

# NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2001

## 'Invasives' Removed During Fall Creek Cleanup

By Carole Barth

About a dozen people came out to help with the fall cleanup of Lockridge Creek. With the weather being so dry, we were able to get at some of the rubbish lodged in the creek bed. Perhaps the oddest item found was a piece of cast iron that could have been a sink pedestal or perhaps a birdbath. A number of people also helped by removing exotic invasive vines.

Plants that escape cultivation and damage natural ecosystems are defined as

“invasive.” Kudzu is probably the best-known example of an invasive plant. In nature, plants and animals evolve together, forming balanced, stable, and diverse communities. When people transport plants to new areas where they have no natural enemies, predators, or diseases to hold them in check, the import may become invasive.

Invasive plants are a big problem. Every year, we lose about three million acres to invasive plants. The damage is estimated to cost \$35.5 billion a year. In fact, invasive species are the second-biggest threat to biodiversity.

During the cleanup we focused on porcelain berry, a vine with pretty blue berries. This vine grows so rampantly that it swarms right over trees and eventually kills them. In fact, we uncovered a good-sized tree that was so burdened by vines it was completely hidden.

Anyone who's interested in learning more about invasive plants and helping to remove them is invited to join the “weed warriors.” These volunteers receive training and are certified to remove invasives on MNCPPC parkland. For more information call Carole Barth (301.593.7863)

or Charles Pritchard (301.593.1781). ■

## Next Meeting on Wednesday, 12 December

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 12 December 2001, at 7:30 p.m. at the North Four Corners Rec Center. The Rec Center is located at the end of Southwood Road, just off Edgewood Drive.

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote. (Annual dues are \$5 per household and may be paid at the meeting or mailed to the NFCCA Treasurer.) ■

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We hope that this issue of *Northwood News* finds you and your family healthy and happy, fresh from enjoying visits and feasts over Thanksgiving. There is nothing to compare with the simple pleasures of family, friends, and time well spent together over the holidays.

Helping make our Northwood-Four Corners neighborhood the best place to spend the holidays and every day is what the NFCCA is all about. Each day new challenges and issues land at our doorsteps and, without our attention, they could easily make the neighborhood a less safe and welcome place to live. Speeding cut-through traffic and forcible burglaries are on the upswing. Chances are you know a neighbor whose house has been robbed lately or heard about these crimes nearby. To experience the traffic problems just try getting out of the neighborhood in the morning!

Without your participation and support the opportunities to fight these problems and better our neighborhood, as detailed in this newsletter and at our meetings, will fall by the wayside. Please become active in your NFCCA: pay your membership dues to support our activities, join us at the bimonthly meetings, or get involved or lead an initiative to improve Northwood-Four Corners. If you don't, who will?

—Ken Hawkins

## Who's Caring for the Corner Where Our Community Sign Is?

By Alan Friedman

The park area on Pepco's corner (at Timberwood and Sutherland Avenues, across from our community sign) is county land. Pepco is mulling over our request for Pepco to apply mulch and control weeds on a regular basis on that corner and to trim the shrubs on that corner as needed. They do not want any involvement with trash or litter, and they say they will not maintain the rail fence, benches, or bricks.

Guy Terenne is the key county person (I continue to consult with Pat Shepherd and Rusty Wallace as well).

Guy confirmed that there is no money to maintain anything, and the trash pick-up money will run out in February. They are planning to take out the trash can in February.

Guy also said that, if any shrubs, rail fencing, benches, or brick work become an eyesore or hazard, they will be removed. The bricks would be replaced with concrete. Pat told me she will do what she can to prevent that from happening (as long as she is around). My guess is that, when the rail fence needs painting, she will plead with Pepco to do it. If she leaves

her position, we may have to do the pleading.

Because nobody else will do it, NFCCA needs to maintain the corner where our community sign sits, as that area (up to the fence) is county land. We need to mulch once a year and pull weeds and trim the hydrangeas as needed. I think we should weed at least twice a year to prevent a weed forest. We also need to mulch two small curbside planters on two other corners that are in "No Man's Land." The large planting area on the southwest corner is on private property and will be maintained by the homeowner on that corner.

(continued on page 3)

## NORTHWOOD NEWS

*Northwood News* is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 950 households in the area bounded by Colesville Road (Route 29), University Blvd. (Route 193), Eisner Street, and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$5 per person and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

*Northwood News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

### Editor

Jacquie Bokow  
10603 Cavalier Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
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# Yeshiva Property to Be Incorporated into the NFC Park

By Dave Povtak

The Yeshiva property (formerly Alexander School) is being incorporated into the existing North Four Corners Park (where NFCCA meetings are held). The five-acre parcel, bounded by University Boulevard, the existing park, and The Oaks retirement community, has been vacant since the deteriorating buildings were torn down some years ago.

Our community will be the first citizens group to sit down and meet with the planning staff and the consultant hired to help develop a plan for the property. It is

anticipated the first meeting will take place early next year.

If you are interested in participating in the process, please sign up at the next NFCCA meeting, or contact either Ken Hawkins (301.681.0762) or Dave Povtak (301.593.3178). ■

## Who Will Care For Our Sign?

*(continued from page 2)*

Pepco's landscaper gave me an estimate to plant two trees to shade the benches. He gave three tree options, but Guy (the county) will only approve Sugar Maple. I asked Pepco if they would be willing to plant two trees on their large grassy area for beautification purposes, and the initial indications are that they will do so.

The grant application I am working on will cover the two trees to shade the benches as well as mulch to cover the entire corner where our sign sits, plus the two little curbside planters on two other corners. We will need to create a team to apply the mulch, as the grant money requires volunteer involvement.

If you are interested in helping with weeding, mulching, litter pick-up, maintaining the fence, etc., on our sign corner (some of these would occur as infrequently as twice a year), please call Alan Friedman at 301.681.9156. ■

## 2001-2002 NFCCA Meetings

Please mark these dates on your calendar for the next cycle of meetings of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association:

**12 December 2001**

**13 February 2002**

**17 April 2002**

**12 June 2002**

*If you have not sent in your annual NFCCA membership dues for 2001-2002, please send a check for \$5 (per person), made out to "NFCCA," to the treasurer (see column at far right for address).*

## NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association meets five times a year, in October, December, February, April, and June. All Board meetings are open to the public, but only residents who have paid dues to the NFCCA may vote. The 2001-2002 Board is listed below; all were re-elected at the 17 October 2001 meeting.

### President

Ken Hawkins  
10205 Lorain Avenue  
301.681.0762  
ken.hawkins AT nara DOT gov

### Vice President

Jim Zepp  
10602 Lockridge Drive  
301.593.7863  
jzepp AT mindspring DOT com

### Treasurer

Margaret Hawkins  
10205 Lorain Avenue  
301.681.0762  
margaret.hawkins AT nara DOT gov

### Secretary

Mike Diegel  
10304 Eastwood Avenue  
301.681.7346  
DiegelME AT aol DOT com

### At Large

Leslie Boness  
10819 Margate Road  
301.681.7814  
dboness AT erols DOT com

Alan Friedman  
126 Snowy Owl Drive  
301.681.9156  
afriedman AT ftc DOT gov

Charles Pritchard  
10612 Margate Road  
301.593.1781  
erc69434 AT aol DOT com

# Neighborhood Seeks Committee To Discuss Traffic Calming

The October newsletter's article about potential traffic calming measures produced a lively turnout and discussion at the subsequent meeting, with a number of concerns expressed.

The board and the association have wrestled with this issue for a number of years and it is still the most provocative issue we face. While we have succeeded in obtaining speed bumps and traffic restrictions, board members continue to hear from the neighborhood that they want something done about cut-through traffic on roads such as Kerwin, Edgewood, Lorain, and others, particularly in the

evening.

The question, of course, is what to do.

Those streets present a special challenge since there are so many ways people can enter the neighborhood from University, while getting out onto Colesville has fewer options and that has proven to be easier to address.

The result of the October meeting's discussion was a consensus resolution to establish a committee to study the alternatives and make recommendations to the board and association. Because, under county regulations, nothing can be done without the consent of the residents of the

affected streets, the membership agreed that the committee should consist of at least one representative from each of the most-affected streets.

Those streets include, at a minimum, Eisner, Kerwin, Dennis, Royalton, Lorain, Sutherland, Edgewood, and Marvin. Residents of other streets who believe that they would be affected also are welcome to participate.

The committee will be free to determine its own workload and schedule of meetings: how often, for how long, etc., as well as appoint its own chairperson. Mike Diegel, who shepherded the most recent traffic restrictions through the county process for the last couple of years, has agreed to serve as a re-

*(continued on page 5)*

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# MoCo Public Safety Helicopters

By Charles Pritchard

The NFCCA joined with other eastern down-county civic associations in officially supporting a proposal by two Montgomery County police officers to establish a public safety helicopter unit within the Montgomery County Police Department. We understand that the Allied Civic Group—an umbrella civic association to which we belong—also supports this proposal, and we have requested that the Civic Federation of Mont. Co. also support this proposal.

Our county is one of the few major jurisdictions in the National Capital region that lacks such a unit. Our only helicopter service is provided sporadically by the Maryland

State Police helicopter squadron (six units for the entire state), which confines most of its activity to medical evacuation. Although the state unit does a good job within its mission, it does not provide timely or adequate support of our own police force.

One of the significant roles that the proposed unit would play is in reducing the hazards of high-speed road and highway pursuit of fleeing automobiles. Nearly half of such pursuits result in a crash with loss of life or injury to the evaders, the pursuing police units, or innocent bystanders. Many of these crashes also result in extensive legal litigation.

Through state-of-the-art

equipment such as forward scanning infrared observation, video downlinks, and improved command and control with the police dispatch and emergency management centers, the airborne units would provide rapid backup for foot and auto patrols, assist in

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## Traffic Calming

(continued from page 4)

source person to get the committee up and running.

Anyone who is interested in participating can contact Diegel at 301.681.7346 or by eMail at DiegelME@aol.com.








Please remember that, without your help, nothing can be done and we will continue to suffer from cut-through traffic. ■



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# Helicopters

*(continued from page 5)*

disaster control, and support our fire department, hazardous material team, and bomb squad in assisting in evacuation and traffic control. The unit also could search for lost or injured persons in remote areas such as county parks and provide environmental enforcement against illegal dumping.

Our police department has a potential cadre of six officers who are officially rated and insured helicopter pilots, which would greatly reduce recruitment and training costs. The helicopters they propose to use are designed for police work and feature quiet engines. The officers call for three aircraft, which

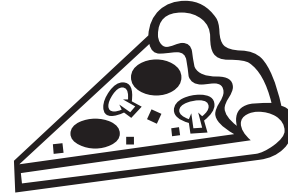
would allow for continuous on-call service by two units and periodic maintenance of the third unit, which would rotate through the maintenance cycle.

Opponents of the proposal have cited the cost of the project (\$1.3 million per unit) plus operating costs during a period of budgetary constraint. One possible source of financing could be the federal government, which recently agreed to improve the technology of the D.C. police department as an adjunct to Homeland Defense against terrorism. Montgomery County is home to several important U.S. government facilities. We will contact both the County Executive and the Council and request consideration of this proposal. ■

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# Lockridge Project Part of Anacostia Restoration

By Carole Barth and Charles Pritchard

Regular patrons of our own Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park have witnessed one example of the joint Montgomery County/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and Washington Council of Government (COG) environmental program designated the "Anacostia Restoration Project." This program was conceived several years ago as a means of countering the severe degradation of the Anacostia watershed that encompasses several subwatersheds in the National Capital area (Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and the District of Columbia).

The underlying problem that precipitated this program is the severe erosion of tributary and main stream rivers in the watershed and subsequent pollution caused largely by increased storm water runoff. The runoff, in turn, is a product of expanded urban development and expansion of impermeable surfaces (highways, streets, parking lots, commercial and residential construction, etc.).

The current engineering work being carried out on the Northwest Branch includes defensively covering collapsing banks with large rocks ("armoring"), some stream realignment, and, later, bio-engineering (natural vegetation implantation and reforestation along the banks). This work was scheduled to have been carried out

two or three years ago but was delayed because of COE budgetary shortfalls. Three areas are currently involved:

1. Stream banks from the Old Randolph Road Bridge downstream for a short distance, a project recently completed.
2. The Lockridge tributary project, currently in progress.
3. The Northwood Terrace project in the tributary between Forest Knolls and Kemp Mill, which is sched-

## Next NFCCA Meeting

Wednesday, 12 December 2001

7:30 p.m.

North Four Corners Rec Center

(The Rec Center is located at the end of Southwood Road, just off Edgewood Drive; parking is available, but limited.)

uled for the future.

Of note on our own nearby Lockridge project is the small subtributary that passes from the northwest to southeast (i.e., Lockridge Creek), which has been heavily armored. Some residents originally complained of the erosion produced by heavy rains. Regrettably, the COE and County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) draw the very large rocks used in armoring (called "rip-rap") from a quarry that produces a chalky, grayish white rock that is not natural to the stream valley area. Complainants have been turned away with citations of excessive cost to

locate, quarry, and transport rock that matches our own. Hopefully, moss and vegetation may eventually mitigate the raw appearance or these "dinosaur eggs" may weather to a more natural appearance.

In the process of clearing space, shrubbery has been reduced along the Lockridge tributary. The sacrifice of this shrubbery was no great loss since most of it was invasive alien plants that crowded out all native plant growth [see story, page 1]. We have talked with DEP about the Civic Association helping to replant the cleared area with native trees and shrubs and they are happy to work with us. We did a similar planting along other sections of the trail with the MNCPPC Forest Ecologist, so this will present another opportunity for a coordinated effort. Without replanting, the newly opened canopy will provide an environment that encourages the spread of invasive exotics.

Also, we have discussed with DEP the possibility of installing a rain garden at the end of Lockridge Drive. Rain gardens are landscaped areas that use plants, soil, mulch, and living organisms to capture and treat storm-water runoff. Within the rain garden, a shallow depression stores four to six inches of water for four to six hours after a rainfall. This is enough time to allow for uptake, infiltration, and pollutant removal, but not enough time to support mosquito breeding. We will be meeting with DEP

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## Anacostia Recovery Project

*(continued from page 8)*

soon to develop this idea further.

An interesting sidebar to the stream restoration program exists at the recently completed Old Randolph Road project. Previously, the Northwest Trail that parallels the Branch on its west bank terminates at an exit near Wheaton Regional Park across from the Wheaton Stable. The project required an access road from this point upstream to the Old Randolph Bridge where the staging area was located temporarily. The original construction permit called for closure of this road upon completion of the project. We pointed out to both Park & Planning and the DEP

that leaving a narrow path along this right-of-way would provide access to the bridge and a connection to the east bank.

This connection would serve two purposes. Firstly, it would enhance the ultimate extension of the Northwest natural surface trail (not paved) north to Ednor Road, a proposal that has been formally adopted in the "County Legacy Open Space" program. Secondly, it would potentially provide a pedestrian loop trail for hikers, joggers, and nature enthusiasts between Randolph and Colesville Road, a distance of approximately six miles, encompassing both the east and west banks of the stream. ■

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