientific tracking of incidents feasible. This was also prior to the widespread use of email, which has dramatically changed how the Safety Network operates. Now, Mt. Airy Safety Alerts inform neighbors of local incidents quickly and efficiently. We are assisted by our Virtual Block Captains, who pledge to send our safety alerts to their neighbors, and the active list serves that cover a significant part of West Mt. Airy. However, our information is limited to that which neighbors share with us, supplemented by the weekly crime report in the Mt. Airy Times Express. WMAN, together with East Mt. Airy Neighbors, also sponsors a website which carries useful crime prevention tips and information on contacting the police: <http://mtairysafetynetwork.org>.

Two other websites offer a wealth of useful information related to crime and safety. The Philadelphia Police Department maintains a website at www.ppdonline.org, which includes an interactive crime map. The map is a beta release, and the police department welcomes feedback so they can refine and improve this application. EveryBlock, at <http://philly.everyblock.com>, calls itself "a news feed for your block". Enter an address, and the site will display recent public records, news articles and photographs relevant to that location. There is a lot to explore on both these sites, and we encourage you to take advantage of these resources.

WMAN is now considering how these changes should affect our work. Should we continue to send Mt. Airy Safety Alerts by email? How can we most effectively make crime prevention information available to neighbors? How can we support important community efforts like Town Watch? If you have any thoughts on these matters, please let us know at wman@wman.net. We are always interested in learning from our neighbors.

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Ned Wolf Park Revitalized and Rededicated

Ned Wolf served as President of West Mt. Airy Neighbors from 1971 – 1973. He died in 1977 and Ned Wolf Park, at the corner of McCallum and Ellet Streets, was named for him in 1979. On October 12, 2008, the volunteers who have rehabilitated the park rededicated it to his memory. This is a portion of Bruce Pitcairn Murray's comments at the dedication ceremony. To read the complete text, please visit WMAN's website at www.wman.net.

THE SPIRIT OF MT. AIRY



Bruce Pitcairn Murray

Good afternoon and welcome to Ned Wolf Park. We are glad that you have come to share in the rededication of this neighborhood space to its namesake. We are proud to have the opportunity to honor a civil rights legend and someone who should be a known hero, along with his colleagues, especially in his hometown, Philadelphia.

We held a meeting in the park two years back and Laura Siena, of West Mt. Airy Neighbors (WMAN) joined us. She knew that it was a Dept. of Recreation lot, and it was named Ned Wolf Park. She referred us to Philadelphia Green and has partnered with us to guide and assist our planning and has helped us every step along the way.

One day Ronda and I were working in the park and someone called out to us from his car. This had become pretty common in early 2007, usually shouting encouragement or thanks for the improvements here. This time someone asked, "Did you know Ned Wolf?" We admitted we didn't, and Dr. Rob Roy McGregor pulled over and talked to us about singing with Ned in the Allens Lane Chorus. I hadn't known anything about Ned's musical or personal life to that point.

I have heard many things about Ned. He has been called various names, and likely embodied each one: pugnacious, gutsy, brilliant, dedicated, and my favorite, "a fearless legal warrior".

Ned thought that we should be able to solve the flaws in our social fabric by appealing to the

good intentions of people, and informing them with some persuasive talk, one of his known specialties. His approach earned the respect of his opposition as well as a large number of professional and personal supporters.

In 1974, after heading the Philadelphia Division of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law (LCCRUL) that found significant social change cases and passed them to major firms for pro-bono representation, founded Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia (PILCOP) and served as the first Executive Director.

I hope that he was satisfied some years later that he had done very good work, that he had accomplished some important things and started some important discussions we continue today. I don't think he expected he would be an inspiration for others to join these causes for decades to come, but in fact, he has. By dedicating this place to his memory, to his neighborhood and to his colleagues who battle for equal rights under the laws of this land, it is my hope that he will inspire the purposeful actions of others who speak out and even fight when necessary until protecting human rights for everyone becomes the real law of our land.



Family & Friends: Jon Weiss, Ned's son-in-law; Flora Barth Wolf with granddaughter Amalya; Abigail Wolf; Susannab Wolf; Bruce Murray; Ronda Throne-Murray.

Philadelphia Cares for Kids' Kingdom

On October 18th, students, alumni, parents, neighbors, and other volunteers participated in Philadelphia Cares Day at Houston School. Teams under the leadership of Houston Principal Kim Newman and Houston Playground Committee members Marie France Cyr, Carol Davis, Rusty Prall and Morrie Zimmerman worked to spruce up the Kids' Kingdom playground.

Volunteers planted a new weeping cherry tree at the entrance to replace a diseased dogwood; turned over the soil in the planters around and inside the playground, and worked in rich hardwood mulch; replanted old perennials, and planted new perennials and annuals in planters; watered new plants and trees; raked wood chips from beneath playground structures where it had built up, and low areas worn down from wear; raked

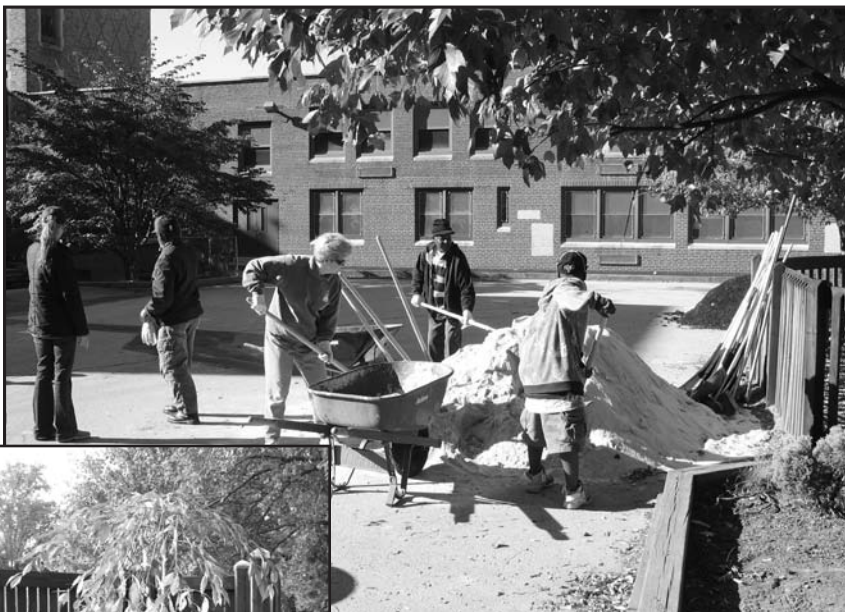


leaves around entire playground; weeded the area near the basketball court where annuals were planted in the spring; and, best of all, sanded and completed the oiling of all the wood surfaces on the playground to preserve the wood.

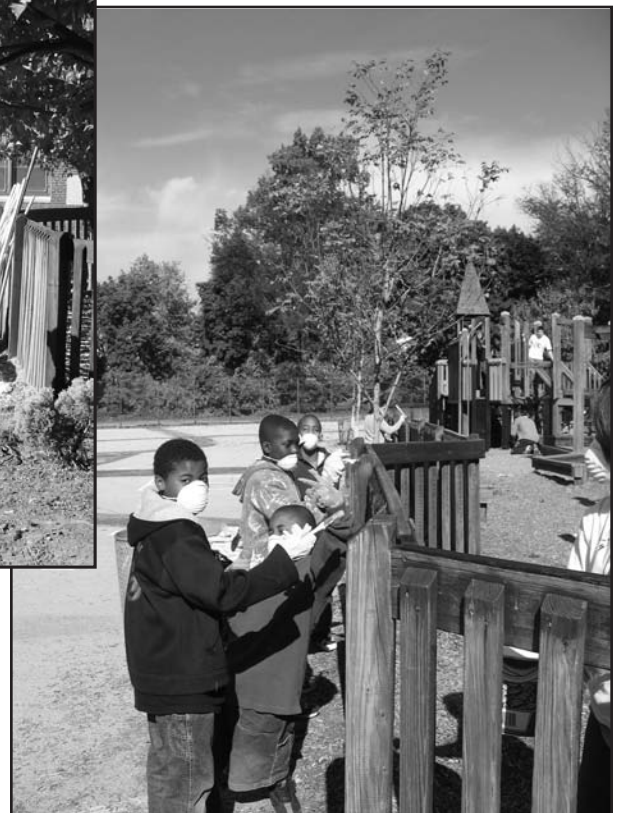
Houston School's playground is a volunteer-driven project which is sponsored by West Mt. Airy Neighbors and which receives financial support from the Houston Home and School Association, parents and

neighbors. The playground is open to the public during these hours:

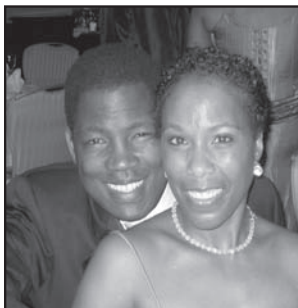
Fall	3:30pm till 6pm
Winter	3:30pm till 6pm
Spring	3:30pm till 6pm
Summer	9:00am till 8pm



WMAN's Executive Director, Laura Morris Siena, was one of many hardworking volunteers.



Save the Date



Karen Colquitt-Hall and Parris Hall will Co-chair the fourth annual *Eat Your Heart Out!*, to be held on Saturday, March 14th, 2009. Karen and Parris, long-time Pelham residents, have previously served as *Eat Your Heart Out!* hosts.

Eat Your Heart Out!, West Mt. Airy Neighbors' signature fund raising event, features community dinners in the lovely homes of West Mt. Airy residents, and showcases the talent of some of our best caterers, restaurateurs and home chefs. Save the date on your calendar – invitations will be sent in late February, 2009.

Eat Your Heart Out!

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WMAN at Work



Volunteers Louise Barteau, Ashley Schmid and Lis Bass planting trees in March, 2008.

Volunteers have been hard at work planting trees under the sponsorship of WMAN's Streetscapes Committee. Trees are provided free of charge to homeowners through the Tree Vitalize program sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. In Philadelphia the program is and administered by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. WMAN's Streetscapes Committee organizes the tree planting itself, and over the last year has planted nearly 100 trees in West Mt. Airy. The Streetscapes Committee thanks these friends for their assistance with this project: David Brothers, High Point Café, Primex, Weavers Way Coop, Wissahickon Tree and Landscaping.

WMAN Annual Giving

Please use the coupon below to send your Annual Giving contribution to WMAN at 6703 Germantown Avenue, Suite 200, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

Or, visit our website at www.wman.net and use our secure server to make your contribution. Thank you!

I'm enclosing my Annual Giving contribution of:

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The official registration and financial information of West Mt. Airy Neighbors may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please make check or money order payable to WMAN.
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Renovations on Track



Construction has commenced on the passenger bridge and platforms at the Allen Lane Train Station. The project, which will completely rehabilitate the historic bridge and make the platforms handicap-accessible, is funded by federal, state and local governments to the tune of more than \$7 million.

Given the current decrepit state of the bridge (as shown in this recent photo), this project is a welcome investment in the historical fabric of our community. The project is scheduled to be finished by the Spring of 2010.

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