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WMAN NEWS

WINTER 2007

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 1



Mt. Airy's newest block group, *Corners and Porches*, gets organized in October 2006.

RISE OF THE BLOCK GROUPS

More than 150 neighbors gathered at Summit Church last October to discuss public safety concerns and to organize a new town watch/block group. The result? *Corners and Porches*, the newest grass roots group to have sprouted in West Mt. Airy.

Like many groups, *Corners and Porches* was started in respond to a particular situation – in this case, a rise in crime in the area around the

intersection of Greene and Sedgwick Streets. Since then, *Corners and Porches* has moved quickly to harness volunteer energy on a number of fronts. Their new listserv has more than 120 participants and serves as an effective communications hub and planning tool for the group. Twenty-nine neighbors participated in a training session sponsored by the City's Integrated Town Watch Services program. In response to neighbor concerns *continued on page 4*

ELFANT WISSAHICKON REALTORS SPONSORS *Eat Your Heart Out!*



Elfant Wissahickon partners Bob Elfant (far left), Louise D'Allesandro (second from left) and Paul Walsh (right) announce their sponsorship of Eat Your Heart Out! in a meeting with WMAN President Jarma J. Frisby.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Being President of West Mt. Airy Neighbors for nearly two years has given me a bird's eye view on how we human beings organize, organize, organize! Whether it's a couple of neighbors getting together to discuss a problem on their block, or a community-wide meeting such as our forum for mayoral candidates, folks have a need to come together, work together, and feel that they are a part of a community.

Since the inception of the internet, many have argued that the need for community comprised of people living within close geographical boundaries will be replaced by global virtual communities drawn together by common interests. While that certainly happens, I take note that our desire to know our neighbors is still compelling.

The new Corners and Porches listserv is a lively place, with a number of different threads focused on building stronger relationships with Henry School, crime prevention tips, and thoughts on how best to organize Town Watch patrols. Meetings get organized and directions get set in that space. I noticed during the holidays, however, that these postings were supplemented by invitations to neighbors to celebrate Christmas, Hanukah, and winter solstice in the flesh, by participating in caroling and latke making at each other's homes. The need to connect is always there.


In Mt. Airy, this connectedness has enabled us to overcome block busting, be proactive in creating a racially integrated community, survive the vicissitudes of Philadelphia's fortunes, and emerge in the 21st Century as a nationally-known community of choice for people seeking a real sense of community – augmented by technology, of course!

Jarma J. Frisby
President

COMMUNITY RELATIONS SPECIALIST

Milt Cohen, former WMAN Board member and long-time West Mt. Airy resident, has joined WMAN in a new part-time position, Community Relations Specialist. This new position represents WMAN's commitment to helping neighbors with quality of life issues which affect them directly. Milt's responsibilities include responding to individual resi-


dents' complaints, linking residents to city services, and working with them to solve problems. Milt will be working closely with our elected officials and with representatives of city agencies to assist community residents. To contact Milt, email him at wmanhelp@hotmail.com or call him at (267) 286-8174.



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ELFANT WISSAHICKON REALTORS SPONSORS EAT YOUR HEART OUT!

The second annual *Eat Your Heart Out!* event is coming your way March 3rd, sponsored by Elfant Wissahickon Realtors. Last year's *Eat Your Heart Out!* sold out quickly and provided a great time for all. The event is a modified progressive dinner, as guests begin the evening together at a central location for cocktails, and then go to dinner at a magnificent West Mt. Airy home, with delicious food cooked by one of the remarkable chefs who live in our area.

Bob Elfant notes, "*Eat Your Heart Out!* is a wonderful opportunity to show off some of the most beautiful homes in MA. We believe it is a great tie-in to our real estate business to sponsor an event which gives people a chance to see and enjoy some of these lovely homes."

This year's event, chaired by Della Lazarus, will begin with cocktails for all participants at the home of Sally and Dan Gordon. Guests will then progress to dinner at one of sixteen homes scattered throughout all of West Mt. Airy. For more information, contact WMAN at wman@wman.net or 215 438-6022.

Eat Your Heart Out!

Saturday March 3



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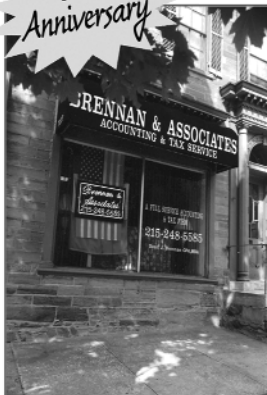
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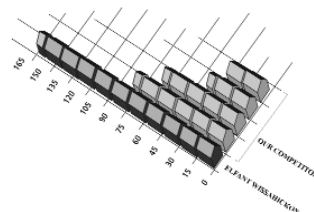
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RISE OF THE BLOCK GROUPS

about the after school behavior of some Henry School students and alumni, *Corners and Porches* is working with Henry School Principal Caren Trantas, as well as the Henry Home and School Association. Concerned *Corners and Porches*

members have come together with members of another block group, the 500 West Glen Echo Neighbors, to clean up and raise funds for the renovation of Ned Wolf Park at the corner of McCallum and Ellet Streets.



Mt. Airy-Nippon-Bryan-Cresheim Town Watch members Celeste Zappala, Lucy Stroiman and Steve Stroiman accept an award from the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission in October, 2006 for their work on behalf of the community.



Pelham Town Watch (PTW) leaders host Corners and Porches leaders at brunch in December. Dean Karavite, Corners and Porches; Eric Fontenot, President, PTW, and his son Nate; Anna Fontenot, PTW; Dan Rhoton, PTW; Leni Windle, PTW; Jared McCabe, PTW; Jill McCabe, PTW; Tonya Ladipo, PTW; Susie Bloch, Corners and Porches

COMMUNITY PROBLEM-SOLVING TO SCALE

Block groups and town watches offer the perfect scale for grass roots organizing. Neighbors can get to know each other well, and establish relationships which foster a strong and closely-knit community. By focusing on a small geographical area, block groups can respond expeditiously to very specific concerns.

HOW WMAN HELPS BLOCK GROUPS

WMAN plays a vital role in supporting the work of block groups by facilitating communications, providing information and other resources, and linking block groups to city services and departments.

FACILITATING COMMUNICATIONS:

WMAN has initiated a listserv just for block captains and other block group leaders, enabling them to share information, ideas, and best practices. WMAN's Virtual Block Captain program emails information to block captains, which they can then pass along to people on their blocks.

PROVIDING RESOURCES: WMAN serves as a conduit for information and best practices on community public safety and block organizing. Through its Quality of Life Committee, chaired by Vice President for Community Relations Steven David Masters, WMAN will focus on crime prevention strategies,

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RISE OF THE BLOCK GROUPS



Members of Mt. Airy-Nippon-Bryan-Cresheim Town Watch meet with 14th District Police Captain Winton Singletary outside of Imperial Chinese at the corner of Germantown Avenue and West Durbam Street. The Town Watch has organized several "sit-ins" in front of the take-out restaurant to discourage loitering.



Members of Corners and Porches and 500 Glen Echo Road Neighbors meet on a rainy Sunday in November, 2006 to plan improvements to Ned Wolf Park at the corner of McCallum and West Ellet Streets. From left to right: Janet Filante, Melissa Mumford, Bruce Murray, Dallas McWilliams, Jerry Aronson, Ronda Throne-Murray.

and address specific quality of life issues as they come up. The group organized around renovating Ned Wolf Park, for example, is using WMAN as a fiscal agent for their fund raising efforts.

LINKING BLOCK GROUPS TO CITY SERVICES: WMAN's strong relationship with Councilwoman Miller's office, other elected officials, and city departments can help block groups solve problems. As a member of the Mt. Airy Nuisance Business Task Force, WMAN brings the coordinated efforts of the 8th District Council Office, District Attorney's office, Licenses and Inspections, PA Liquor Control and Enforcement, and the

Be a Virtual Block Captain

Are you the "keeper of the email addresses" for your block, or would you be willing to organize your block electronically? If so, consider becoming a Virtual Block Captain. The job description is easy – simply be the communications link between WMAN and your neighbors for crime alerts and other essential information. You will also be invited to join the Mt. Airy Block Captains listserv. For more information, or to sign up, write to wman@wman.net.

City's Health Department to bear on problem businesses.

PELHAM TOWN WATCH: THE HEROES OF THE CORNER DELI SAGA

Readers of this newsletter and the local newspapers will be familiar with the long and complex story of the Corner Deli, a former nuisance business on the corner of East Hortter Street and Germantown Avenue. The meticulous record-keeping of Pelham Town Watch members was powerful testimony about the goings-on outside this business – testimony which has been used time and time again in the legal proceedings which have accompanied the community's efforts to curtail the activities around the Corner Deli.

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MAJOR BLOCK GROUPS

These are the larger block groups in West Mt. Airy:

CORNERS AND PORCHES

Coverage area: Mainly Greene and Sedgwick Streets in the vicinity of Henry School

Contact: Susan Bloch, susiebloch@earthlink.net

500 GLEN ECHO ROAD NEIGHBORS

Coverage area: Block of 500 Glen Echo Road and vicinity

Contact: WMAN Board member JoAnn Chapman jochapee@tmail.com

MT. AIRY TOWN WATCH

Coverage area: This Town Watch covers a wide area around the Henry School, including the areas covered by some other block groups. It is the largest Town Watch in Mt. Airy.

Contact: Mark Hartsfield (215) 844-4105

MT. AIRY-NIPPON-BRYAN-CRESHEIM TOWN WATCH

Coverage area: Unit and 100 blocks of Mt. Airy Avenue and Nippon Street; 7100 and 7200 blocks of Bryan Street and Cresheim Road

Contact: Steve Stroiman, (215) 247-2493

PELHAM TOWN WATCH

Coverage Area: Unit and 100 blocks of West Horticter Street and Pelham Road; unit block of Westview Street; 6600 block of Emlen Street

Contact: Dan Rhoton, danrhoton@hotmail.com

UPPER WISSAHICKON CIVIC ASSOCIATION


Coverage Area: Allens Lane, Mt. Airy and Mt. Pleasant Avenues below Wissahickon Avenue; Mt. Airy Terrace

Contact: George Draper (215) 844-6377 or Harold Rush (215) 242-4021

WEATHEM TOWN WATCH

Coverage Area: Weathem Street, 200 blocks of West Gorgas, Idell, and Durand; 6900 block of Cresheim Road.

Contact: Frank Killian (215) 843-6380 or WMAN Board member Louis Clotman louis@clotman.com



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KEVIN PETER NAMED CO-CHAIR, MT. AIRY SCHOOLS COMMITTEE



BANK OF AMERICA HONORS KEVIN AND NANCY PETER AS “LOCAL HEROES.” Kevin Peter, shown here with his wife Nancy and Greg Davis, East Mt. Airy Neighbors Board member and co-chair of the Schools Committee, has agreed to serve as Co-chair of the Committee. Kevin and Nancy recently were honored by Bank of America as “Local Heroes” for their work with Henry School. The \$5,000 grant which accompanied the honor will be used to promote Henry School as an elementary school of choice for Mt. Airy residents. Kevin also serves as the WMAN Finance Vice President, which includes membership on the Executive Committee.

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WMAN MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WMAN will hold a meeting of its membership on Tuesday, February 13th at 7:30 pm at Summit Presbyterian Church, corner of Greene and Westview Streets, to vote on proposed amendments to its By-laws. All WMAN members are invited to attend and eligible to vote on the By-laws amendments. By-laws draft and additional information are available at the WMAN website www.wman.net.

While you are there, take some time to explore the rest of WMAN's website, which is filled with useful information and resources on city services, schools, current local issues, and more.

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