



West Mt. Airy Neighbors  
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# WMAN NEWS

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## New Board Members



Jarma Frisby, WMAN President, with new board members: Charles "Chuck" Matthews, Ricardo Jefferson, Sheldon Kilby, Annette McDaniel-Turner, Karen Howard, and Allyson Katzman Bormack.

*Story beginning on page 4*

## "Partners in Progress"

At its annual meeting in June, WMAN honored nine "Partners in Progress", whose work strengthens the community for all of us.

**Herb Rothe Jr. and Herb Rothe III:** Herb Jr. and Herb III are the third and fourth generation owners of Rothe Florist, which has been on Germantown Avenue in Mt. Airy for 100 years. When other businesses left for the suburbs or closed their doors, Rothe Florist stayed. Through thick and thin, prosperity and hardship, Rothe Florist has anchored Mt. Airy's business district and presented a beautiful window to the world. Both Rotheres have also played an important role in the development of the Mt. Airy Business Association and the Mt. Airy Business Improvement District.

**Greg Moore and the C. W. Henry School Centennial Committee:** Greg Moore and a host of loyal parents, alumni, and teachers came together to celebrate an educational and community milestone – Henry School's Centennial. The volunteer group planned a week of celebrations including a fashion show, sock hop, carnival, tours at the school, and, the main event--the Henry Centennial "Homecoming" Dinner and Dance. More than 200 people (including boxing champion Bernard Hopkins) came to share memories of this amazing educational institution. These events also sparked the beginnings of the first C.W. Henry Alumni Association. The Association's first projects are to develop an alumni database, and to help the school gain enough financial support to construct a much-needed new school lunchroom.

**Susan Beetle:** Maintaining accurate financial records is a difficult but essential part of managing a small not-for-profit. Since 2005, Susan not only served on WMAN's Finance Committee, but as a volunteer ensured that WMAN's books are shipshape: balancing the checkbook, reviewing the allocation of funds and serving as a needed double check on staff work. It is not an overstatement to say that WMAN would not be around if not for Susan's extraordinary commitment. Susan has now "retired" from this volunteer job, and WMAN has hired a part-time bookkeeper, Marie France Cyr.

**Heather Pierce:** Over the last year, Heather has organized and motivated Carpenter's Woods Town Watch to be an effective force for crime prevention and public safety in the area bounded by

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## Looking Forward/Looking Back



This year has been a crucial one for West Mt. Airy Neighbors, as we have looked to our future through our strategic planning process and plan to commemorate our history when we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year.

Involving residents in our strategic planning process was one of the most rewarding activities of 2008. We interviewed community leaders, hosted well-attended brainstorming sessions, and conducted an online survey that garnered a large number of responses. What we learned again – and it's a message we learn every day in this *exceptional* community – is that Mt. Airy residents are passionate about this neighborhood, idealistic about what we can accomplish here, and ready to pitch in to move our community and our city forward.

### WHAT WE LEARNED

The outreach we undertook as part of our planning process revealed that:

WMAN is valued for its communications, especially its Mt. Airy Safety Network Alerts which keep residents informed of incidents and provide crime-prevention information;

WMAN's core committees, such as our Zoning and Quality of Life Committees, are meeting the needs of many people, but their work needs to be more broadly publicized;

Top issues of concern to our residents are crime and safety, and the quality of our public schools. Maintaining housing affordability, the basis Mt. Airy's economic diversity, is also a significant concern.

Mt. Airy residents want our community associations to engage and lead in sustainable practices, creating innovative local responses to large issues such as global warming.

### OUR PLAN'S HIGHLIGHTS

From these insights, WMAN's Board, led by Strategic Planning Committee Chair Mary Hale Meyer, focused on the following Strategic Goals for 2008-2011:

#### Goal 1: Neighborhood Engagement

Engage West Mt. Airy residents, businesses and civic organizations in activities that help build long-term sustainability to create a better future for our community. Sustainable neighborhood development means a safer, greener, and healthier neighborhood for families, individuals, and businesses to grow and thrive while preserving West Mt. Airy's proud legacy of diversity, history, and civic discourse.

#### Goal 2: Community Advocacy

Advocate for West Mt. Airy residents on issues that affect their lives, from public safety and quality public education to environmental standards and transportation access.

#### Goal 3: Community News and Information

Become a vital source for community news and information through the expansion and development of print and electronic communication activities, including email alerts, newsletters, WMAN's website, and local news media coverage.

#### Goal 4: Organizational Viability

Create long-term organizational viability to ensure WMAN's future growth and development.

### PUTTING OUR PLAN INTO ACTION

What's the value of any planning if the result sits on a shelf and collects dust? WMAN's Board and staff are committed to fulfilling this plan and have developed benchmarks and an action plan to measure our progress in the next three years. We are holding ourselves accountable to moving WMAN to the next level as an organization and we hope our members and friends will remind us of that accountability if we stray from our path.

As always, we welcome input and advice from you. We appreciate your support for WMAN and your commitment to this neighborhood. Please know that we are here for you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jarma J. Frisby".

Jarma J. Frisby  
President

## WMAN's 50th is Coming Up!

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In 1959, an energetic and visionary group of community leaders founded West Mt. Airy Neighbors with the explicit purpose of creating and sustaining a racially integrated community. This was only a dozen years after Jackie Robinson integrated baseball, five years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, and two years before black and white Freedom Riders were beaten and jailed for taking bus trips together across state lines in the south. To plan and work for an intentionally diverse community was a new idea never before tried in the U.S.

We are proud of our unique history with its history of ground-breaking leadership, and will be celebrating our 50th Anniversary next year with a number of events – so many that they will likely spill over into 2010. While plans are still in process, here's what we have on the drawing board:

- *50 Good Neighbors*: Many area residents have fond memories of WMAN's great *40 Good Neighbors* event in 1999;
- Telling the stories of those who grew up here and those who led the integration effort;
- Celebrating our diversity in performing and visual arts.

These are just three focus areas for now, and there will likely be others. If you want to get involved in planning WMAN's 50th, please write to Executive Director Laura Siena at [wman@wman.net](mailto:wman@wman.net). And, if you moved here in the 50s, 60s, or 70s, or if you grew up here, please share your stories! To let us know about you, email [wman@wman.net](mailto:wman@wman.net) or call our office at (215) 438-6022.

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*continued from page 1*

### “Partners in Progress”

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Allens Lane and Lincoln Drive, and McCallum Street and Wissahickon Avenue. Carpenter's Woods Town Watch volunteers patrol two nights a week, conduct trainings in crime prevention and town watch techniques, and maintain a website. Heather's community spirit was behind the clean-up of the Germantown Jewish Centre's play yard after vandals had put broken glass under the sand.

**Brian Hester:** Duval Improvement Association, which represents the area bounded by Johnson and Washington, and McCallum and Wayne, is an essential community partner to WMAN. Brian, who became President in 2007, is a dynamic and effective leader, focused on solving community problems from illegal uses of residential properties to litter accumulation to nuisance businesses. He works closely with WMAN to maximize access to resources such as the Mt. Airy Nuisance Business Task Force. Brian also organizes events, bringing together the residents of this community for the good of all.

**Kathryn McKenzie and Todd Perry:** This year, the Mt. Airy Day Committee, under the leadership of Kathy and Todd, more than doubled last year's funds raised through corporate sponsorships. Much of these additional funds will support EMAN and WMAN's community work, but funds also supported headline entertainment at Mt. Airy Day and such innovations as a Moon Bounce in the children's games area.

**Zakiyyah Abdul-Raheem:** From 1998 – 1990, “Zak” served as East Mt. Airy Neighbors' (EMAN's) president. She became Executive Director of EMAN in 2006 after a stint as a VISTA volunteer in America's southwest. In this role, she worked on many cooperative projects with WMAN, including workshops on predatory lending, Mt. Airy Day, and community association relationships with large institutions. Zak is retiring from EMAN to take up a new life in North Carolina. At WMAN, we wish her the fondest farewell and hope she returns, again, to Mt. Airy.



*Herb Rotbe, III and Herb Rotbe, Jr., Rotbe Florist; Greg Moore, Houston School Centennial; Susan Beetle, volunteer bookkeeper for WMAN; Heather Pierce, Carpenter's Woods Town Watch; Brian Hester, Duval Improvement Association; Todd Perry and Kathryn McKenzie, Co-Chairs, Mt. Airy Day 2008; and Zakiyyah Abdul-Raheem, Executive Director, East Mt. Airy Neighbors.*

At its Annual Meeting in June, WMAN's membersh



**Allyson Katzman Bormack** comes to the Board of WMAN with an extensive and impressive record of community involvement. She has lived in West Mt. Airy for 11 years and loves the friendliness, diversity and physical beauty of Mt. Airy. With her husband, Mitch, she has been active with many groups and activities that have benefited our community, including the Emlen Circle Beautification Group as well as the Homeowners United to Protect Pelham (HUPP.) Allyson and Mitch have served on the planning committee of *Eat Your Heart Out!* since its inception, as well as opening up their lovely house in the Pelham neighborhood to serve as dinner hosts for two years. Allyson works as a paralegal.



After living on the West Coast for many years, **Karen Howard**, a native New Yorker, wanted to come home to the East Coast. First, she researched neighborhoods and discovered West Mt. Airy. Only then did she look for a job in Philadelphia. Karen has spent her long professional career working in the field of education. She has well-developed skills in motivating students, a skill that has come in handy the last two years in which Karen has worked to coordinate volunteers for Mt. Airy Day. Karen loves the diversity of West Mt. Airy as well as its proximity to the Wissahickon. She looks forward to continuing her involvement with the community by serving on the WMAN Board of Directors and participating on committees for community events like Mt. Airy Day and *Eat Your Heart Out!*



**Ricardo Jefferson** moved to West Mt. Airy after growing up in Michigan. As a new resident of the area, Ricardo is impressed by the civic-mindedness of West Mt. Airy residents. He worked on the Emlen Circle Beautification Group project and has volunteered at Ned Wolf Park. Besides being interested in maintaining the wonderful quality of life that he has found in our neighborhood, Ricardo is also interested in zoning issues. He is employed as a civil litigation attorney at a Philadelphia law firm and is willing to provide guidance on legal issues that may come before WMAN.



**Sheldon Kilby** is a lifelong resident of Mt. Airy, and has lived in West Mt. Airy since 1992. He grew up in East Mt. Airy, where his family was the first African-American family on their block. He has been a pillar of Pelham Town Watch, and has been active in dealing with nuisance businesses. He wants to see West Mt. Airy maintain its valued diversity, with affordable housing as well as housing attractive to more affluent residents. He thinks of West Mt. Airy as a refuge in the city, where people can live free from problems seen in other areas of the city, but realizes it takes constant work to keep it that way. He wants responsible businesses in West Mt. Airy: businesses that work with the neighborhood and are an asset. To that end, he wants to see continued efforts to create real partnerships between the neighbors, businesses, and police to accomplish the goals of each.

## ects New Board Members

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ip elected six new Board members to three year terms:

**Charles “Chuck” Matthews** and his wife moved to Philadelphia 13 years ago and have been Mt Airy residents for 10 of those years. Chuck and his wife were drawn to Mt Airy because of the strong sense of connection and community Mt. Airy residents feel towards the neighborhood and each other. Chuck helps coach basketball and Mt. Airy Baseball, which build community by bringing together kids, and their parents, from different parts of the neighborhood and different schools. Through his experience with Mt Airy baseball and basketball, Chuck has been inspired to become even more active in the community and sees his involvement with the board as his logical next step. Chuck works in the investment banking business with a specialty in municipal bonds. He has been a member of WMAN’s finance committee for the last year.



**Annette McDaniel-Turner**, a resident of West Mt. Airy since 1989, recently served Co-chair with her husband Michael of WMAN’s most successful fundraising event, *Eat Your Heart Out!* An obstetrician/gynecologist by profession, Annette is no longer practicing. She is currently pursuing studies in the field of Non-Clinical Business/Business Administration at Johns Hopkins University. Active in a number of organizations and committees and a member of The Board of Medicine, Annette looks forward to continuing to work with WMAN to maintain and enhance the diversity, quality of life and cohesiveness of West Mt. Airy.



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## Don Black – “The Mayor of Mt. Airy”

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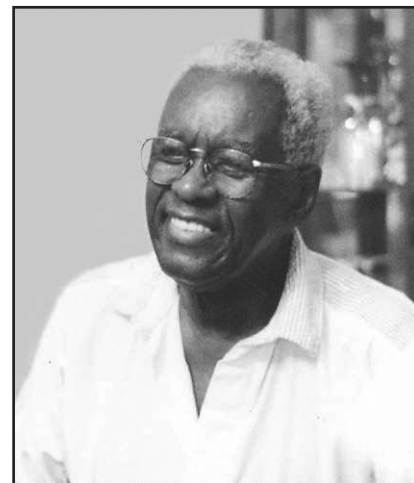
Don Black, a long-time WMAN Board member of WMAN and an active leader of efforts to create an integrated community here, died in September at the age of 86. Laura Siena, Executive Director, wrote this about Don on behalf of WMAN to his widow, Vivian, and their family:

Although he was not tall in physical stature, Don Black was a giant of a man. We who love and enjoy Mt. Airy today stand on the shoulders of leaders like Don who had the vision of an integrated community and worked so hard to make it a reality. We can never repay or forget the debt of gratitude we owe to people like your dear husband who gave so generously for a new kind of community, one not seen in America before.

Don’s community involvement extended far beyond his work with West Mt. Airy Neighbors, where he served on the Crime and Safety and Human Resources Committees. He was a founder of Northwest Victims Services, a longtime Democratic committeeman, Cub and Boy Scout leader, active member and leader at Germantown Community Presbyterian Church, a Board member of Mt. Airy USA and Neighborhood Interfaith Movement among many other community activities.

In 1999, Don was honored as one of “40 Good Neighbors” in recognition of WMAN’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. His daughter Melanie Black Sellers has also served on WMAN’s Board, and his daughter Lynda is a member of WMAN’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.

Mt. Airy was fortunate to have Don as a friend and neighbor.



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## Liz Werthan Appointed to Bench



Liz Werthan retired in June from WMAN's Board after many years of devoted service. Her dedicated leadership, particularly in strengthening the organization through the Nominating Committee and the Executive Committee, has resulted in an organization much stronger than the one she joined.

On October 12, West Mt. Airy Neighbors (WMAN) and neighborhood friends of Liz dedicated a bench in the newly renovated Ned Wolf Park in honor of Liz and her contributions to WMAN over many years. Liz was a friend of Ned Wolf and has volunteered in the revitalization effort, making this an appropriate tribute.

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Meet Milt



Milt Cohen, WMAN's Community Relations Specialist, plays an important role in our organization by helping members of our community get necessary city services. Milt deals with a broad range of issues, from abandoned cars which need to be towed, dead trees needing removal and neglected sidewalks overgrown with vegetation, to abandoned houses needing to be cleaned and sealed. As our Community Relations Specialist, he has worked to

resolve conflicts between neighbors, most of which have involved barking dogs. He has helped apartment residents deal with their landlords, or with the poor maintenance of other apartments in their neighborhood. Recently, he has become involved with neighbors' concerns about institutions in their community. He provides a limited amount of service to residents of East Mt. Airy, who are aware of his work through a monthly column he writes for the *Mt. Airy Times Express*. If you have a problem within Milt's purview and would like his assistance, he can be reached at 267 286-8174 or [wmanhelp@hotmail.com](mailto:wmanhelp@hotmail.com).

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Illegal Dumping	.....(86-5560	Rat Control	.....(86-9719	Open Fire Hydrant	.....(85-6300	or	.....(86-3425E