

The Greenbrier News

"GNA" - the Greenbrier Neighborhood Association

January 2004

Web Pg. avenue.org/gna (send Pete Brecht editorials or comments you wish to post regarding the neighborhood.)

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SEND YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESSES Our neighborhood e-mail list is continuing to grow (over 100 names). It is, of course, free, and it allows neighborhood news and announcements to be spread around quickly and economically. We are actually maintaining two lists. One is a list of e-mails of people who want to receive neighborhood announcements but wish to keep their e-mail addresses private; the second list is designed to be more of an electronic community which helps us communicate with each other and fosters a better sense of community. We are in the process of moving it to a members-only Yahoo Group to enhance further its ease of use without losing control. So far, the open list is by far the largest list, and I hope that continues to be true. Send your name, street address, and e-mail address to: NedMichie@aol.com. **Do it now while you're thinking about it!** You can remove your name at any time if you want to go back to being uninformed.

NOTE TO EXISTING LIST MEMBERS - I sent an e-mail out on January 2. If you did not get this e-mail, then you are not on my list or not on it correctly. So, please re-send me your e-mail address, and sorry for the trouble.

NEIGHBORHOOD PICNIC The Recreation Committee met and has decided that we should have a Neighborhood potluck picnic in the Spring (early May, perhaps). Look for an announcement in our next newsletter.

WELCOME COMMITTEE We are forming a welcoming committee to greet people moving into our neighborhood. Please consider helping out with this committee. Contact me if you are interested. Our other committees are: (1) Traffic and Sidewalk; (2) Communications – writing, editing, and/or formatting this newsletter (the current goal is to put out 3- 4 newsletters per year) or helping with the web page and/or e-mail directory; (3) Recreation/Leisure and Greenbrier Park – considering ideas to improve the Park and our enjoyment of it; (4) Security – The function of this committee is to consider actions we can realistically take to make us all safer.

TRAFFIC ISSUES The Park Street Bridge is open – Hooray! Hopefully this will cut down on the parade of cars cutting through our neighborhood every day. But many feel we still will have serious traffic problems.

Traffic Calming?? The residents of Grove Road are particularly concerned about the speed and amount of traffic in front of their houses – a problem which will be magnified once the 52 condominium units are built at the Park Street end of Melbourne. As a result of these concerns and those of others in different parts of the neighborhood, I set up a meeting on December 3rd with the city's new Traffic Engineer, Dave Beardsley, and invited our Executive Committee, The Traffic Committee, and concerned residents of Grove Road to talk about traffic calming possibilities on Grove Road and in the neighborhood generally.

The Engineer first asked us whether the problem was mostly cut-throughs or just speeding. He said that if cut-throughs are a major problem, then the best cure may be a diverter which essentially prevents people from taking the most direct route through the neighborhood and instead sends drivers on a more circuitous route. A couple of the obvious problems a diverter would create is that all of us would be forced to take the more circuitous route and it would send a stream of traffic down streets that previously were relatively quiet. Beardsley did say, however, that a diverter could be designed to allow emergency vehicles through if that was desired.

My guess is that we are not, as a neighborhood, ready to take such a drastic step – though other neighborhoods are planning to do so. Dave Beardsley said that there are quite a number of less drastic traffic calming measures that could be taken on any given street to deal with speeding problems. He asked us to identify the perceived problem areas; he would then study the roads in question within a couple months and report back some possible solutions. We told him that the high traffic volumes and the speeding take place most often on our main thoroughfares; i.e., Greenbrier/Brandywine, Essex & King Mountain, Meadowbrook Heights, and Grove Road. We asked him to look

most closely at Grove Road. If I hear from people about other problem areas, I can try to add them to his list. Once Beardsley reports back to us, I will include his ideas in our next newsletter and we will have a neighborhood discussion about the issue. Beardsley says that it will depend on the type of traffic calming measure being proposed as to whether the city will essentially require full neighborhood approval versus just approval from those living around the project. I'm in favor of a full neighborhood discussion, but I do also think that the residents of Grove are in a different posture than the rest of us, in that the problem traffic on that street is sort of city-wide traffic: kids coming to and from CHS for school, and adults and kids coming from all over the region to go to the various events (sports contests, CHS performing arts, band competitions, events at McIntire Park). They also get cut-through traffic which, as noted, will increase with the new condominiums. My further feeling is that we neighborhood folks don't drive the length of Grove much. So my personal view (until convinced otherwise) is that whatever the residents of Grove want in the way of traffic calming is okay by me.

It is important to keep in mind that nothing can happen without money, and for the reasons outlined above it is my hope that the city will fund any projects on Grove out of its general traffic calming fund. Any other changes will undoubtedly have to come from our yearly (sort of) neighborhood allotment.

SIDEWALKS

Of course, we have other pressing needs for our allotment money – most prominently, sidewalks. At its meeting in the spring, the Traffic/Sidewalk Committee recommended the following priority for our sidewalk construction:

- 1) Kenwood, from Melbourne to the existing sidewalk section on Kenwood near the intersection with Concord;
- 2) Kenwood from the other end of the existing sidewalk up to Yorktown;
- 3) Finishing the sidewalk from Concord over the little hill and down to Kenwood.

These sidewalk projects were given priority because they will make foot travel safe to and from CHS and because these relatively small stretches, which can be accomplished within a couple years, will connect existing sidewalks and create long, uninterrupted sidewalk paths. There are, of course, many other roads that need sidewalks. Perhaps chief in my mind is the narrow portion of Meadowbrook Heights from Grove up to Kenwood. This stretch, if made safe, would provide foot travel to and from Walker, the city's Upper Elementary School. The reason this stretch was not given top priority is that it is so long that it would take years of saving up our allotment money to accomplish it. Other streets, like the curvy part of Yorktown and Brandywine where it would be great to have sidewalks, were not given top priority because they would be extremely expensive and are farther away from schools to which kids might be walking. Also, the trails along Meadow Creek provide an alternative to walking on either Brandywine or the curvy part of Yorktown for many purposes. (E.g., if you are walking on the sidewalk on Yorktown and want to walk to somewhere on Brandywine or Brandywine Extended, you can go down Bunker Hill and connect up to the creek path to get where you are going).

The above priority list is just the committee's recommendation. It will be up to the Association as a whole to decide how we want to use our money (and it sounds as if we are in fact, going to get our allotment money this spring). So, be thinking about where you think we should spend our allotment money (traffic calming, sidewalks, circuit nature walk on the south side of the creek . . .).

Speaking of sidewalks – those of you lucky enough to have them in front of your houses – please remember that the price you pay is that *you are obligated by city code and neighborly courtesy to keep them clear*, including cutting back bushes and limbs and shoveling the snow within 12 hours after the last flake falls.

ADOPT A PLOT Calling all Gardeners: Use your talents and energy to help beautify our neighborhood and possibly even calm traffic. If we pick a plot of land on City property for a flower bed, the City will provide all bulbs, plantings, and bed design help. Possible flower bed plots include an area on the hill at the intersection of Meadowbrook Heights and the 250 Bypass, or the spot of land on the neighborhood side of the CHS entrance on Melbourne. The City will also provide new annual bulbs and mulch yearly and provide pest control. “Your mission, if you choose to accept it” would be to provide the labor for installation and maintaining the garden i.e., weeding and watering as necessary. We could also use some of our neighborhood allotment to put up a welcome sign like the Rose Hill neighborhood did on Rose Hill Drive. Those interested should contact me, and then the group can plan for a spring flower bed planting.

BASKETBALL / GREENBRIER GYM USE – The school is kindly giving the GNA free use of the gym. I am currently hosting basketball games for adults 21 and over on Saturdays at 9:30 am, during cold weather and on rainy days in warm weather. Just show up if you are interested. If other responsible adults want to host a recreational non-profit event, there are probably other time slots available. Contact me NedMichie@aol.com, or 296-6961

GREENBRIER SCHOOL NEWS

You may have read recently in the paper that the significant growth in housing in Charlottesville is naturally going to lead to an increase in the number of children attending our city schools. Most of the new housing is priced for middle and upper middle class folks, and it is a tribute to the quality of our school system that it is safe to predict that a high percentage of these families will choose to enroll their children in our public schools despite the large number of private alternatives. [EDITOR'S NOTE - Our daughter is currently a sixth grader in the city schools, and I can personally attest to the high quality of the education she received at Greenbrier, our fully accredited, wonderful elementary school which is under the 7-year leadership of Principal Dr. Faye Giglio; and at Walker, which has really bloomed the past 4 years under Principal Jim Henderson's leadership. Also, all the Buford parents I have talked to have said that the school has really turned around in the last year and a half under new Principal Tim Flynn; and CHS currently under Principal Kenny Leatherwood has more Advanced Placement and honors courses than any school in the area, public or private, – which, along with having the best band and orchestra programs in the state, causes CHS to actually have a waiting list of out-of-district kids wanting to go there.]

In any event, under the current district boundaries, none of the influx of kids from the new housing would go to Greenbrier, and the influx could lead to overcrowding of some of the other elementary schools. The School Board appointed a committee to come up with recommendations on how to divide up the new kids. It will almost certainly include a recommendation to redraw the lines to move some of the new housing developments into Greenbrier's district (e.g., the condos at the corner of Melbourne and Park and the housing being planned for the land near Pen Park where the old Meadow Creek sewage treatment plant was located). This is something for us to keep an eye on, but as long as the changes are within reason we should, as a neighborhood, welcome them. Greenbrier has one of the smallest enrollments of the City's elementary schools and on occasion has been mentioned as expendable. The school is a big asset to our neighborhood – including our real estate values – so we don't want to lose it, and the school does currently have the capacity to take on more children without any significant increase in class sizes.

SCHOOL EVENTS

Greenbrier school will be hosting the exhibit, "**Don't Grieve After Me**": **The Black Experience in Virginia, 1619 - 2001**. Sponsored by the *Virginia Foundation for the Humanities* and the *African American Heritage in Virginia*, the exhibit is on loan to Greenbrier School from mid-December through January 24. According to the *African American Heritage in Virginia* web site, "the exhibit incorporates over one hundred archival photographs in a narrative that explores a number of themes in African-American history. Among the topics considered are migration patterns and the establishment of a black Virginian culture; family, community, and religious life; the contributions of blacks to Virginia society through skilled and professional work; and their social and educational achievements and struggles." In December, teachers and students will become familiar with the exhibit. The exhibit will be open to the public in January, with students as tour guides. The schedule of days and times the exhibit will be open will be posted on the school doors in January.

SCHOOL'S BOX TOPS, LABELS, ETC. PROGRAM

Greenbrier Elementary School, like many schools, is enrolled in rewards programs with local and national merchants. It is important to re-link your grocery card ANNUALLY at each of the stores, in order to designate the school of your choice (hopefully our neighborhood school - Greenbrier Elementary). This may be done via the program's website or at the store's customer service desk. Please encourage neighbors and relatives to enroll and support our school. It's fast, easy & FREE and benefits the schools greatly. In the past, Greenbrier has purchased science equipment, computers, software, PE equipment, etc. with the points and cash accumulated over the school year from these programs. In addition, collection boxes for Campbell's labels and Box Tops for Education are located in the school's lobby, on Greenbrier Drive, and on Kerry Lane.

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>TOTAL 2002-03</u>	<u>CODE</u>	<u>WEBSITE</u>
Kroger	46,351pts	80371	www.shoppercredit.com/kroger
Giant	\$320.86	02463	www.giantfood.com
Harris Teeter	n/a	1015	www.HarrisTeeter.com
Kmart	n/a	89EH	www.KmartSchoolSpirit.com
Target	\$126.71	103411	www.target.com
Box Tops	\$132.00		www.boxtops4education.com
Campbell's labels	2,576 pts	51363	www.labelsforeducatations.com
Food Lion	\$16.00		www.foodlion.com

If you have any questions, contact Michelle Devine (974-9424 or mbdevine@planetcomm.net)

GREENBRIER CERT TRAINING One of our Greenbrier residents, Martin Phillips, is offering to train a group of Greenbrierians to form a "CERT." **CONTACT INFORMATION** – Martin Phillips, Charlottesville CERT Manager, 434.996.7729, Email: mphillips@virginia.edu. Here is his description of the program (see also web site - www.CharlottesvilleCERT.):

CERTs (Community Emergency Response Teams) are formed by members of a neighborhood or workplace who want to be better prepared for the hazards that threaten their communities. We need only think back on Hurricane Isabelle. CERT programs serve in more than 170 communities nationwide.

CERTs are not intended to replace a community's First Responder capability, but rather, to serve as an important supplement to it.

CERT training in Charlottesville is free and comprised of eight training sessions, one evening session per week for two hours. If you are interested in being better prepared to help yourself and your neighbors, we are enrolling students now for the next training session. Class size is limited to 20 participants.

Session 1: Disaster Preparedness

Session 2: Disaster Fire Suppression

Session 3 & 4: Disaster First Aid

Session 5: Light Search and Rescue Operations

Session 6: Disaster Psychology and Team Organization

Session 7: Terrorism

Session 8: Course Review and Disaster Simulation

CRIME We (the people who have signed up) are theoretically on the City's call watch system for crimes in our neighborhood, but I have yet to get a call. I will continue to spread word via e-mail of crimes as I hear about them from neighborhood folks or the alleged Call Watch System. So please let me know about any crimes.

GREENBRIER GRIPES (Have a gripe? Let me know: NedMichie@aol.com; 1704 Concord Dr.; 296-6961)

Speeding - My guess is that those of you reading this who speed regularly on our neighborhood roads are also adamantly opposed to traffic calming. If you or your family members are in this category, beware. You may speed your way into having traffic calming measures in our neighborhood. (Note that I am not suggesting that those who oppose traffic calming are all speeders.)

Dogs - 1: I have gotten complaints of dogs barking too early in the morning. So please be considerate and adjust the times you let your dogs out or otherwise control their barking, both on week days and on weekends – and make it later on weekends. Not everyone wants to wake up before 7:00 am.

Dogs - 2: I have gotten a report of some dogs at more than one household who are apparently kept outside 24/7/365 without so much as a bed off the ground. Whatever the case, pet owners, please give your pets proper care.

PERSONAL SERVICES - If you have a personal service (e.g., babysitting, lawn mowing, pet care) to offer people in our neighborhood, let me know – we will start listing them regularly in the newsletter (as space allows). Kids under 18 and living at home in our neighborhood get free listings. The fee for others is \$5.00 per word (excluding name and phone #, and e-mail).

FOUND - Remote control airplane. Contact Rick Seaman, 973-8753, afs@virginia.edu.

NEWSLETTER HELP NEEDED If you can help distribute the newsletter contact Linda Seaman 973-8753, linda_seaman@hotmail.com. If you have IDEAS FOR ARTICLES contact Ned Michie - NedMichie@aol.com

DUES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Dues are \$10.00 per year (January 1 – December 31). These dues will primarily go to pay for newsletter printing but will also be available for other purposes such as those described above. Please support our efforts to have an active and useful Neighborhood Association by sending in your check (made payable to "GNA") to our Treasurer, Jon Perkins, 2411 Brook Rd., 22901.