



NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2005

Opposing Plans Now That Soccer Field is Approved

By Carole Barth

As you've probably heard by now, in September the Planning Board approved the MNCPPC staff facility plan for North Four Corners Park with the additional soccer field and parking lot. While this was upsetting, after three years of MNCPPC intransigence, it was not unexpected. This also means that the real fight will take place during the the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget process, where MNCPPC projects must compete for funding along with every other agency's CIP projects. In this context, spending \$5.8 million dollars for a soccer field, parking lot, and some minor improvements could well be a hard sell for MNCPPC.

On 1 November, county agencies sent their budget proposals for CIP projects in fiscal years (FY) 2007-2012 to the County Executive's office. (North Four Corners Park was included in the recommendation for FY12.) The County Executive will make his recommendation for all county capital improvements (including park projects) by 15 January 2006. The County Council will hold hearings in early February and work sessions in February and March, and will adopt a final CIP in late May.

NFCCA is arranging meetings with decision-makers now so we can brief them about our concerns in advance of this process. We are also seeking support from neighboring civic associations to demonstrate that we have legitimate concerns and we realize this park serves more than just our neighborhood. Most recently, South Four Corners Civic Assn. has agreed to write a letter in our behalf.

In the meantime, we will continue to pursue management and maintenance issues related to the existing park facilities and to hold Park and Planning accountable for the park-related problems

our community continues to experience. For more information or to help with this issue, contact Carole Ann Barth at 301.593.7863 or email to cbarth@mindspring.com. ■

Next Meeting on 14 December

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 14 December 2005, 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-Forest Knolls 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 \$10 per household and may be paid at the meeting.) ■

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DECEMBER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanksgiving is right around the corner as I write this, so this seems the appropriate time to thank the people that make our Association work. You wouldn't be reading this without all the excellent work of our newsletter editor, Jacquie Bokow. I would also like to thank the Association board members who have attended numerous hearings, kept the books in order, researched zoning issues, developed the crimewatch listserve, and encouraged friends and neighbors to join NFCCA. Individual volunteers have also played a vital role: delivering newsletters, working on traffic and park issues, and helping with creek cleanups and other special events. I've been especially happy that we have had good participation from Forest Knolls residents in our expanded Association.

In the coming year, we will continue to fight for our neighborhood in a variety of arenas. Along the way, we hope to have some fun events as well. I want to encourage all new (or newly active) residents to participate; whatever your interests and skills, there is something special you can bring to our community. If you can't come to the regular meetings, there are lots of other ways to be involved. If there's something you'd like to see added to our activities, we'd love your help in making it happen. I look forward to working with as many of you as possible in the coming year.

—Carole Ann Barth

Conflicts in Our Mtg. Schedule

By Carole Barth

In accordance with the Association bylaws, our annual membership meeting is held on the second Wednesday of the month. This year, the second Wednesday in October coincided with Yom Kippur. Unfortunately, this meant that a number of residents could not attend. Looking ahead, we see the following conflicts between our regular meeting dates and observances which are on a lunar schedule: the 12 April 2006 meeting falls on the night before Passover

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NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,492 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household 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
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Silver Spring, MD 20901
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A Note to Forest Knolls Folks

By Ann Rose

This is a special message to all the neighbors of Forest Knolls. The Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association is a great way to expand your community awareness from the high school to Colesville Road and beyond. When you attend the meetings, you will find a group of very knowledgeable, very dedicated neighbors leading NFCCA. Great effort is made to keep us updated on a variety of concerns, such as: the recent all-too-frequent power outages, the need for traffic controls, plans to enlarge the park, or who to contact if the house next door presents

problems, etc., etc.

The *Northwood News* is a big help too. It is wonderful having it delivered right to our front doors now that Forest Knolls is included in NFFCA. The NFFCA is an effective forum to bring your concerns to. You will meet some mighty fine neighbors, both newcomers and oldtimers. (My husband, Allan, and I have lived on Caddington Avenue for 47 years.) Last year we had about 20 households from Forest Knolls who joined. Let's see how we can do this year.

Wishing you all Happy Holidays!!! ■

A Plant Riddle in Our Neighborhood

By Carole Barth

Have you ever heard of a shrub that blooms just as it loses its leaves in the fall? How about a shrub that shoots its seeds 10 to 20 feet away with a loud pop? Or a familiar product available at any drugstore which is distilled from a shrub's twigs? Well, the witch hazel, *Hamamelis virginiana*, is that shrub and it grows right here in the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park.

The witch hazel has unusual yellow flowers with narrow twisted petals, that look like little stars. It blooms from September to December, and this long flowering



Ron Hepworth

The bewitching *Hamamelis virginiana*.

period increases the odds of pollination since fewer insects are active this late in the year. Although pollinated in late fall/early winter, fertilization (and thus seed development) does not occur until the spring.

How did the plant come by its unusual name? Some people speculate that it is simply such an odd plant, people once thought it was supernatural. Others point to the long tradition of using forked witch hazel branches as divining rods for "water witching" or dowsing. According to *The Book of Forest and Thicket* by John Eastman, the word "witch" is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon word "wych" (related to the word wicker) which means bending and, thus, it describes the crooked growth habit of witch hazel stems.

However it got its name, this is a plant worth seeing (and hearing) if you are lucky enough to be there when the seed pods burst. ■

Schedule Conflicts

(continued from page 2) and the 12 December 2007 meeting falls on the last day of Hanukkah.

Of course, we are a highly diverse community, and there may well be additional observances not shown on the calendar. If so, please let us know. While we may not be able to avoid conflicting dates, we can note them in advance so there is an opportunity to discuss any problems that might arise. ■

Oldest Resident

Congratulations to Edna Snyder of Dennis Avenue who, at 96 years of age, is our oldest resident. She moved into her home in Northwood Park in 1956 and her daughter Mary White now lives with her.

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. Current officers:

President

Carole Barth
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Who are the People in the Neighborhood?

Portrait of NFCCA Board Member Charlie Pritchard

By Caitlin James

Every two months, a corps of volunteers treks through our neighborhood delivering this newsletter to your doorstep. The longest route—91 houses on Lombardy Road—is walked by Charlie Pritchard, 82, former president of the Northwood Four Corners Civic Association and current Board Member.

It's not surprising that Charlie would take this on. He's clearly a man who appreciates the great outdoors; for decades he has dedicated himself to improving the quality of the local environment. In so doing, Charlie has made his mark in North-

wood Park and in Montgomery County in numerous ways.

Alongside State Rangers and Americorps volunteers, Charlie helped build the Seneca Greenway Trail in western Montgomery County. He also had a big hand in the Rachel Carson Trail, which runs through our neighborhood in Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, lobbying the County Planning Board to approve it and assisting in its physical construction. He is a member of the local Sierra Club Chapter, the Audubon Naturalist Society, the Neighbors of Northwest Branch, and the Advisory Committees of the Legacy

Open Space Program and the Anacostia Restoration Project.

Charlie's volunteer work goes beyond the environment. He also tutored a Chinese couple in English for several years for the Literacy Council of Montgomery County English for Speakers of Other Languages Program.

What motivates Charlie to dedicate so many of his waking hours to the community? Part of his motivation is political.

"Montgomery County likes to tout itself as a very advanced and progressive county, but we have a lot of conflicts [between leaders],
(continued on page 5)



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Charlie Pritchard

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and have had a lot of conflicts [as a neighborhood] with the [Maryland National] Park and Planning Commission,” he said. “A lot of people here want to keep this area from becoming a concrete jungle and the Parks and Planning doesn’t recognize this.”

Another part of his motivation is personal. “I spent my career indoors in an office, and the idea you could go out and do something physical and then look back and say we built 100 feet of trail today—that was very rewarding,” he said.

Charlie has a long history of commitment to public service that includes his career.

It all began with the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The attack prompted Charlie’s father, who had previously denied his 18-year-old son permission to enlist in the Army, to have a change of heart. Charlie enlisted with his father’s support. He was assigned to the U.S. 8th Army Air Force and sent to England where he was trained in bomb disposal at a British Royal Air Force school. There, he learned to deactivate German fuses and bombs. As part of a U.S. bomb disposal squad, he participated in the Normandy Invasion, three campaigns in France and Germany, and in the Occupation of Germany.

Charlie hoped to use the G.I. Bill to attend college
(continued on page 7)

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*Study by *Aging for Health Care Policy and Research*, PR Newswire 6/19/01

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Charlie Pritchard

(continued from page 5)
when he returned to the U.S. However, there was one catch: he had never finished high school. Growing up in Denver, an unstable upbringing failed to provide him with the structure he needed to excel in school. He dropped out, lived on his own, and found work. The Army, Charlie said, “solved many of my personal problems.”

Charlie credits his father, who was dying of tuberculosis as the war came to a close, for convincing the Denver School Board to issue him a diploma, so that he could benefit from the G.I. Bill. With this funding, he studied journalism at the University of Illinois and later transferred to the University of California at Berkeley, where he graduated with honors with a B.A. in Russian Language and Literature. He signed up for the Reserves while pursuing his education and, as a result, was recalled when the Korean War began in 1950.

In Korea, Charlie was assigned to a public information section in corps headquarters. He wrote stories about military units and soldiers for their hometown newspapers and escorted reporters to and from the front lines, where he came under fire occasionally. He was awarded the Bronze Star for this work. He also served briefly in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal squad before returning home. His last rank when he was honorably

discharged was Sergeant First Class.

Upon completion of his undergraduate degree—after returning from Korea—Charlie was recruited by the National Security Agency (NSA) in Arlington. While working at the NSA, he earned an M.A. in Russian Studies from Georgetown University. Upon retirement from the NSA, he was given the organization’s Meritorious Service Award for his 27 year-career with them.

It was while studying at U.C. Berkeley that Charlie met Nancy Jean Moss, who at the time was doing graduate work in education, and who was to become his wife. They moved to the Silver Spring area in 1956, when Charlie was working at the NSA and Nancy was working as an editor for the Operations Research Office of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. In 1957, they

bought the house in Northwood Park where Charlie still lives. Nancy passed away in 1984.

“We were greatly attracted to the rolling hills, the woods, North Four Corners Park, and the nearby Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, whose natural state reminded my wife of her native North Carolina,” Charlie said.

With his decades of involvement in the community and the county, Charlie has unique insights into the pressing environmental and energy issues facing us. He cites traffic congestion as one of his strongest concerns.

“There is not enough public transit,” he said. “Building and widening roads will not solve this problem and the public needs to be educated on our transportation problems.”

(continued on page 10)



The amazing Charlie Pritchard in the great outdoors he loves.

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230 Thistle Dr	\$440,000	Other	5	3	

** Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed **



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Charlie Pritchard

(continued from page 7)

He believes one solution is to produce electrical power from nuclear power plants.

“We might consider elevated mono-rail or mono-beam transit,” he said.

Charlie is also concerned about the MNPPC’s current efforts to add another soccer field to the North Four Corners Park as part of its proposed park improvement plan.

“The Commission often ignores problems in our neighborhoods,” he said. “There may be too much planning and too much development that ignores quality of life rather than enhancing it.”


He worries that the NFC-

CA does not have “enough voices to counter bad plans and projects.” He sees the solution as getting the communities that surround the area to combine and present an united front to the County Executive, the Planning Board, and the Council.

Charlie is proud of the leadership this community has seen. “We have been fortunate over the years to have had a number of effective, articulate, and responsive civic association leaders,” he said. This is a tradition he hopes to see continue.

If you come to one of the bimonthly NFCCA meetings, you are likely to see Charlie Pritchard at work, adding his voice to the proceedings, ever-ready to advocate for what he sees as the common good. ■

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