



# Northwood News

Published Bi-Monthly by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association

April 1996

## President's Message

by Jim Zepp

As we enter Spring following a pretty rough Winter, I received welcome news for our neighborhood. As a result of our Association testifying at numerous public hearings and lobbying our government officials, the County Parks Department has announced its intention to acquire the former Yesliiva School site to expand the North Four Corners Park. (See the article in this newsletter for more information on this issue.)

This decision highlights the importance of a strong and active civic association. The owners of this property requested a zoning change to allow the construction of 48 town-houses and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission staff have recommended a 42 town-house development in the draft Master Plan. In recognition of the need for more recreation facilities in our area, the Association adopted a resolution that the site be acquired for park land. The other civic associations in this area supported our position. This support was critical in getting our resolution included in the CAC recommendations for the Four Corners Master Plan.

Your attendance at membership meetings is critical. Without your presence, the Civic Association cannot pass resolutions and officials presenting projects affecting our community have the impression that low attendance means we aren't concerned. We encourage you to attend. There are many decisions to be made that will effect our neighborhood's traffic volume, quality of life, and property values. We need your support!

## Association Bylaws to be Revised

by Jim Zepp

Following publication of the revised Northwood Four Corners Civic Association Bylaws in the February 1996 Association Newsletter and a presentation at the Association February meeting, a number of revisions have been suggested by Association members and will be presented at the April meeting. The revisions and rationales are:

### Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Membership in the Association shall be open to all adult persons without regard to age, gender, racial, ethnic or national origin, residing within or owning residential property within the Association boundaries.

Change to "Membership in the Association shall be open to all adult persons, 18 years or over residing

Continued on page 2

## Association Meeting

Thursday, April 18, 1996 7:00 P.M.  
North Four Corners Rec Center  
200 Southwood Drive

### Free Flowers!

To welcome the Spring season, the first fifty persons attending the meeting will receive a free flower. A drawing will be held for a grand prize.

## Agenda for April 18 Meeting

- Proposed Bylaw revisions\*
- Update on RT 29 Construction
- Walkways for WSSC pipes in Northwest Branch\*
- Proposed renovation of Four Corners shopping center\*
- Proposed Transit-way update\* (indicates items for resolution vote)

**Bylaws Continued from page 1**

within or owning residential property within the Association boundaries." Rationale: references to "age, gender, racial, ethnic or national origin" raise legal issues that may be difficult to resolve.

**Article VI: Officers**

Section 4: No person shall serve as President for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

Delete this Section. Rationale. Term limits are not applied to other officers. All officers should be elected and serve at the discretion of the Association membership.

**Article IX: Membership Meetings**

Section 4: Fifteen (15) members of the General Membership shall constitute a quorum.

Replace with "Twenty five (25) members of the General Membership shall constitute a quorum." Rationale: Fifteen members is too small a number of members in an association that potentially includes over 800 households to decide Association actions and policy.

**NOTE:** For various reasons—bad weather, other commitments—less than 25 members were present at the last two meetings of the Association. Consequently, all proposed resolutions and actions were stalled because the current bylaws require at least 25 members to make a quorum. Members are urged to attend the April

**Mark your calendar!****Future Association Meetings are scheduled for:**

**April 18, 1996**  
**June 20, 1996**

Please plan to attend these meetings. Good participation makes our association stronger.

**Route 29 Transitway Recommendations Made**

At the Association's February meeting, Rob Klein, of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), presented plans for a Transit-way along Colesville Road (Route 29) from Sligo Creek to Burtonsville. A Transit-way is a special lane that only express buses use. The buses would travel only in the direction appropriate to morning or evening rush hours. Express buses traveling in the other direction would use the regular traffic lanes. This project is intended to reduce traffic congestion on Route 29 by encouraging commuters to take the bus. Based on consultant studies, the Transit-way would reduce the Route 29 commute time by 4.5 to 12.5 minutes.

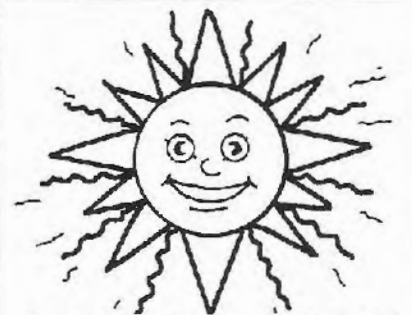
Building the Transit-way would require reducing the medians to seven foot widths except at the Four Corners intersection. Most left turns and crossings along Route 29 would be prevented, except at intersections with traffic lights, by extensions of the Transit-way through the intersections. The Route 29 roadway would be widened which would mean taking an additional 6 to 10 feet of land along the right of way. This could significantly impact the homes and businesses facing on Colesville Road.

Mr. Klein is responsible for a Feasibility Study on the Transit-way which will be released shortly. He has been invited to the April Association meeting to update us on this project. Following the publication of the Feasibility Study, the project would enter a design phase. This and the necessary approval process mean that the possible construction of the Transit-way would not occur for about four years.

In a separate but related development, MCDOT has announced that it will begin planning for a possible bus transfer station in the Four Corners intersection. This would be an area where buses traveling along

Colesville Road and University Boulevard could pull in to discharge and pick up passengers. Most bus riders would then not have to cross a street to make their connections. The likely location for a transfer station would be where the Seven-Eleven store is located. If this project is approved, it would also be built in about four years.

The Transit-way Feasibility Study will be submitted to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for Mandatory Referral approval on May 23rd. Funding for planning of the bus transfer station are included in the Capital Improvements Program pending before the County Council. Consequently, at our next meeting, we may consider resolutions on these two projects.

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# Traffic Report

by Clayton Englar

## Route 29/Four-Corners Construction

By now all residents should have received a letter from the State Highway Administration (SHA) outlining their proposed schedule for the Route 29 widening and Four-Corners intersection re-configuration. Included will be a map of the planned renovations and a phone number for questions and concerns. I recently spoke with the Kevin Nowak of SHA, and he gave me an update on the project. All of the utility work has apparently been completed, and a contractor has been awarded the job (Ft. Myer Construction), and they plan to begin construction in mid-April.

The two turn-restriction signs our neighborhood voted for last year (no right-turns from Colesville Road southbound at Southwood and Lorain Avenues during AM rush-hour) have been approved and are part of the general sign installation portion of the project. We have been very successful in getting SHA to minimize the property taken on our side of Colesville Road as well.

Bill", passed in 1993, we are involved in a long process that will hopefully result in a permanent solution to this problem. The car license tag survey (to determine the percentage of "non-local traffic") was completed several months ago, and a thorough traffic count during rush-hours is nearly done. Our Traffic Committee is to meet with DOT at the end of April to discuss potential ways to control this traffic. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact me (at 593-1448, day & eve.).



## Cut-Through Traffic Bill

I spoke with Sara Navid of the County Department of Transportation (DOT) regarding our status on their efforts to control the cut-through traffic that has plagued our neighborhood for the past several years. Under the County's "Traffic Management

## Found:

In February a child's bike was found abandoned on Lockridge Drive. If this belongs to you or someone you know, please call 593-7863



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# Land Use Issues

by Jim Zepp

## Yeshiva School Site

As mentioned in the President's Message, the County Parks Department has announced its intention to purchase the former Yeshiva School site at 315 University Boulevard to expand the North Four Corners Park. Because of the probable cost of this land and the need for active recreation facilities in this part of the County, a sports field and playground equipment would be installed there rather making this a forested area. (You can see conceptual drawing for a possible layout of the site at the next Association meeting.)

This is a reversal of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) staff recommendation in the draft Four Corners Master Plan and the property owners' request for a town-house development on these six acres. This comes as a result of efforts by the Association to convince officials that further residential development would not benefit our community and that the needs for recreational facilities in our area were not being met. Even though the new Blair Senior High School on the Kay Tract will include sports fields that will be managed by the County Parks Department and are to be made available for community use, these are not likely to fully satisfy the area's recreational needs. The school is expected to have a student body of 2,800 to 3,200. The school will have the same number of fields as other County schools with 2,000 students would normally receive. Consequently, community access to the school fields may be very limited.

Community vigilance on this issue should not stop, however. Many approvals have to be obtained before this becomes a reality. The draft Four Corners Master Plan that includes this recommendation must be approved by the MNCPPC, County

Executive, and County Council. This will probably take until early 1997. Then funding for the purchase must be approved in the County's Capital Improvements Program budget which would not occur until July 1997. The Association will continue its efforts to see this project through these processes.



## Woodmoor Shopping Center

For a number of years the Keller family, owners of the Woodmoor Shopping Center, have wanted to renovate and expand this property. In anticipation of expansion, all but one of the homes along the Shopping Center's side of Pierce Drive have been bought by the Center's owners. The area's civic associations and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) have opposed any plans that would require the demolition of the Pierce Drive homes. This opposition is based on the belief that these houses are an important buffer between the residential and commercial areas of

the Woodmoor neighborhood and their loss could start an expansion of businesses into the neighborhood and negatively affect the remaining homes near the Center.

Last June the Keller family retained the Linowes and Blocher law firm to represent their request for a rezoning of this property and the homes behind it to allow for expansion of the retail space and construction of a two-story parking deck. This plan was presented to the Four Corners Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for possible inclusion in the plan. Because this request had not been discussed with the Woodmoor-Pinecrest Citizens Association (WPCA)—which represents the community most directly affected by the proposal—and the CAC was close to finalizing the draft Master Plan, the CAC made a tentative recommendation strongly suggesting that the owners meet with the WPCA to develop a mutually agreeable plan.

On February 19, 1996 three alternative designs were presented for the Shopping Center (you can see these plans at the next Association meeting). Common to all three proposals are the following:

- All of the homes on the Shopping Center side of Pierce Drive

Continued on page 5

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## THE FIG TREE

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**Woodmoor Cont'd from page 4**  
 would be demolished.

- Pierce Drive would be closed to traffic and replaced with a landscaped, pedestrian walkway and a private drive for three of the homes on the opposite side of Pierce Drive. The fourth home on Pierce Drive faces Lexington and would retain its street access.

- Except for the new construction, none of the plans specify what will be done to rest of the Shopping Center structure.

The alternatives differ in how the retail space would be added to the Shopping Center. Option 1 would build a freestanding, 14,500 sq. ft. structure along the University Boulevard side which either a medium size or several small businesses could occupy. Option 2 would replace the middle of the Shopping Center with a single 39,900 sq. ft. space that would extend to the front corner of the property. This would allow a major business such as a grocery store to locate here. Option 3 would extend the Shopping Center along the end currently occupied by Sam Kugler's Linens to create a 25,000 sq. ft. space.

In the discussions that have occurred so far, the community representatives have stressed the importance of retaining the neighborhood character of the Shopping Center. This has generally meant cleaning and enhancing the existing structure, retaining as many of the current businesses as possible, and adding businesses that would serve the neighborhood's needs. The Shopping Center owners argue that in order to pay for the renovations without raising rents to a level that would displace the current tenants, they have to add more retail space. This would require demolishing the Pierce Drive homes that they own to expand the parking area.

At their February meeting, the Woodmoor-Pinecrest Citizens Association voted against three proposals and in favor of retaining the draft Four Corners Master Plan recommendations for this property.

The Master Plan would rezone the existing commercial area of the Shopping Center so that a renovated structure could be planned through a community design approval process and the Pierce Drive homes would retain their residential zoning.

The Woodmoor Shopping Center owners and the WPCA have both been invited to send representatives to our April meeting to present their positions. This issue has great significance for the future of the Four Corners commercial area. We had previously deferred adopting any position due to the active negotiations between the owners and the Woodmoor community. At our next meeting, we may consider resolutions on this matter.

## **Four Corners Commercial Revitalization Project**

For the last year the County Department of Housing and Community Development has had a project to renovate the storefronts along our neighborhood's side of Colesville Road. The intention was to coordinate this effort with the State Highway Administration's landscaping work that will be done as part of the jug-handle project for the intersection. It was hoped that by providing a new and consistent look to the stores (similar to what has been done in Wheaton, White Oak), the Four Corners image would be improved and the businesses strengthened.

The County hired an architect to develop plans for the storefronts that would be attractive and affordable for the business owners. Although the County can provide some financial assistance to the businesses, the majority of the construction work must be paid by the owners. However, none of the owners have agreed to pursue this effort for various reasons. The major concern raised by many of the businesses is the lack of adequate customer parking. Because of this problem, the owners see little benefit in improving the attractiveness of their storefronts. The County is currently exploring alternatives to address this issue. Otherwise, there is little hope of seeing an improved Four Corners commercial area in the near future.

As NFCCA president, I have represented the Association at these meetings. I proposed a residents survey by the Four Corners area civic associations to document their needs for stores and services. This information would help retain the businesses that residents patronize and attract new ones we want in the area. The County staff has indicated that they are willing to tabulate the responses and the Four Corners civic associations have been approached about participating in such a survey which would sent out to residents this Spring.

Because of all of the changes occurring in the Four Corners area, it is important that our community be active in these discussions. Many of the storefronts would be improved by

**Continued on page 6**

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## Revitalization from page 5

a renovation and there are neighborhood commercial needs not being met. With the highway and school construction during the next two years, it will be difficult for many of these businesses to hold on through the disruption. Our Association could play an important role in shaping the future of this commercial area.



## Ecology

by Carole Barth

### How Can You Tell If the "Winter of the Century" Has Finally Given Way to Spring?

Even when the weather seems unseasonably cold there are still reliable signs of spring all around us.

#### In the woods

The very first harbinger of spring is not delicate pink and white spring beauty but the sturdy skunk cabbage. The skunk cabbage copes with cold weather by creating its own internal microclimate, which may be as warm as 72 degrees. Thus the skunk cabbage melts its way through to declare spring. Later signs of spring include beautiful flowers like trout lilies and bloodroot. Perhaps the sweetest sound of spring is the clear calling of the spring peeper. These tiny tree frogs (about the size of lima beans) can be heard half a mile away.

#### In the garden

Most of us thrill to the first robin sighting of the year. When we see that familiar bird come back from the south to once again search the lawn for worms, we know spring is here. To get the flip side, check out the earthworm population. A healthy garden will yield more than 10 earthworms per square yard. Lucky gardeners may even find earthworm eggs in their little round cocoons. The bloom

display kicks off with aconite, snowdrops, crocus and other small seasonal glories. While I enjoy all these seasonal indicators, I count spring officially here when I find the first slug and the first dandelion.

### Join Us for and Earth Day Creek Cleanup

If it's spring it must be time for a creek cleanup! **Join us on Saturday, April 20, at 9 a.m.** to help spruce up Lockridge Creek. Wear sturdy shoes, long sleeves, and gloves. Trash bags and drinks will be provided. Last year's spring cleanup netted 42 bags of trash, and since the fall cleanup was rained out, we can expect a similar load this spring. Charles Pritchard will be coordinating the event. Call him at 593-1781 with questions, donations, or suggestions.

### Timely Tips For the Year of the Rat

According to the Chinese zodiac, 1996 is the year of the rat. While the zodiacs rat is a positive symbol, real rats have been sighted in the neighborhood, causing some residents to wonder if 1996 will live up to its designation. Interestingly, rats have the ability to regulate their own population size to suit the availability of food and shelter. If an area can support more rats, breeding rates will go up. If the rat population begins to exceed an area's carrying capacity,

babies will be aborted or eaten until balance is again achieved. This explains the research showing that poisoning has only a short-term impact. Replacement rats are quickly born and the population soon regains its previous level. So instead of trying to control the population directly, it is more effective to reduce the neighborhood's carrying capacity.

Some simple steps that can help are:

- keep yards and common areas clean of food items
- rake up fallen fruits and nuts in the garden
- don't leave pet food outside
- store grass seed, bird seed, and pet food indoors or in secure containers
- buy a no-spill bird feeder or rake up spilled food frequently
- keep garbage inaccessible
- if you compost food wastes you have several options—use a closed compost container, bury the waste at least six inches deep, or be sure your compost pile is a "hot" or aerobic pile which decomposes wastes quickly.
- always scoop your pet's poop — rats will feed on feces.
- always place organic garbage in secure cans with locking lids. Non-locking lids can easily be fitted with elastic cords. Place garbage cans in a rack at least 12 inches high. Keep cans at least 24 inches away from buildings or other vantage points a rat could

Continued on page 7



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**Rats Continued from page 6**

leap from.

To determine whether or not a serious rat problem exists, an objective estimate of the population should be made. Observe (and note on a hand-drawn plan) any rat signs such as: holes and tunnels, droppings, urine (rat urine glows under ultraviolet light), tracks, rub marks, and gnawing marks. To find out if a hole is in current use, fill it with sawdust or paper. If the hole has been reopened or the paper chewed or moved within 24 hours, the burrow is an active one. The book *Common-Sense Pest Control* suggests the following rule of thumb for estimating rat populations:

No signs are detected, even though a rodent presumed to be a rat has been sighted in the area. There are probably fewer than five rats and they have invaded only recently

Old droppings and gnawing marks common; no rats observed in daytime, but one or more spotted at night. There are probably five or more rats in each area where one is spotted regularly at night.

Fresh droppings, tracks and gnawing marks, with three or more rats seen at night at any one time, or seen in daylight. There are probably more than 15 rats in the area.

None of these measures will eliminate rats entirely. The common Norway rat, like many imported species, has few natural enemies to keep it in check. The other common name for this animal (sewer rat) points out another reason eradication is impossible. Since the sewer system provides rats with transport, housing and food service, there will be rats as long as we have sewers. Research shows, however, that the steps outlined above can successfully reduce populations to below nuisance levels. In addition, there are many steps that can make it difficult and unattractive for rats to attempt entry into homes. For example, providing a perimeter of lawn, walkway, or low growing ground cover deters rats because they dislike crossing open areas. You can even make a rat-proof tunnel barrier

by filling a small (8 inch wide by 8 inch deep) trench with pea gravel. For more information on rat control, contact the County Health Department or see chapter 33 of *Common-Sense Pest Control*. (call Carole Ann Barth at 593-7863 if you want to borrow this book.)



**TESTIMONY IN FOUR CORNERS MASTER PLAN ON NORTHWEST BRANCH MULTIUSE TRAIL**

At the March 7th Public Hearing on the Four Corners Master Plan at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Charles G. Pritchard speaking as President of the Coalition for Preservation of the Natural Environment of Northwest Stream Valley Park objected to language in the Four Corners Master Plan that called for construction of a paved hiker-biker or multiuse trail replacing the present unpaved natural Northwest Trail between Colesville and Kemp Mill Roads on the west bank of the stream. He stated that construction of such a trail would adversely affect water quality in the stream, drive out wildlife, result in excessive clearing of essential stream side forest buffers and negatively impact use of this scenic section of the park for local residents and outside naturalists and visitors who find the stream one of the last natural areas in the eastern county park land.

It was the consensus of the attendees at the last two NFCCA meetings as well as many other trail users to retain this trail in its natural state. Mr. Pritchard noted that the Park and Planning Commission had changed the wording regarding the west bank trail in the White Oak Master Plan and recommended similar changes in the Four Corners Master Plan. He also raised the issue

of proposed bridges in conjunction with the upgrading of the surface main line sewer conduits at the Lockridge Drive, Hannes Street and Lombardy Road tributaries. He was supported in his proposals by President Zepp of NFCCA and Ms. Sally Busker, President of the Woodmoor-Pinecrest Citizens Association. A representative of the County Executive objected to MNCPPC's inclusion of bicycle street lanes in the Master Plan process, pointing out that such planning belonged rightfully to the County Department of Transportation.



*Northwood News*

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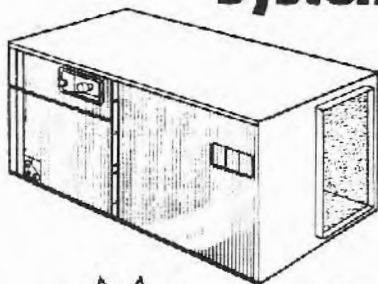
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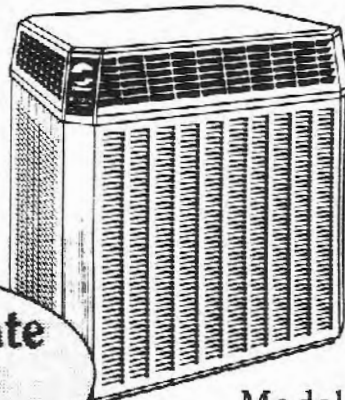
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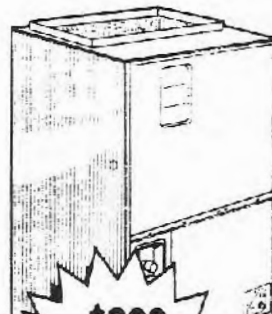
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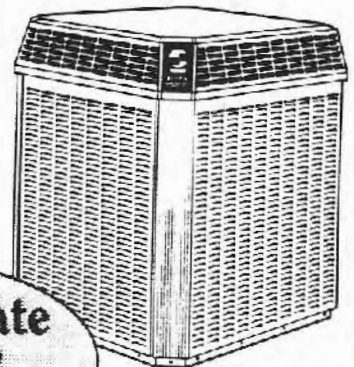
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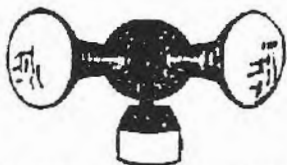


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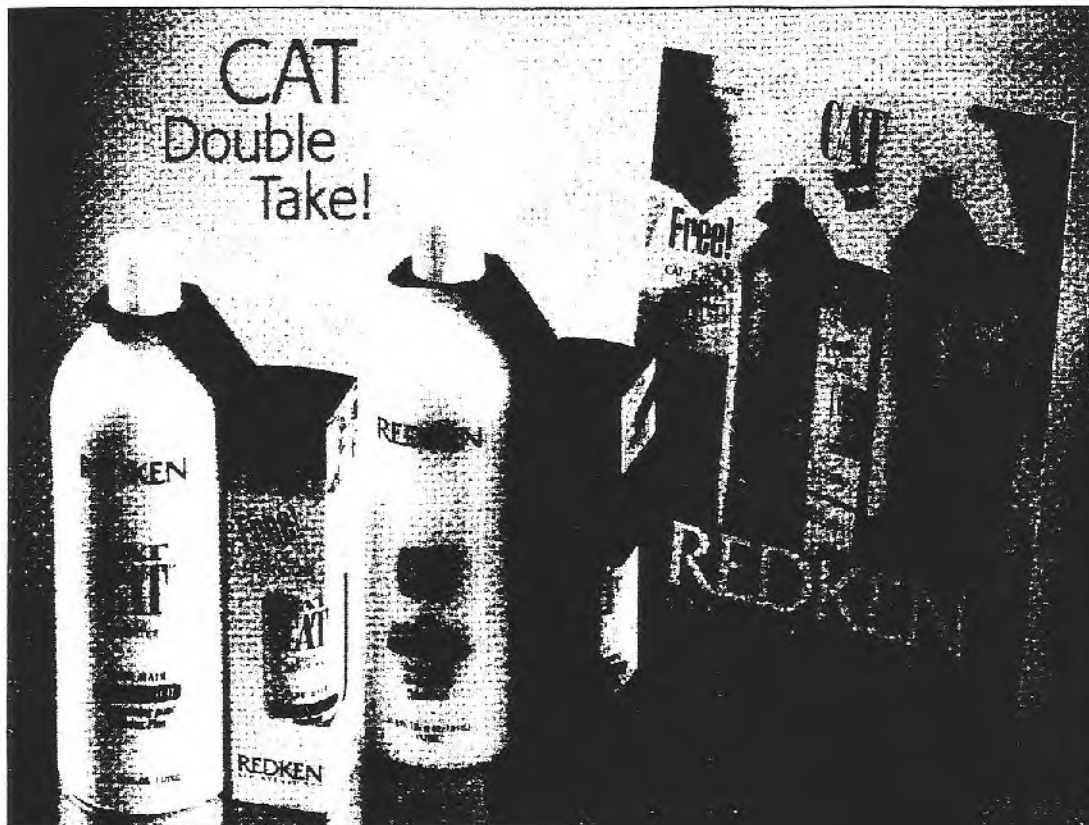
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# Woodmoor

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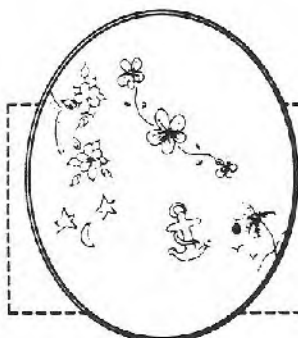
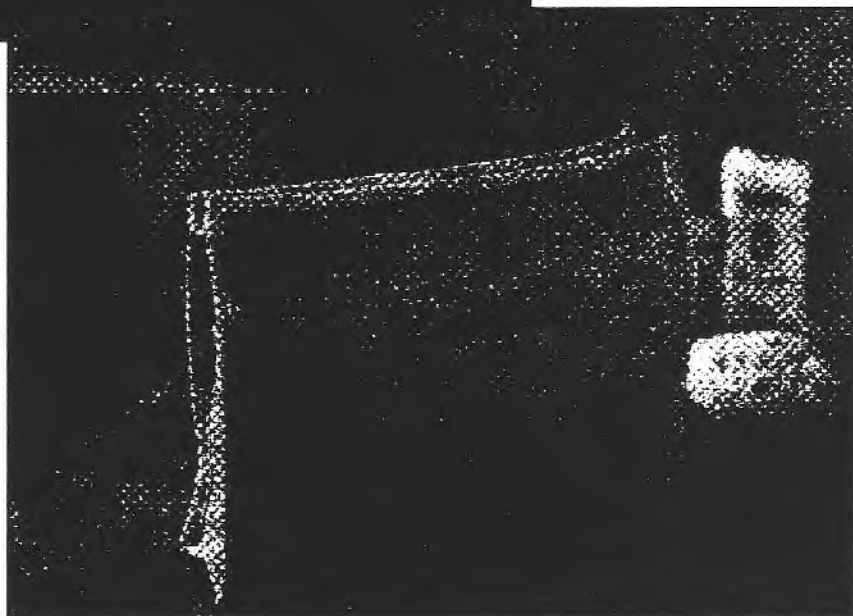


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1994  
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AVE SALES PRICE: DEAN \$176,700  
AVE DAYS ON MARKET: (ALL AGENTS) 148  
AVE DAYS ON MARKET: DEAN 34

1995  
AVE SALES PRICE: (ALL AGENTS) \$174,367  
AVE SALES PRICE: DEAN \$198,250  
AVE DAYS ON MARKET: (ALL AGENTS) 180  
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HIGH SALES PRICE: \$251,000

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# Jim Galloway - The House Doctor

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- \* *Additions*
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- \* *Gutters - Replace, Clean*
- \* *Thermal Windows and doors Replacement or storm*
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- \* *Plumbing*
- \* *Electrical*

**\$200 OFF** Any interior job. Painting, carpentry, vinyl windows or repair (\$1000 minimum). That is 20% to help keep the crew busy and the bills paid. This is the time to save money and get a first class job done right. I take pride in my work and reputation and welcome the opportunity to give you a free no-obligation estimate. We currently offer a special on Simonton and Certainteed vinyl replacement windows (rated number 1 by the leading consumer magazines). This is the time to finish off your basement with drywall or paneling or add insulation and new sheetwork to the cold corner room or remodel a kitchen or bathroom.

After the winter storm we just experienced, many homes' Roofs, Gutters and Exterior need attention-Painting too. Let me inspect your home. I have lived in the Northwood, 4-Corners Area for 25 years and will not let any contractor from another area come in and beat my price. My workmanship and guarantee is far superior to other contractors'. I am licensed bonded and insured.

***BE WISE! PROTECT THE INVESTMENT YOU HAVE IN YOUR HOME. CALL TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE. ASK YOUR NEIGHBORS ABOUT MY WORKMANSHIP- IT IS TOP-NOTCH AND LOW-PRICED.***

**Call Jim Galloway  
"The House Doctor"  
(301)681-6802**

**MHIC #44345**

**Please leave a message and phone number. Your call will be returned ASAP**