

the ACORN

A PUBLICATION OF THE WOODLEY PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



WWW.WPCAONLINE.ORG
WPCADC@AOL.COM

FALL 2007

Fall WPCA Meeting

November 14th, 7 pm, at St. Thomas
Apostle Church, 27th St & Woodley Rd

Councilmember Cheh To Speak

Ward 3 City Councilmember Mary Cheh will be the speaker at the next WPCA meeting, on November 14th. Cheh is the Chair of the Council's Public Services and Consumer Affairs Committee, which has oversight responsibility for the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs. She



has taken a special interest in environmental issues, introducing bills on greenhouse gas emissions and energy-efficient buildings. Cheh was elected to the post last November and will soon complete her first year in office. We look forward to her observations and to hearing her answers to your questions.

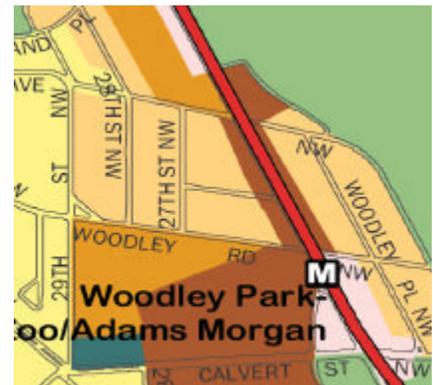
WPCA Elections

Also at the meeting will be the elections for WPCA officers and other members of the Executive Committee. The terms of all four officers (president, VP, secretary and treasurer) are expiring, and there are four other vacancies on the Executive Committee as well, three for two-year terms ending in 2009 and one to complete a term ending in 2008. Please consider running for any of these positions and, in any event, come out and vote.

D.C. To Rewrite Its Zoning Regulations

Zoning rules determine what may be built where, how buildings may be used, and how tall, wide and deep they may be. It's hard to think of any rules that are more important to an urban neighborhood than zoning rules. Over the next two years, DC's rules will be subjected to a thorough review and rewrite, and the changes made could have an enormous effect on Woodley Park and the City in general.

This review was prompted by the City Council's approval last December of a new Comprehensive Plan for the District. This two-inch-thick document contains the District government's policies and plans for City's physical development for the next 20 years. Logically, DC law requires that its zoning rules be consistent with the Plan — thus, the broad review that is being undertaken.



What does this mean for Woodley Park and other neighborhoods? That's not clear. The Plan assumes an increase in DC's population of more than 120,000 by 2025. Where will all these new neighbors live? The Plan endorses the objective of transit-oriented

(Continued on page 2)

Neighborhood Watch Program Is Launched

The Woodley Park Neighborhood Watch Program is now up and running. We have volunteers to act as block captains for several blocks in the neighborhood, and the residents of those blocks are providing contact information to the block captains. Other blocks, however, have yet to participate in the program. We ask you to consider volunteering to help.

Neighborhood Watch is a group of citizens organized with the goal of taking an active role in making their community healthy and crime free, by working with law enforcement and other City resources. A Neighborhood Watch Program is built upon a foundation of communication among neighbors in order to identify community concerns and criminal activity, and

to work towards improving the quality of life in the community. The program operates through a communications chain that includes the police, block captains and residents.

The Neighborhood Watch concept is based on the premise that when it comes to crime, an ounce of prevention far exceeds the value of a pound of cure. The goal of the program is to eliminate preventable crimes through citizen activism and awareness. To do this, the program aims to get residents to observe, recognize and report suspicious or criminal activities. Its fundamental elements are awareness and communication.

The goal is to have one captain per block or apartment building, who

(Continued on page 3)



WPCA BOARD

President

John Goodman

Vice President

Wes Bizzell

Secretary

Terry Shea

Treasurer

Bill Kummings

At-Large Members

Barbara Ioanes

Elba Morales

Ronnie Rosenwasser

Jay Sushelsky

Past President

Nour Jurgenson

The Acorn

Editorial Board

Morton Lebow

John Goodman

The Acorn is published periodically by the Woodley Park Community Association and delivered free of charge to WPCA members and others in the Woodley Park community. If there's something you want to read about or something you think your neighbors should know about, let us know. We invite your comments, suggestions, and submissions. Contact us at wpcadc@aol.com.



(Zoning continued from page 1)

and corridor development, focusing development in areas around Metro stations and along the City's major boulevards. Woodley Park, of course, sits on top of a Metro station and straddles Connecticut Avenue.

The Plan aims to create "transit villages" around Metro stations with pedestrian-oriented commercial and residential development. The reach of this development could be up to one-half mile from the station, thus including almost all Woodley Park.

These villages would be characterized by mixed residential and commercial uses rather than single-purpose uses, diverse housing types, a de-emphasis of auto-oriented uses, and a "stepping down" of building densities moving away from the station.

The Plan calls for most of Woodley Park to be "moderate density residential," which is not unlike the area's current zoning classification. However, the Plan also suggests that greater building height and density might be permitted in such areas than is allowed now. Increased density could be accomplished by decreasing the minimum lot size or the size of required yards or by increasing the allowable coverage of a lot or the mass of the building that may be built on it. The Plan also encourages "infill development," new construction on now-vacant land.

The Plan does recognize the existence of established neighborhoods in which greater development might not be appropriate: "The established character and scale of the neighborhood surrounding the station should be considered, as should factors such as topography, demographics, and the sta-

tion's capacity to support new transit riders. Many stations abut historic or stable low density neighborhoods." The way the new zoning rules balance "transit-oriented development" and this recognition of "the existence of established neighborhoods" will determine the future of Woodley Park.

So what's the process? In the District, zoning rules are written by an independent, five-member Zoning Commission. Three of its members are District residents appointed for fixed terms by the Mayor; the other two are named by the Architect of the Capitol and the Director of the National Park Service. The Commission has limited staff support of its own and often relies on the expertise of DC's Office of Planning.

During the summer, the Zoning Commission held two "public roundtables" at which 40 individuals and organizations (including WPCA) gave their ideas about what should be done to revise the rules. At the suggestion of the Office of Planning, the Commission agreed to set up a task force of community and industry participants to provide guidance on the formation of targeted working groups and the issues to be dealt with by those groups. These groups will draft new regulation language to be reviewed by the task force and the public. Ultimately, probably in 2009, formal recommendations will be presented to the Commission, which will have another public process before any changes are adopted.

WPCA intends to be active in this process. If you want to become involved or want more information, you can reach me at goodman@verizon.net.

John Goodman



Gloria Day and her giant bubbles entertain at the WPCA Kids End-of-School Picnic.



What's Happening at the Marriott?

There's been a lot going on at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, and there's much more to come. Some of the plans of the Hotel's owner, The JBG Companies, have changed, while JBG remains intent on other parts of the project.

New Garage. JBG built a new garage for 289 vehicles under the Hotel's front lawn and created a new park area above it. The garage is for the use of Hotel guests and, at this point, at least, is valet-only.

To celebrate the re-opening of the park, JBG and the Marriott hosted Woodley Park Day on their front lawn. The event, sponsored by the Woodley Park Business Association, drew hundreds of neighbors to enjoy the good weather, food and conversation.

Loading Dock. JBG also built a new loading dock area on the east side of the Hotel. Although JBG said it would close the Woodley Road loading dock when the new one was completed in September 2006 so that large trucks would no longer travel up that street, it has not done so. JBG now says that this facility will remain in use until that

part of the building is demolished next year.

Condominium Conversion. Another change in plans is that JBG has decided not to convert any part of the Hotel to condominium apartments. Converting

izing all the Hotel's 1,334 guestrooms.

Refenestration. Starting in November, JBG will replace the windows in the Park Tower wing of the Hotel.

Demolition. The wing of the Hotel that houses the Cotillion ballroom and a garage will be demolished starting in March of next year at the earliest. This project should take about three months.

New Condo Building. JBG still intends to build a condo addition to the Hotel. Plans filed by JBG with its application for a building permit show an eight-story, 90-foot-tall building with a swimming pool on the roof. It will have roughly 120 units, some of them larger than 4,000 square feet, and an underground garage for about 230 vehicles. Construction will begin after the demolition is completed and take two years.

JBG's application for this building is currently under review by City officials. Many members of

the Woodley Park community believe that DC's zoning regulations allow only a 50-foot building in this location, but the Zoning Administrator has not yet made his decision.



Neighbors enjoy Woodley Park Day on the Marriott's front lawn.

hotel rooms for apartments — and trading tourists for permanent residents — was the one part of the project that virtually everyone in the neighborhood supported. Instead, JBG has announced “a \$100 million renovation and repositioning” of the Hotel which includes modern-

(Watch continued from page 1)

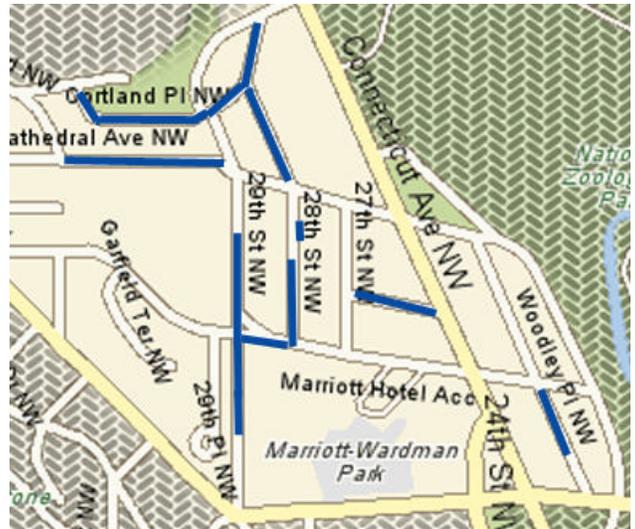
will be responsible for disseminating information by email, fax or flyer to residents. This information can include crime alerts and other messages from the police, City officials or neighbors.

The Woodley Park Neighborhood Watch Program is all about ownership of the neighborhood by and for neighborhood residents. Key to its successful operation is the cooperation of the neighborhood's residents when it comes to compilation of neighborhood data, including providing telephone and email contact information. Also critical is the willingness of neighborhood residents to alert other residents upon the detection or suspicion of unusual activity that raises a question as to its legiti-

macy.

The Woodley Park neighborhood map to the right indicates those blocks that have coverage and those that do not. Please get in touch with Jay Sushelsky (jsushelsky@aol.com, (202) 332.1212) if you wish to volunteer as a block captain or in some other way to promote and maintain the Woodley Park Neighborhood Watch Program.

Residents of one neighborhood in Northwest Washington credit their Neighborhood Watch Program for the double-digit reductions in crime they've experienced every year for the past 5 years. We would like to have the same experience here in Woodley Park.



We have block captains for the streets or buildings marked in blue.

Jay Sushelsky



Calm That Traffic

One of the big complaints you hear in the neighborhood is that cars, trucks and buses barrel down local streets, ignoring speed limits and stops signs. What can we do about this, other than get out of the way? One thing we can do is ask the District government, specifically the District Department of Transportation (or DDoT), to implement traffic-calming measures on these streets.

We already have DDoT-installed traffic-calming devices on one Woodley Park street and will soon get them on another. There are three speed

should be employed.

There are limits on what DDoT will do, however. For example, DDoT says, "Speed humps are not recommended for bus routes because of the potential discomfort to bus passengers." This would apparently rule them out on sections of Woodley Road, Cathedral Avenue and 29th Street. They also should generally not be considered on roadways with a grade of 7 percent or more.

What should you do if you think the traffic on your street needs calm-



One of the three speed humps on Woodley Place.

humps on Woodley Place between Calvert Street and Woodley Road. Their purpose is to slow the traffic coming off Calvert Street onto the local streets. Last month, Patrick Ogbeide, DDoT Supervisory General Engineer, advised us that speed humps will be installed on Woodley Road between Connecticut Avenue and 28th Street by the end of November. (A bit of traffic jargon here: Speed bumps are narrow obstructions installed on the roadway that are intended to make vehicles almost come to a stop. Speed humps are wider and more gentle and are used to slow traffic.)

A section of the DDoT Design and Engineering Manual describes different types of traffic problems on local streets that can be ameliorated by calming measures. Speeding, of course, is the obvious problem. But the volume of traffic alone can create unsafe conditions that need to be dealt with. The Manual also explains the various different methods DDoT can use and indicates when they

ing? DDoT has a process you have to follow. The first step is to petition DDoT to perform a transportation audit. DDoT recommends that 50 percent of the residents on the block support that request and sign the petition. DDoT then designs the audit to study the traffic patterns (speeds, volumes, cut-through traffic, crash rates etc) on the street. After the audit completed, DDoT develops its findings and recommendations, which are then forwarded to the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission for its review. If a decision is made to implement some measure, DDoT will budget, schedule etc.

The DDoT materials are available on the WPCA website, <http://www.wpcaonline.org/Traffic/>. The DDoT process is not a quick one, nor is the end result of having any of these measures implemented on your street guaranteed. If neighbors are interested in getting traffic-calming measures on our streets, WPCA can help and coordinate the effort.

WPCA thanks All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church, Stanford University and St. Thomas Apostle Catholic Church for allowing WPCA to use their facilities for meetings and other activities.

Did you know that...

Development of Woodley Park really began with the construction of a townhouse at 2600 Connecticut Avenue by Clark Waggaman. Five of his first commissions in the area are at 2519, 2602, 2604, and 2623-2627 Connecticut Avenue.

Senator Francis G. Newlands, whose Chevy Chase Land Company was building in the Chevy Chase suburb, sought advice from renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted about the design of the main traffic artery to that then-distant location. Olmsted advised that Connecticut Avenue be regarded as the main channel of a great river with other streets as its tributaries.

Can You Hear from Us?

Send us your e-mail addresses, please. This will allow us to send you e-mail updates about WPCA activities and other news of interest to Woodley Park residents. We promise that we won't clog your mailbox with e-mail. And we promise that we won't give your e-mail address (or any other information about you) to people who will, or to anybody else at all. Just send an e-mail to us at wpcadc@aol.com, and we will add you to our distribution list.



Mary Buckley: Dancer and Teacher

Who's that person you see walking the dog every morning or whom you nod to at the Metro elevator? We have many interesting neighbors who lead interesting lives. From time to time, The Acorn will publish stories about them. Let us know if there is someone you want us to write about.

When 5-foot 2-inch, 104-pound Mary Buckley, our 28th Street neighbor, lifted her modern dance partner above her head on the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, the audience was startled. When she appeared to twirl him in the air, they gasped. This was just another stop in a career that started with dance lessons at the age of five and took her to many cities in the United States as well as Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium and Albania.

Mary took up Modern Dance at Jersey City State College. Before starting her dance career with a vengeance, she did gymnastics for a year in Rumania while her husband, Bob, was on a Fulbright there. Returning to the United States, she took a job as a computer programmer at George Washington University, which gave her tuition benefits leading to a Masters degree in dance.

Dancer

When the family moved to London for two years, she auditioned for and was accepted as a paid member of the modern dance company called Kickstart, which toured the British Isles with performances in Ireland, Denmark and Belgium. In 1980, back in the United States, Mary danced with the Dance Exchange for five years and started her own dance company, performing in California, New York and Washington. Then moved on to the Debra Riley dance group for the next seven years.

Moving from one dance group to another is necessary she said, because, "once you learn one vocabulary, your curiosity takes you to different places." Those different places led her to a long pro-



fessional relationship with Merian Rosen, professor of dance at the University of Maryland.

Seeing Mary at a modern dance recital, Joseph Mills asked her to work with him. They worked together for a number of years as a duet company where they developed their skill at lifting each other, which led to the audience gasps at the Kennedy Center. Performing together in Chicago, they were approached by the Albanian Cultural Attaché who invited them to Albania to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their ballet

academy. Mary remembers how, "in that country they were treated like rock stars with their concert performance televised to the whole country." At the airport the following day, the clerk at the airline counter recognized them and bumped them into first class.

Teacher

While she was dancing, Mary was also teaching part time at Mount Vernon College and then at the University of Maryland for a semester before she joined the faculty at George Washington University. At George Washington University, as Assistant Professor of Dance, she is the Program Director of International Arts and Culture in the Women's Leadership Program. As part of this program, she leads a group of 15 students on a three-week program which includes two weeks in Paris to study Modernism of Arts in the early 20th Century where the students take in the museums as well as discussions with experts from the Sorbonne.

This past July, one of her students of Indian heritage proposed a research project after seeing two different Indian dance groups from two very different segments of Indian society (one from the Untouchable another from a wealthy class). Their proposal for a school sponsored fellowship to create a film about three women who use grass roots leadership was accepted. The film, entitled "India: Leadership Through A Woman's Lens," follows the work of a pediatrician who has established 500

clinics in needy sections of India, another who uses the theatrical performing arts for people living in the slums, and another who has encouraged slum dwellers to give voice to their desires to control their living conditions as developers move to exploit their opportunities in their areas.

From lifting her dance partner high above her head, Mary seems to be using her energy to lift the sights of her students as well.

Morton Lebow



Mary and her GWU Arts and Culture students



WPCA thanks these neighborhood businesses that have financially supported our activities during the past year:

- Aidan Montessori School
- American Association of Homes and Services of the Aging
- Carbon
- Cathedral Pharmacy
- Cox & Cox Homes Team
- Deoudes-Magafan Realty
- Tamora Ilasat, Long & Foster
- Lebanese Taverna
- Manhattan Market
- Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
- Mr. Chen's
- Murphy's of DC
- National Cathedral
- Ann Novel
- Open City
- Ellen Passman, W.C. & A.N. Miller
- Kathy Purchase, Prudential
- Rajaji
- Salon Roi
- Stanford in Washington
- Unity Woods Yoga Center
- Washington Therapy Guild
- Zoo Bar Café

AAHSA

"What exactly goes on in that building on the southeast corner of Calvert and Connecticut? I think it maybe has something to do with seniors, but..." Because we thought you might be curious too, The Acorn asked the question. Here's the answer we got:

"Oh, you mean the place with the heart and the hands on it?"

That's how most of my friends would describe the building where I work, the American Association of Homes and Services of the Aging's (AAHSA) headquarters.

What's my response to them? That the heart and hands are there to represent AAHSA's commitment to community inside and out.

Founded in 1961, AAHSA's mission is simple: to help our 5,700 members create the future of aging services. These not-for-profit organizations offer a variety of care and service options for older adults and their loved ones nationwide. Some of AAHSA's local members include The Washington Home, a nursing home, and Moore Towers, an affordable sen-

ior housing community.

We are committed to helping these organizations achieve this goal through advocacy, research and educational opportunities. Some of AAHSA's newest programs and initiatives include the Center for Aging Services Technologies and the Long-term Care



Solution Project, a policy initiative focused on transforming how our country pays for long-term care.

AAHSA has also strived to be an active member in the Woodley Park community in since the Association moved into the building in 2001. Our building is a precinct for primary and

(Continued on page 7)

Annual Membership Registration Form

NAME(S)

STREET ADDRESS

E-MAIL

HOME PHONE

AREAS OF INTEREST / CONCERN

SIGNATURE

DATE

WPCA needs your contributions to cover expenses. WPCA is a section 501(c)(3) organization, and contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Including your e-mail address will allow us to send you meeting notices and other items of interest.

Contribution ? \$25 ? \$50 ? \$100 ? Other

Please make your check payable to **Woodley Park Community Association** and send it to WPCA, Membership Desk, P.O. Box 4852, Washington, DC 20008.



Bye Bye, Benin. Hello, Historic District?

There was great surprise when neighbors saw heavy machinery demolishing the building on Cathedral Avenue that once was the home of the Embassy of the Republic of Benin.



The first surprise was that people in the neighborhood didn't know that the building was coming down. Yes, it had been vacant for a while — Benin's embassy in now on Kalamazoo Road — but vacancy is not usually a prelude to demolition.

The demolition apparently was also a surprise to the DC government. ANC 3C03 Commissioner Stephanie Zobay's district includes the former embassy property. She reports that DCRA, the DC agency that issues demolition permits, "couldn't find any record of a permit for this property." According to the US State



Department, embassy properties are exempt from some local regulations, but still must get permits to tear down buildings. Zobay says that the State Department had no objection to the demolition, but told the Beninese that they had to get DC government approval for what they wanted to do.

The other surprise was that many residents thought that Woodley Park was an historic district and that special authorization — and notice to the community — was required to demolish any building in the district. They found out that, while much of what we think of as Woodley Park is an historic district, the boundary line of that district runs along the middle of Cathedral Avenue, and that the Benin property, and everything else to the north, is outside the historic district.

This news caused some to ask whether the historic district could be

expanded to include the blocks above Cathedral Avenue. The Historic Preservation folks at the DC Office of Planning say that this is possible, but the residents have to make a case for it.

There are both good things and bad about living in an historic district. Among the good is that you know that your neighbors will not be able to make changes to their houses that are inconsistent with the rules for the district. The bad, of course, is that you will not be able to make such changes to your property either.

We at WPCA don't know whether the residents

of these blocks want them to be added to the Woodley Park historic district. Let us know. You can discuss this subject in the Historic District forum on the



The WPCA Executive Committee will meet on the first Wednesday of the month through June 2008 (except in January, when it will meet on the 9th). Agendas will be posted on the WPCA website a few days before the meeting. All members are invited to attend.

(AAHSA continued from page 6)

general elections. We also offer discounted flu shots to community members every year and hosted a holiday gift drive to benefit a local social service agency.

Our building also has space which is used as an art gallery. The gallery was developed to showcase the work of local artists as well as the artistic talents of the elderly. An exhibition of paintings and photographs by Sushila Mallawaarachchi, a local artist and graphic designer at AAHSA ended in August. Her exhibit included photographs from her native Sri Lanka as well as Buddhist images. Past exhibits in the AAHSA building include photos documenting a nursing home's evacuation and recovery during Hurricane Katrina and multimedia pieces seniors created as part of the "Art With Elders" program in San Francisco.

To learn more about AAHSA, visit our website at www.aahsa.org.

Sarah Mashburn, AAHSA

WPCA website, <http://www.wpcaonline.org/Forums/>, or let any of the WPCA Board members (<http://www.wpcaonline.org/officers/>) know what you think.



The Woodley Park Historic District



A Report from the New Oyster-Adams School

Hannah Everhart, Grade 5

I've been going to Oyster Elementary School since I was five years old. Last spring, my parents told me that I would be going to a new school, but it would still be Oyster.

That's because this summer Oyster made an expansion. The program moved into another building, the old Adams Elementary School on 19th Street in Adams Morgan. Oyster used to be pre-kinder to sixth grade. Now it's pre-kinder to eighth grade. The fourth grade to eighth grade is in the Adams building, but we don't have an eighth grade yet. That will happen next year when the seventh graders move up. The Oyster campus has pre-kinder to third grade. I am in the new building because

I am in the fifth grade.

Our principal is still Sra. Guzman, and our new Vice Principal is Sra. Villegas. My teachers are Ms. Buchinsky



and Sr. Ames. The class stuff is just the same as it was at Oyster. On Thursdays, Filmore Arts Camp comes to Adams. They teach us art, music, dance and drama. This semester I am taking guitar and drama.

At Adams, we have recently gotten

our lockers and desks. The playground is different and a couple of kids have gotten hurt, like a broken arm and a collision that ended up with one kid in the hospital. We used to have water coolers because we could not use the water fountains while they were being tested for lead. The test results were good so now we can drink from the water fountains.

For me, it is harder to get there. I used to walk to Oyster. Now I ride my bike to Adams, and it is farther away and I have to go up more hills. It is hard for the Moms and Dads who have children at both campuses. I am one example. My brother is at Oyster and I am at Adams. So either my Mom takes us both or my Dad walks him. We have started groups. There is a walking group. There is a bike group. I am in the bike group. We ride every day. Sometimes we have a small group or a big group.



ARE YOU STILL
WITH US?

Has your membership expired or will it expire soon? WPCA members can see the expiration date of their memberships on their address label. If your date has passed or soon will, please renew using the membership form on page 6. You can also renew and contribute online at www.wpcaonline.org/Join/. Your new date will be either one year from the date your renewal is received or one year from your current date, whichever is later.



WOODLEY PARK
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION



P.O. Box 4852
Washington, DC 20008