

Neighbourhood News & Views

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AINSIE WOOD / WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Autumn 2002
OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.

*"Building community
block by block"*



A Fond Farewell

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AWWCA meets with MPP Christopherson

PHYLLIS TRESIDDER

At a reception in Toronto on May 7, I met **Dianne Cunningham**, minister of training, colleges, and universities. I asked the minister for clarification regarding the fact that refurbishing and building student housing are not covered under the SuperBuild Fund Program. The minister confirmed that that is the case, but stated that seed money is available for housing. She suggested that the AWWCA go through **MPP David Christopherson's** office to gather the required information.

Consequently, on May 10 AWWCA members **Rick Grigg**, **Shelagh Snider**, and I attended a meeting with MPP Christopherson to discuss this and other issues of concern to AWWCA members.

One of the topics was the problem of repeated requests for the same variance when there is no material change in the application. This issue was reported in the autumn 2001, winter 2002, and spring 2002 issues of the AWWCA newsletter. Christopherson said that he will check the details of this with **Lee Ann Coveyduck**, general manager of planning and development for the City of Hamilton.

We also discussed the problems of

noise and lights from Highway 403 disturbing nearby residents. Our MPP had previously asked for a noise study on this issue, but he did not yet have the report. He is now pursuing this issue on the AWWCA's behalf and is also call-



left to right: Shelagh Snider, MPP David Christopherson, Phyllis Tresidder, Rick Grigg

ing for the installation of light baffles on the 403. On September 13, we met with Christopherson again and at that meeting he gave us the good news that light baffles will be installed.

Then we came to the issue of funding for student housing. Following the meeting, Christopherson told us that he had sent two letters—one to the **Honourable Dianne Cunningham** requesting information about the seed money that is available for student residences and the second to the **Honourable Chris Hodgson**, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, asking why student housing is not included under SuperBuild funding.

We will report to you when we have further information.

green NEWS

A Fond Farewell

JANET WOODWARD

AWWCA member **Karen Poyner** contacted me concerning "the grand old lady" of Barclay Street (Karen informed the AWWCA on June 19 that the great white oak was not a lady after all but, rather, a grand old man!) when city staff were seen inspecting the tree. I provided Karen with contact names and numbers at the city and the Royal Botanical Gardens. Karen spoke of the great affection neighbourhood residents have for the old oak tree, how many have written stories and poems about it, and how children gather at its trunk. On July 20 a photo of Karen standing in front of the oak tree was featured in a story on the front page of The Hamilton Spectator.

On July 22 at 7 p.m. residents gathered to bid farewell to the oak and write their memories of the old tree in a commemorative book. AWWCA member **Shelagh Snider** read a 44-line poem ending with: "My branches



WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE!

“Woodman, forbear thy stroke!
Cut not its earth-bound ties;
Oh, spare that aged oak,
Now towering to the skies!”

George Pope Morris, 1830

Leusden, was read in her absence. It begins: "O stately sentry / Steeped in time / What wonder have you witnessed / In days before our city stood / Where once was only endless wood, / And nature was sublime?"

Karen said: "Lots of people have been coming to the tree each day. Some with cameras, some with stories and others just wanted to say goodbye. One father came because an oak tree was planted at the University of Toronto in memory of his son who was murdered a year

ago. He wanted to see what that tree would look like in 300 years. It was a very moving moment! Another significant moment was when a fire truck pulled up and out jumped six firemen, who came to have a look at the tree. They were very sympathetic."

Five Tree Facts

- A single large tree can release up to 400 gallons of water into the atmosphere each day.
- Urban neighborhoods with mature trees can be up to 11 degrees cooler in summer than those without trees.
- Two mature trees provide enough oxygen for a family of four.
- Large trees remove 60-70 times more pollution than small ones.
- Trees provide mental benefits and healing qualities.



Residents gathered to bid farewell to the 200—300-year-old oak on Barclay Street.

enfold you in a final hug. / As we say goodbye as old friends should. / One of flesh and one of wood."

A poem, Ode on the Barclay Oak, by Barclay Street resident **Sheila Van**



City of Hamilton arborist **Flick Cadawksi** is said to have been practically in tears when the consultants reported that the tree had to come down to protect the safety of residents.

green NEWS

Hamilton Tests “Green Carts” for Compostable Materials

ANDREA HORWATH

Green-cart collection is a key component to our overall aggressive goal of 65 per cent waste diversion by 2008 as outlined in Hamilton's Solid Waste Management Master Plan (SWMMP) adopted by council in December 2001.

With our Solid Waste Reduction Unit (SWARU) closing in 2006, the SWMMP calls for a waste-management system that includes: collection of organic materials and a facility to process them, an enhanced recycling program, and community recycling centres. We

must have environmentally conscious programs in place to handle the waste generated within Hamilton's city limits.

“Green-cart” material refers to organic items that can be composted rather than going to landfill, thus extending the life of our landfill site. Items such as food scraps, litter, pet waste, diapers, sawdust, human and pet hair, meat and bones, fat, oil, and grease can be sepa-

rated from the waste stream at the household level much like our program for leaf and yard waste. Green-cart collection has the potential to divert more than 40 per cent of household organic waste.

A one-year demonstration project (October 2002 to October 2003) will guide us toward a city-wide rollout in 2006. It will test a variety of options available—different collection carts, communication materials, and housing types. Approximately 2,400 homes, in five different areas throughout the city, are being studied, including portions of Flamorough, Ancaster, Dundas, East Hamilton, and Hamilton Mountain.

For more information or details see www.city.hamilton.on.ca and go to City Government—Departments—Transportation Operations and Environment—solid-waste process.

Andrea Horwath is councillor for Ward 2 and chair of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Steering Committee.



Westdale Waterways Investigation

LOREEN JEROME

A public meeting was held May 29 at St. Mary's High School to report the water-quality findings at two local sites. One was at the creek that runs north of a pipe in the ravine just north of Sterling Avenue and just east of Forsyth Avenue; the other site was the outfall at Royal Avenue and Stroud Road. For comparison, the water was examined in the small creek flowing under Hillcrest Avenue next to the soccer field.

Dr. Larry Belbeck of McMaster University and **Kenneth Sherman** of the AWWCA asked high-school students in the Watershed Stewardship Program to conduct this investigation. Students sampled the two sites over four weeks, after receiving a laboratory-training course of five weeks.

Students, teachers, and teaching assistants from Westdale, Parkside, Grimsby, and Assumption High Schools prepared the water-quality report under the supervision of **Dr. George Sorger** of McMaster University.

Conclusions

It appears that the outfall at Royal and Stroud is an occasional source of coliform, phosphate, and ammonium contamination and that the Sterling site has the properties of a catchment pool, which can occasionally be highly contaminated with coliform bacteria and organisms that use up the dissolved oxygen. A possible consideration might be to increase the flow in the Sterling site by removing some of the obstacles to its flow of water. You can find a wealth of information at www.environmenthamilton.org.

DUMP & RUN

On May 23, a letter of appreciation was received from **Joanna Ranieri**, chair of the McMaster Students' Union Environment Committee.

She wrote to thank AWWCA members for their assistance with the recent “Dump & Run” refuse-disposal and bulk-item pickup program.

green NEWS

TRASH TRASHED

DMITRI MALAKHOV

From the dawn of time people have lived in groups or communities. Although much has changed, the basic principles and foundations of a community remain the same. The caring, passion, and ideas of each and every member make a good community. A community is a place where problems must be tackled together. Raymond and I are thankful to those who participated in the cleanup on April 27 when we col-



Left to right back row: Raymond Leon, Dmitri Malakhov, Mark Eisenberg, Shelli Eisenberg, Penny Palmer; front row: Nikkie To, Emily Palmer, Kennedy Palmer, and Geordie Pasztor

lected 20 bags of garbage. We hope this is just the beginning of an annual program and that it will be an event of a larger scale next year. Raymond and I would like to say thank you to: **Colleen Connolly; Shelli and Mark Eisenberg; Hong Hao; Cary Kinsley; Irina Malakhova; Penny, Emily, and Kennedy**

Palmer; Geordie Pasztor; Nikkie To; and Mira Votakh for their enthusiastic participation. We thank **Janet Woodward** for her wise and priceless guidance. Please join us next time.

Dmitri Malakhov and Raymond Leon are Grade 12 students at Westdale Secondary School.

n e w s FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

JANET WOODWARD

Joan Baez said in April this year, "I'm not an optimist about the world, the human race . . . but I do have hope for people, for individuals." In thinking about the singer's words, it's clear to me that it's the AWWCA's individual members who are making a difference in our community.

And I notice that we are growing, block by block, into a more closely knit, supportive community, strengthening our neighbourhoods as we come together to find solutions to the problems that affect us. We do this with no office or staff—just a dedicated group of enthusiastic volunteers.

In addition to keeping in touch through the newsletter, we communi-

cate with a few hundred members by e-mail, notifying them of community issues and opportunities between newsletters. The number of members on our e-mail list keeps growing—two years ago it was 25 per cent, last year 33 per cent, and today it's 42 per cent. The AWWCA's membership list, including your address and e-mail, are kept confidential and are used only by the board for AWWCA business. If you are a member and haven't signed up to be on our e-mail list but would like to, please contact the AWWCA.

I'm very pleased to report that in the past year we welcomed 51 new members to our association. On August 31, the end of our fiscal year, our paid-up membership totaled exactly 400.

We notice more and more that the blocks that have members and block representatives know how to deal with and prevent problems, or they know to contact the AWWCA to find out how to get help.

Many of you have expressed concern when an owner-occupied home on your block goes up for sale. Please see the suggestions in the "Double-Cohort Survival Guide" in this newsletter about how you can lessen the chance of owner-occupied houses being turned into rentals. Through the newsletter, e-mail communication, and meetings

*"Building community
block by block"*

with individual members, we aim to give you the tools you need to stabilize your block and live peacefully. Recently, when remarking on how quickly police responded to problems on her block, a member said to me, "Things would be a lot worse than they are if it weren't for the AWWCA's intervention a few years ago."

If you would like a membership package to introduce a neighbour to the AWWCA, please call 905-526-9101.

NEWS

from the

PRESIDENT

It was a long, hot summer on more than just the weather front!

Issues of change, development, and deterioration in our neighbourhoods have required your board of directors to continually work on your behalf. This included making a presentation to City Council and attending a number of meetings during the summer.

You have told us your most pressing concerns are bylaw infractions and the lack of sufficient and appropriate student housing provided by McMaster University. As a community organization, it is our desire to maintain our neighbourhoods as great places to live, work, play, and raise our families—this is the mandate you have given us.

Our most important role is (1) staying informed about what is happening in the community and (2) formulating effective responses to community issues. We attended workshops to improve the efficiency of your board's performance. We spoke loudly and clearly about your concerns and asked that all parties involved commit themselves to a clear plan of action. We followed up with visits, phone calls, and numerous e-mails, and we even hired a consultant to ensure that we had a clear understanding of the planning issues.

We continue to work on your behalf, communicating with the university to encourage the development of appropriate student housing, and with the city to insist on strict enforcement of bylaws in our neighbourhoods. We represent the association on the secondary-plan executive committee for our neighbourhood, the McMaster Master Plan, and the traffic and environment committees.

We met with our mayor, **Bob Wade**, our member of provincial parliament, **David Christopherson**, city manager, **Bob Robertson**, our councillor, **Marvin Caplan** and his executive assistant **Dale Brown**, representatives of the Westdale and Dundas Business Improvement

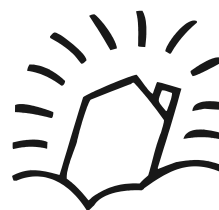
Areas, city staff, city planners, as well as representatives from the building and traffic departments. We continue to liaise with the police services and bylaw officers and are represented on the President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations of McMaster University by AWWCA board member **Cary Kinsley**.

Recently the AWWCA joined The Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods, or F.U.N., an umbrella group of community associations throughout Ontario. It was formed in October 2001 to give a strong, unified voice for the various neighbourhoods' concerns so that they would be heard at the provincial level.

The AWWCA is proving that volunteering can be a renewable resource in our community; our newest board members provide renewed energy to the AWWCA. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude for the time, dedication, energy, and vision that your directors have contributed over the past year. They have truly done everything they could to make

your concerns known and to bring about positive change.

Having passed the first anniversary as your president, I have a much



Because we care

greater understanding of our many challenges. The political process is complicated and time consuming. In order to be a truly representative organization we need to call upon as many of you as possible to take an active role in running the AWWCA. You are invited to attend board meetings on the first Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Call the AWWCA for location.

Yard-waste pickups in AWWCA area

November 4, November 18

Bulk-goods pickups in AWWCA area

November 11, January 27,

March 17

Christmas Trees

January 6, January 13

VARSITY NEWS

Bringing Together Neighbours: McMaster Area Support Team (M*A*S*T*)

**ELEANOR ALEXANDER
VICE-PRESIDENT EXTERNAL
MCMASTER AREA SUPPORT
TEAM**

The McMaster Area Support Team (M*A*S*T*) is a network of McMaster students living off campus who are trying to build a sense of community in the neighbourhoods around the university. We are aware of and concerned about the issues often associated with student housing, including excessive noise and poorly maintained homes. However, we also believe that there is a great potential for positive interaction between students and permanent residents in Westdale and Ainslie Wood.

M*A*S*T*'s vision of building community is very similar to the AWWCA's motto of "building community block by block." M*A*S*T* believes that when individuals meet and establish friendly relations with each other, a large first step has been taken toward preventing and resolving potential tensions within neighbourhoods. With the frequent turnover of students, we realize that it isn't easy to have a strong sense of connection between neighbours and some of us are unable to become involved in the community because of demanding academic pressures. Students nevertheless suffer from this lack of connection, as many of us are far from our homes and families and are often unfamiliar with the community. We have much to learn and gain from connections with permanent residents who may be able to provide perspective on this area and a

sense of being integrated into a community, rather than isolated within the walls of the university. M*A*S*T*'s street representatives want to help bring together students and permanent residents!

Street reps play several roles on our block, but the central one is connecting with all of the residents on the street and organizing events to bring people together on a block-by-block basis. On Dalewood Avenue South, some of the events I hosted included a potluck dinner and a dessert-fondue night. Skating parties and neighbourhood cleanups are other examples of the type of small events that we have seen build stronger communities.

M*A*S*T*'s main work this year will include:

- Empowering and building our team of street reps. With student organizations, it is always challenging to ensure growth, as students move



quickly through studies. In M*A*S*T*'s third year, we have a team of about 20 street reps, and we'd like to increase that number significantly.

- Coordinating larger events such as the Hallowe'en House Decorating Contest, snow-shoveling blitzes, and

community cleanups.

- Collaborating with community and campus groups, including the McMaster Students' Union, our councillor and his staff, and the AWWCA, to respond to shared concerns, such as preparing students to be good neighbours.

If a M*A*S*T* representative contacts you, please share your enthusiasm and ideas, or discuss any concerns you may have. If you know students who may be interested in joining M*A*S*T*, spread the word. Please share your ideas about how we can make the Ainslie Wood and Westdale community even more vibrant! **Contact M*A*S*T* at or 905-320-8087.**

Eleanor Alexander is a fourth-year student, Honours Arts and Science, who lives at 18 Glenmount Avenue.

Double Cohort Survival Guide

As reported in the winter and spring newsletters, the residential community around McMaster is concerned about the impact of the extra enrolment of the double cohort. Below are suggestions from AWWCA members that may help to preserve the integrity of the residential community and improve the stability of our neighbourhoods:

1. If possible, avoid selling your house until after the double cohort, particularly if you're planning to stay in the AWWCA community.
2. If you have to sell, use a reputable agent. Avoid agents who advertise residential homes as income properties. Network with friends and neighbours if you need help finding a good agent.
3. Consider selling privately and controlling, as best you can, who buys your house.
4. Absentee landlords may make an unconditional cash offer. This is very hard for young families to

match. Try to allow enough time to sell your house so that you can consider all offers and perhaps take one that is conditional.

5. Consider renting a room in your home to a student during the double cohort, even if you wouldn't normally do so. This will save students renting rooms in absentee-landlord-operated houses.
6. If a house near you is up for sale, put signs in your windows, "Resident Homeowners Welcomed." One member has done this, and it worked. Contact the AWWCA if you need a sign.
7. Help students be aware of the lack of on-street parking before they rent by placing signs in your win-

dows, "Limited on-street parking in this area."

8. If you know of properties that do not comply with property-standards bylaws, including garbage around a property, be proactive in reporting problems to bylaw officers. Call the property-standards department at 905-546-2782 or 905-546-2489 (CITY). Make a note of when you called and follow up to ensure the work is done. Be persistent. If you are unsure of the bylaw, ask the city.
9. If you suspect construction is taking place on a house without a permit, call the building department at 905-546-2720 or 905-546-2489 (CITY) and ask for an inspection to

be done. Make a note of when you call and ask for a report from the city. Be persistent.

10. If you are bothered by noise, call 905-546-2782 or 905-546-2489 (CITY). Make a note of when you call. Be persistent. See "Bothered by Noise?" in this issue for a more detailed explanation of how to handle problems with noise.
11. If you wish to report garbage put out on the wrong day or before 7 p.m. the night before pickup, call the bylaw-enforcement department at City Hall at 905-546-6000 or 905-546-2489 (CITY).

If you have other suggestions, please let us know.

Are We Really "Changing Tomorrow Today"?

ELDON Y. HARRIS

I believe that McMaster University understands its catchy slogan "Changing Tomorrow Today" to mean: We are changing tomorrow today for the better. From its perspective, McMaster University may well argue that it is changing tomorrow today for the better—increased enrolment, new buildings, increased and improved programs, more research, more staff and faculty, a larger number of visitors—the assumption being that expansion is better.

However, it can also be shown that there are other ways in which McMaster University is changing tomorrow today for the worse—insufficient student residences as enrolment increases, leading to students living off campus, often in sub-standard rental accommodation; increased traffic congestion in the residential areas surrounding McMaster due to more employees, visitors, and students coming to campus; increased demand for city services, such as sewer, water, garbage collection, policing, parking, property-standards and bylaw enforcement. These costs add to a city budget already strained to the limit and raise taxes of homeowners throughout Hamilton—the demonstrable effect being that McMaster's expansion could be handled much better, or should come to a halt.

I conclude that McMaster University has shown insufficient practical concern or responsibility (other than public-relations rhetoric) for its negative impact on the surrounding community. The University may well respond: We have shown

much concern. Look at the newsletters we circulate to the community. Look at the committees we have established or joined to look into the problems. My answer to that would be: Until McMaster University puts its money and its time

and its effort into solving the problems in a demonstrably practical way, it is talk without action; until it puts its pocket-book where its mouth is, it will continue to demonstrate its lack of concern and lack of ownership of responsibility for the problems it has created in the surrounding communities.



What can be done? Let McMaster University immediately freeze the size of its campus in West Hamilton, cease its obsessive concern to expand, and recognize that bigger is not necessarily better. Let McMaster start acting immediately in practical ways by building many more new student residences to adequately serve the needs of both its incoming students and its current students. Twelve new residences would be a good goal to start with. I am told that the new McMaster Plan has identified six sites on campus which could be designated for new student residences.

I suggest that it is time for the City of Hamilton to tell McMaster University: Fix the problems you have created! Our community would applaud such action by the City of Hamilton and its elected councillors. Let's make this an election issue!

NEWS from the BLUES



l to r: Police Services Board Chair Bernie Morelli, Police Chief Ken Robertson, Dianne Peacock, Division 1 Superintendent Mike Shea, P.C. Marc Haas

AWWCA Block Representative Graduates from Police College

*Congratulations to **Dianne Peacock**, who graduated June 5 from the eight-week seniors' Police College Program. Dianne evaluated her experience for us:*

The coordinator for our division, **P.C. Marc Haas**, was an excellent teacher. This program was truly an eye-opening experience. All the speakers provided valuable information and a better understanding of the job of police officers. We listened to police officers from the Vice and Drug Branch, Major Fraud Branch, Use of Force Training, Forensic Identification, Major Crimes Unit, Emergency Response Unit, K-9 Unit, and the Seniors' Support Department.

I am now aware of the many skills and techniques that our officers must learn and master, from supportive help for seniors, to the often difficult and dangerous situations that these women and men must deal with on a daily basis.

By taking this program, I now have a better understanding of how the Hamilton Police Department provides help and protection for the citizens of Hamilton. I also realize how I, as a citizen, can assist our police officers in their efforts to make everyone can feel safe and secure.

Police College is held at the central police station and runs for ten weeks on Thursday evenings from 7—9 p.m. If you are interested in taking

the course, contact **Constable Joanne Serkeyn**, Community Services Officer, 905-546-4906, 8:30—4:30 daily or leave a message.

A Few Home-Security Precautions

The police hope that homeowners will not feel alarmed about their security while living in their own homes, but have made a few suggestions to enhance security. The police would also be glad to discuss security matters with small groups of citizens, such as elderly residents.

Such discussions could be held in private homes, churches, or libraries. Please call Betty Bechtel at 905-526-1714 if you are interested in such a meeting.

1. Keep all doors and windows locked

at all times.

2. It is important not to open the door to strangers at any time. Talk through the closed door.
3. If a stranger knocks at your door, call through the closed door so that he or she knows that someone is inside. Break-and-enter crimes are usually committed in the daytime, rarely at night. If you talk through the closed door, the thief will leave. If there is no response, the criminal will go around to the back and break in.
4. Do not allow strangers in your house, even if they look presentable. They may ask for a glass of water or something similar, especially if they are alone.
5. Some thieves will phone and make up a story, such as saying that you have won something and they wish to deliver it to you.
6. A door chain can be broken easily with a hard push. Do not open the door even with the chain in place.
7. Keep outdoor lights on all night as a deterrent to criminals.

8. Consider installing a peep-hole in your door if it does not have a window.

9. You may wish to install an intercom at your front door.

10. Seniors with an alarm-call device are advised to activate the alarm if they feel they are in a threatening situation.

*Our thanks to the following for the above suggestions: **P.C. Mark Haas**, who works*

*with seniors' issues related to policing, **P.C. Brian Powell**, **P.C. Greg Doerr**, **Betty Bechtel**, AWWCA police liaison, and **Cary Kinsley**, AWWCA board member.*

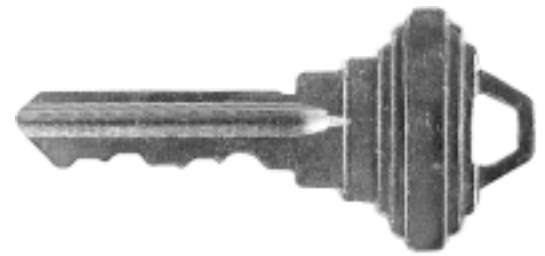
Crime Stats from the Hamilton Police Service

For the period January to December 2001, Hamilton police reported 774 violent crimes and property crimes for our area, which is Beat 691 (west of Highway 403 to the border of Dundas).

Beat 691 is one of 11 beats in Division 1; it ranked seventh overall but fourth in property crimes. Please read "A Few Home Security Precautions" on this page for suggestions on how you can improve security in your home.

Security Update

BETTY BECHTEL



PHONE CALLS TO THE HAMILTON POLICE

The new automated phone answering service is causing some frustration for callers. Call these numbers if you have a problem:

(905) 546-4925 is the main police number. After the taped message, a live person will answer. **(905) 546-4772** is reception. Someone will answer 24 hours a day.

(905) 546-4771 is the sergeant's desk. Someone will answer 24 hours a day. Call this number if you see kegs being delivered and ask to speak to the staff sergeant on duty.

911 is for emergencies only.

BETTY BECHTEL
POLICE LIAISON, AWWCA

Problems in the AWWCA Areas

A 96-year-old woman was accosted in her own home. A male, in his 20s, carrying a paper bag, knocked on her door, claiming he was delivering her medications. When she turned to get the money, he came in, shut the door, and pushed her into a chair. She was kept prisoner in her own home for 1½ hours. He told her not to tell anyone. The next day she told a neighbour, who advised her to call the police. The police visited and took a report. The woman's family, neighbours, and the local pharmacy have made arrangements to improve her security. Since then, a few other incidents of strangers knocking on doors of homeowners have surfaced.

Large, out-of-control house parties continue to plague our neighbourhoods. One AWWCA member observed that some rental houses have been known as party houses for as long as eight years. Problem houses are located on Thorndale North, Forsyth South, Sterling, Arkell, Sussex, Hollywood North, Dalewood Crescent, Haddon

North, and Emerson. Neighbours lose sleep because of the parties. Members report that they are also kept awake by the noise of bar patrons in nearby Westdale Village, by newly installed electric roof fans at McMaster University, and by noise from truck deliveries to McMaster's loading docks in the middle of the night.

Note: Contrary to the information in McMaster University's "Living Off-Campus Student Success Guide," students have been requested not to knock on homeowners' doors to announce they are holding parties. The police have stressed that it is important **not** to open the door to strangers at any time (see "A Few Home-Security Precautions" in this newsletter).

The police advise homeowners to call them about problems rather than trying to deal with party offenders themselves because it is too risky to do so.

- A "peeping Tom" was seen at various times in Westdale backyards. He is now in custody.
- Street games, including some taking place at 3 a.m., have been reported on Sussex Avenue, Thorndale Street North, Haddon Avenue South, and

Sterling Street.

- Egg throwing at houses has been reported in Westdale and Ainslie Wood North.
- Broken glass and other litter have been noted along Main Street West and in the neighbourhoods.
- A protective outer window was broken at Binkley Church.
- On Haddon Avenue South, a car had its door and interior badly damaged.

Bylaw Response

Noise-bylaw officers have visited several of the problem houses, and in some cases warning letters were sent to the offenders. During the initial weeks of September, officers proactively enforced property and noise standards in our community. These officers face difficult situations, and we thank them for their efforts.

Police Response

Police have been breaking up groups of teenagers in Westdale Village and Churchill Park. They have charged repeat offenders, liquor and drug offenders, and those exhibiting other offensive behaviour. P.C. Vanderpol, the high-school-liaison officer, says youths

NOISE & PROPERTY STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

Call **(905) 546-2489** (CITY) 24 hours a day for noise, parking, and property-standards complaints. See the article "Bothered by Noise?" in this issue for a more detailed explanation of how to deal with a noise problem.

are getting the message about unacceptable and illegal behaviour. He has the advantage of seeing these students both at school and in the community.

Police have charged occupants at large parties where illegal behaviour was taking place. Some partygoers have spent the night in jail. Jack Vanderpol has once again given warnings to the occupants of problem houses. He makes this information available to other officers and to **Judy Downey**, who coordinates bylaw enforcement at City Hall.

Police Planning for Fall and Spring

Each summer before the fall semester, and again in the spring before the term ends, police develop strategies to reduce the surge of problems usually seen at these times. McMaster University held a Welcome Week planning session in late August, attended by several levels of police administration, including **Supt. Mike Shea**, **Staff Sgt. Scott Rastin**, **Sgt. Al Smethurst**, **Sgt. James Adam** (new Neighbourhood Watch coordinator), and **P.C. Jack Vanderpol**. Police state that while they want the students to have an enjoyable school year, there is zero tolerance for drunk and disorderly behaviour. This is particularly emphasized in the first few weeks of the fall term. Extra officers were assigned to the AWWCA areas, and dispatchers were instructed not to call them to other areas except for high-priority calls. Bike patrols have been effective in searching out problem locations. Keg parties, with liquor sold without a license, were broken up early in the evening.

Police say that it is important for stu-

dents to realize the ramifications of a criminal conviction. For example, a simple conviction of mischief could jeopardize a would-be engineer's ability to be bonded, which is essential to becoming a professional engineer.

P.C. Vanderpol once again communicated with Mac students through the Silhouette, the students' handbook, McMaster's radio station, and the students' e-mail network. **Adam Spence**, vice-president education of McMaster Students' Union, was helpful in coordinating the e-mail messages.

Following the Welcome Week planning session, our councillor arranged a meeting at City Hall with noise and property-standards senior staff, bylaw officers, Sgt. Al Smethurst, and P.C. Jack Vanderpol. This meeting enhanced cooperation, strategies, and consistency among the various personnel who address the problems in the west end.

YOUR THANKS

Because of the nature of their work, police receive many complaints from the public. It would be helpful if community members would send a note of appreciation for the work the police do to decrease our problems. Feedback from the community will let them know that their strategies are working. We are the only university community in Canada to have community policing.

Send your letter to Hamilton Police Service, 155 King William Street, Box 1060, LCD 1, Hamilton, Ontario L8N 4C1, or e-mail: mshea@hamiltonpolice.on.ca.

Many of P.C. Vanderpol's efforts are done voluntarily, on his own time. It would be nice to let him know his efforts are appreciated. Your information and feedback is important. Please e-mail me, Betty Bechtel, at betjimb@interlynx.net or call me at (905) 526-1714.

We are very appreciative of the work involved in this comprehensive planning. We are also grateful that **Deputy Chief of Police Tom Marlor** reinstated

RIDE lanes, which had not been in this year's budget.

We appreciate the ongoing work of the Hamilton Police Service in the AWWCA areas. Extra police hours have been devoted to our areas in peak times. This work can be stressful, and some officers have been injured on duty. Having had the opportunity to meet several officers, I am repeatedly impressed with their high calibre of professionalism, caring, communication, and tact in handling difficult situations.

Supt. Shea has attended community meetings about problems and provides his support. We are indebted to the officers of Beat 691 (which includes the AWWCA area), including **Sgt. Al Smethurst**, **P.C. Brian Powell**, **P.C. John Keosongseng**, **P.C. Daryl Reid**, and **P.C. Michelle Emeory**.

Good News!

We have received no complaints about problems in Churchill Park this summer. An AWWCA member living in the area noted that she has not had to make a single phone call to the police about park problems. We are grateful to the police for keeping a close watch on the park.

Other neighbours observed how quickly the police and bylaw officers responded to and dispatched three noisy parties in the first week of the semester, and how quietly the partygoers left the area. In the past, many partygoers had been belligerent and noisy when the parties they were attending were broken up. Police reported that there are fewer people drinking off-campus.

Most of McMaster's Welcome Week activities, including the engineers' backyard parties, were held on campus instead of in the community. McMaster also undertook to write a letter to stu-

dents living in the community whose misconduct did not reflect the university's standards of behaviour. These are welcome changes.

September 25 update

Communication with police: After the AWWCA annual meeting, P.C. Vanderpol gave us the update below. His report was e-mailed to members on September 25. Jack wants to keep community members informed about what police are doing. For example, people need to know that many charges have been laid this year in our area. Jack plans to keep the beat officers informed of problems and what is being done. The police rely on information provided to them directly by the community and on information people send to me, which I forward to the police.

Extra police: Jack met with Superintendent Shea, who is very supportive of the police work being done in the west end. They hope to have an additional squad car added to the regular Beat 691 squad car for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights during the fall season. These are the major bar

nights. The extra squad car might still have to leave the area for top-priority problems.

Homecoming weekend: Traditionally there is a surge of problems on homecoming weekend. Additional officers

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CANADA POST
CUSTOMER SERVICE
1-800-267-1177

Locally:

BRAD WALDES
SUPERINTENDENT
DEPOT 1
905-521-8755

The AWWCA has been advised that complaints to Canada Post must be handled within 24 hours of the complaint being filed. Please follow up if the graffiti is not removed within a day. A member reported graffiti on the post box at Cline Avenue North and Marion North on June 28. It was eradicated shortly after the call.

were assigned to our area.

Visiting problem houses: Jack visits problem houses noted in my lists. He will also contact Judy Downey of licensing and standards for her information about problem houses. Several members in the Newton Avenue neighbourhood reported to the AWWCA a major concern with illegal behaviour taking place at a house on Newton in the third week of September. Jack advised the AWWCA that the police

were aware of the problems and that charges have been laid against the occupants. The house was a major concern to several neighbours the third week of September. The police visited problem houses identified at the annual meeting, and Jack also visited the member from Cline Avenue South who displayed the rocks that had been thrown through his front window and door. Jack hopes to distinguish patterns of problems from random incidents.

McMaster University: On September 25, Jack visited **Dr. Phil Wood**, who took over Dr. Mary Keyes' position as vice president in charge of student affairs, and reported that McMaster will take some form of action when students in the community are breaking the law.

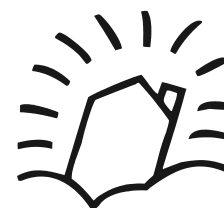
Thanks to police: People informed Jack at the annual general meeting that they intend to write thank-you letters to the police for their efforts in our community. Jack said this is important for two reasons: (1) Police need to know that their strategies are working. For example, in the past there were many complaints about problems in Churchill Park. Police increased their surveillance. **Janet Woodward's** e-mail let the police know that their efforts were effective in minimizing the problems. (2) When police get positive feedback, it encourages them to help out more. They know their efforts are not in vain.



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CITY HALL NEWS

A Fireside Chat with the Mayor

GABRIELLE DIFRANCESCO

On June 15, Hamilton's department of culture and recreation organized what was called a Community Associations' President's Forum. This forum provided an opportunity for community-association representatives to network with each other and with city staff and **Mayor Bob Wade**. About 16 community associations were represented and our councillor, **Marvin Caplan**, was also in attendance.

I spoke on behalf of the AWWCA and said that, if they want to see an example of a sustainable community that fits with Vision 20/20, they can look at Westdale—a community where one can walk to everything—public schools, the library, the university, stores, banks, places of worship—and it works.

If I could use one word, it would be "balance." We want to strike a balance between the needs of McMaster University and the needs of the resident homeowners. We are also concerned about development in terms of the longterm needs of our community and those large-scale developments that want to enter our community.

At the fireside chat with Mayor Wade, I asked, "How do we as neighbourhoods have input into big decisions that affect our lives? How can we as citizens have an impact on these decisions? Often the decisions made by our City Council do not reflect the priorities identified by local citizens' groups and individuals with limited resources. How do we ensure that libraries, community centres, public transportation, bylaw enforcement and other community services are not sacrificed in order to fund projects such as the proposed Red Hill

Expressway?"

Unfortunately, the forum was not designed to generate answers or even to seek consensus, especially as there was limited time for discussion. However, the concept of the forum is a good one, and I suggest that another forum be held next year. However, it needs a format that will better meet the requirements of the associations. The suggestions I made are as follows: Hold a full-day forum to allow sufficient time for meaningful discussion. Use an open format where participants set the topics and identify problems, lead the discussions, suggest possible solutions, choose a course of action, and write up reports on site, using computers. If these elements are committed to, I believe the forum will be more effective.

Gabrielle DiFrancesco is vice-president of the AWWCA

Did I Hear Meadowlands?

Following are excerpts from a presentation given by Phyllis Tresidder on July 3 to the hearings subcommittee of City Council. The subcommittee was considering a motion to approve changes in Hamilton's zoning and Official Plan to allow the construction of Fortino's superstore at Main Street West and Rifle Range Road. The full presentation can be obtained from the public record. Phyllis has lived 27 years on or near Main Street West. She is past president of the AWWCA, a member of the AWWCA's board of directors, and chair of the AWWCA's planning subcommittee.

The proponent of this development proposal has substantial resources. City staff and our councillor, **Marvin Caplan**, support the proposal, and so the odds certainly do not favour the neighbourhood association's position on this issue.

That's the key, though, isn't it? That

word "neighbourhood." It's what allows us to shift the context of our decision making out of the adversarial arena. It's not really about winning and losing at all. It's about guiding change in a neighbourhood—my neighbourhood and my neighbours' neighbourhood.

That's the key to this entire process. The decision and approvals issued today will be measured for success in our neighbourhood, not just at the end of this hearing, or even at the end of the next municipal term, but in two years, three years, and 10 years from now.

We also have concerns about the process by which we distinguish what's potentially tolerable and what's unacceptable. "Potentially" is the key word here. We don't know yet!

Our concerns are not prioritized here but are cumulative:

1. There would be a substantial increase in traffic in our neighbourhoods.
2. What would be the impact on the viability of existing commercial enterprises, not just along Main Street West but also in Westdale and Dundas?
3. How can these approvals be regarded in relation to the Secondary Plan and Infrastructure Master Plan process that is now underway and that **Mayor Wade** told the AWWCA at its annual general meeting in September 2001 was imminent?
4. The opportunity for residential development on Block 2 of the subject land would be lost.
5. It appears to us that when applications of this nature are received it is already too late to effectively assess, let alone challenge, them. It now appears to us that council and staff are not allowing neighbourhood/secondary planning to have much, if any, real bearing on decisions made by council and staff on

projects of this scale.

The public notice regarding the proposed development was placed on Rifle Range Road amid trees, in front of what at this moment presents itself to the neighbourhood and street as undeveloped meadowlands. Did I hear meadowlands? Do I hear warning bells?

Neighbourhood planning needs to be taken far more seriously in the hierarchy of planning in this city. It is about balance and sustainability. Please consider for our sakes what is at stake here! The AWWCA asks that the approvals be denied as being premature in the absence of commercial-impact studies and analyses, future-housing-needs analysis, and an updated and reviewed neighbourhood-planning process.

What did we learn from the way this proposal was handled by staff and council? Your board of directors met with a professional planner whom we hired to strategize regarding recommendations that will help the AWWCA handle future development proposals in our neighbourhoods. We will report to you on what we learned from the planner in the next newsletter.

An Elephant in Our Backyard?

*Following is a summary of the presentation given by **Gabrielle DiFrancesco** on July 3 to the hearings subcommittee of City Council. Gabrielle is the vice president of the AWWCA and a 30-year resident of Westdale.*

It is with gratitude that I think of planner Robert Anderson Pope, who planned Westdale with a balance of business and residential development. When we talk about sustainable development and Vision 20/20 we need to look at Westdale as a living, working example of sustainable development and not just some textbook case. In Westdale you can access a wide range of stores and services without having to rely on a car or public transport. It is the kind of development that fosters a sense of community.

We know what happened to Gore Park and the wonderful, majestic, shade-giving trees. They were cut down in the name of improvement. We also know what happened to the core when we overdeveloped the commercial base. Longtime stores like the Right House went out of business, and many new commercial ventures failed. Have we learned from the mistakes of the past? Are we certain that the proposed development of the Fortino's superstore is beneficial to the longterm health of our neighbourhoods? We all know that gains won can easily be lost. *Let not past experiences be wasted.*

I have room for an elephant in my backyard, not very much room, but it would fit. I would be in trouble when it came time to find the resources to feed that elephant, and I would be in bigger trouble when that elephant had to do its "business." Then there would be the traffic congestion as people from all over came to see my elephant. Does this mean that an elephant is a bad thing? No, it just means that it is not a good fit for my neighbourhood.

There is physical room on Main Street West for the proposed Fortino's development, but are we certain that this proposed development will "do no harm," a criterion that Mayor Wade said should be a *minimum* consideration before any decisions are made that affect neighbourhoods. Are we certain that the rezoning of this land from multiresidential to commercial will meet the needs of the surrounding neighbourhoods? Has a land inventory been taken to determine if we can afford to let this land be rezoned? Have we considered the ever-expanding needs for land? Could not this land have been used for student housing to accommodate the growing university population, especially in light of the double cohort? This is one of the last large blocks of land available in the Ainslie Wood and Westdale areas.

Has a business-impact study been conducted? What about all the businesses that have paid taxes for so long, that have served the community well and have given so much to it? The proposed superstore is not just a grocery store. What will happen to the

florists, the dry cleaners, the drug-stores in Westdale and along Main Street West? Do we want to repeat the mistakes that we made downtown? *Can you look us in the eye and say that this proposed development will "do no harm"?* The residents of the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods entrust you with the wellbeing of our communities, and we ask you to guarantee that you will not place an elephant in our backyards.

Councillor Marvin Caplan acknowledged that big box stores are not a good fit for established neighbourhoods; however, he spoke out strongly in support of the Fortino's development. In his comments, he failed to respond to the issue of the need for both a business-impact study and an inventory of the existing available land and community needs. Our councillor did not ask that the development be put on hold until the secondary plan is completed. He said that he felt compelled to support Fortino's because of the possibility that Fortino's could appeal a negative decision to the Ontario Municipal Board. We need to ask: Are our councillors duty-bound to respond to the concerns of their constituents, or is their role to acquiesce because of the fear of an appeal to the OMB?

Only five councillors were present for the hearing (**Chad Collins**, the chair, **Marvin Caplan**, **Frank D'Amico**, **Dave Mitchell**, and **Margaret McCarthy**), and all voted in favour of the Fortino's superstore. Why were only five councillors present to make such a major decision?

Editor's notes:

The AWWCA's presentation received editorial coverage from local radio stations and The Hamilton Spectator on July 9 and July 18. In **Brian McHattie's** letter published in The Hamilton Spectator on July 2, he noted that residents had to act on their own time and with their own money, abandoning community projects to fight for the public interest, while City Council backed private interest. McHattie recommends monitoring the voting records of our municipal politicians to encourage them to support the overall public interest.

Let's Make This an Election Issue!



This is the garbage from one house on Thorndale Street North. It took the owners nearly all day to put it out. The pile was many times bigger than anyone has ever seen on this street before. The maximum number of items that can be put out per collection is eight. This pile contained many bulk items (eight mattresses, a chesterfield, carpeting, a children's swimming pool, bookshelves, and a grocery cart filled with cardboard that was not reduced to the proper size, nor was it bundled). It was put out on Sunday, May 5, despite the fact that there was no bulk-pickup day scheduled for that week, meaning neighbours would have to put up with the illegal eyesore until the scheduled pickup on May 13. When residents complained, the city picked up the bulk items; it took three separate trucks with crews. These extra costs are unfairly distributed to all taxpayers

when the absentee landowners should be paying extra for this extraordinary amount of garbage and bulk items. This same property has been the subject of neighbours' complaints both before and after this incident.



On the same day, the house directly opposite the above house on Thorndale Street North put out a huge amount of garbage, including bulk items such as tables, gates, and rolls of carpeting.

A month after tenants vacated their

rental house on Haddon Avenue South, their bills from the gas company, phone



company, and cable company, together with mounds of junk mail, piled up on a chair on the front porch.

**TO REPORT GARBAGE
PUT OUT TOO SOON OR
ON THE WRONG DAY
CALL:**

**BYLAW ENFORCEMENT
DEPARTMENT
AT CITY HALL
905-546-6000**

or:

**CITY HALL
MAIN SWITCHBOARD
905-546-2489 (CITY)**

**TO REPORT UNSIGHTLY
GARBAGE AROUND A
PROPERTY
CALL:**

**PROPERTY STANDARDS
DEPARTMENT
905-546-2782**

or:

905-546-2489 (CITY)

On August 20, 2002 the following letter, which has been edited for this newsletter, was sent to our mayor and councillor. **Mayor Wade** replied August 22, saying that **Councillor Caplan** will assist in resolving these matters for the Ainslie Wood/Westdale community and that he trusts that Caplan will copy him on his response to the AWWCA. Let's make property-standards enforcement an election issue.

To: Mayor Bob Wade

Copy to: Councillor Marvin Caplan

On June 20, 2002, you held the Proudly Hamilton Community Summit, a meeting to determine what could be done to improve Hamilton's image. Not to our surprise, the number one concern was the need for proactive enforcement of property-standards bylaws. When the AWWCA was formed four years ago, a survey of members showed that property standards were their number one concern. However, when the McMaster University Area Task Force attempted to get proactive enforcement of property-standards bylaws, it ran into cost problems.

Since our initial survey, several hundred new members have joined the AWWCA, and stricter enforcement of existing bylaws is still the number one

concern.

It is obvious that the policy of trying to gain compliance does not work. The AWWCA recommends that the system be changed to a policy of immediate monetary penalties (like traffic tickets).

Our members have given creative suggestions for improving property-standards bylaw enforcement and for how to ensure that funding is available for additional bylaw officers. Following are some of their many suggestions:

1. Citizens wish to present lists of poorly kept properties to City Hall, and the lists need to be acted upon. In the past, AWWCA members have been told that this is not possible.
2. Enforcement of bylaws needs to be practised proactively. City inspectors need to have the authority to initiate action rather than relying on the complaint-based system that is now in place.
3. Enforcement would include fines to the homeowner (in addition to fines to the tenant). Just as the owner of a car is held responsible if the car is photographed running a red light or is illegally parked, property owners would be responsible if their ten-

ants are rowdy and disturb the neighbours

4. Property-standards fines could be a percentage of property taxes so the amount of the fines doesn't become outdated. (Property taxes are adjusted upward as market value increases.)
5. Property-standards fines need to be dedicated to paying for the employment of bylaw officers, and need to be sufficiently high to do so. This would take care of the problem that complaints about violations are not dealt with because of lack of funding. If there are lots of valid complaints, there will be lots of fines to pay bylaw officers.
6. The city would publicize the names, home addresses, and phone numbers of absentee landlords who persistently incur fines, along with the address of the offending property.

The AWWCA would be happy to work with you to provide ideas on how to work out the details of these suggestions and we look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Millar

President, AWWCA



URBAN *issues*

New Building at Main and Binkley

On May 8 **Phyllis Tresidder** attended the hearings sub-committee of City Council concerning the residential development at Main Street West and Binkley Road. The project was approved and we look forward to this new development in our community. See the article below, reprinted from our winter newsletter, for more information on the project.

Longer Bar Hours . . . !!!

BETTY BECHTEL

Recently there were articles in the media about the possibility of Ontario bars staying open until 4 a.m. British Columbia has gone this route but is now reconsidering. A Hamilton Spectator editorial expressed concern for the residents in the communities around the university and Hess

Village. Extending bar hours would be punishing to the nearby residents. The AWWCA has expressed its opposition to this proposal to our councillor, who has stated that he will oppose bars being open longer. The police chiefs of Ontario are also strongly opposed to extended hours.

Barn Buggies

LOREEN JEROME

Grocery buggies are a common sight on residential streets in our neighbourhood. I spoke with the manager, **Larry Szoke**, about the problem and told him I represent the AWWCA. He said that grocery buggies belonging to the Barn in Westdale will be picked up if you call the store number, 905-523-5044, Monday—Friday 8:15 a.m.—4:30 p.m. You will be asked for the house number or location where the buggies are. Buggies are picked up on the weekend by a private collector, employed by the store. The one I phoned about was removed as promised. Larry was very appreciative that I had called, as the buggies cost approximately \$150.00 each, and the cost of the stolen ones is reflected in higher grocery costs.

Thanks to the Barn

A big thank you to the Barn in Westdale for donating bottled water for our annual general meeting. Those attending the meeting were encouraged to support our neighbourhood stores to help preserve our local shopping area.

REPRINTED FROM OUR WINTER NEWSLETTER

New building proposed at Main and Binkley

An apartment building (*plan drawings shown on the right*) is proposed at Binkley Road and Main Street West for the abandoned gas-station lot. The plan is for a three-story walk up with eight to ten upscale two-bedroom units, with decorative railings and doors opening out to the railings. The drawings presented showed a building in the style seen in Montreal and Quebec City. The plans show green space behind the building and between the building and the first house on Binkley Road, with a privacy fence along the property line.

The building would face onto Binkley Road, and there would be underground parking. The property is now zoned commercial, and the developers admitted that they were testing the waters to see how the proposal would be received by the residents in the area before applying for a zoning change.

AWWCA member **Rick Grigg** learned of the details at the open house held January 17 and was impressed with the concept and design. Other neighbours commented that they were generally

well disposed to the plan. We hope that this development proceeds, as there could be a much less desirable development on this corner if it doesn't.



Let's Recognize What We Have Before It's Gone

KARYN CALLAGHAN

It was a scenario that has been played out often. On July 24, the Committee of Adjustment heard yet another application for a variance to the parking bylaw in Westdale Village; yet another attempt was being made to convert a retail store to a restaurant. I have lived in Westdale for over 11 years and have witnessed a lamentable string of such applications approved. We have long since passed the point of sustainability when it comes to parking. The village area was designed to house exactly what our designated zoning implies: neighbourhood shopping. It was intended to allow residents to walk to the business area from the streets that literally encircle it—a model encouraged by the renowned urban planner, **Jane Jacobs**. Certainly, times have changed. Suburban sprawl is now exacting its toll, and Canada's urban centres are living with the legacy of planning that is based on automobile dependency. In contrast, the design of Westdale is once again being recognized as brilliant—an idea whose time has come—

again. Unless residents oppose decisions that will irretrievably harm the character and intent of this model, it will be an idea that will exist only in Hamilton's history.

We are particularly vulnerable in this area due to the proximity to the university and its failure to provide adequate on-campus housing. One rental house in our neighbourhood may add four or five automobiles to the mix. The conversion of "neighbourhood shopping" businesses—a hardware store, a grocereria, and a bagel store—to restaurants and bars that are open until 2 a.m. (and perhaps later, if the province changes current legislation) is having a dramatic impact on residents who live cheek-by-jowl with these businesses. Late-night noise, broken glass, garbage, dumpsters that for some reason are cleared by huge trucks in our narrow alleys at 5 a.m., are all part-and-parcel of this shift. Business owners complain that the rents are so high that there are few options aside from bars that can generate adequate revenue. The recent renaissance on Locke Street of antique

stores and interesting boutiques challenges that claim. Westdale may be even better able to host such businesses, due to its design. It is imperative that the Westdale Business Improvement Area and residents collaboratively engage in long-term planning if we are to preserve Westdale's wonderful character.

This time, *the application for the parking variance was denied*. I am not sure why, although I was pleased. I have presented the same arguments before, with the opposite outcome. The citizens on the committee appeared to be sympathetic to our dilemma. A map of the neighbourhood with red dots to identify the number of restaurants and bars within a three-block stretch of King Street West may have brought the point home. Ask the folks living in proximity to Hess Village—Hamilton's other "quaint little village"—about their quality of life! Let's recognize what we have before it's gone.

Karyn Callaghan is an AWWCA member and resident of Westdale.

Some Problems and Suggested Solutions from AWWCA Members

A small group of resident homeowners on Haddon Avenue North recently engaged in some brainstorming and have come up with ideas about how to deal with two perennial issues affecting our neighbourhood.

A problem: Cars may be parked on your street, especially near pubs and restaurants. When the occupants return to them in the wee hours of the morning, they often hoot, holler, and rev their engines, thus disturbing your peace.

A solution: Instead of parking your car in your driveway for the night, why not park it on the street, thus taking up a space that would otherwise be filled by a nonresident, especially from Thursday to Saturday evenings? This might ensure some peace and quiet, at least in front of your house. On our block there is no restriction on parking from 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. We suggest you check the parking regulations on your block, as we wouldn't want you to receive a parking ticket. You may

want to weigh this benefit against the risk you take by leaving your car on the roadway, which may make it more vulnerable to vandalism.

A problem: Despite the City of Hamilton's additional investment in bylaw enforcement (from one officer to six), there appears to be a need for more enforcement.

A solution: Rather than raising taxes to hire more officers, why not ask the city to "deputize" volunteer citizens who may be retired or otherwise interested in enforcing bylaws in their particular neighbourhood. Such deputies could be given orientation and training with the authority to issue tickets or at least to call police or the bylaw officers to deal with problems in their area. The only cost to the city might be for training and issuing cell phones, etc., but this would greatly amplify their effectiveness for a minimum of ratepayers' dollars. The City of Toronto has deputized retired Toronto Transit Commission workers for this very purpose. We have at least one volunteer on Haddon Avenue North who is willing to apply. This suggestion has been put forward to our councillor.

Respectfully submitted by a group of concerned and caring citizens on Haddon Avenue North.

Update on the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan

VANESSA GRUPE

The Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan was initiated in February 2002 and is well underway. In the spring newsletter I outlined the reasons for the study, a list of participants, and the approaches for public participation. Some highlights of the work to date include:

- The questionnaire sent to 8,000 households resulted in over 1,100 completed questionnaires being returned. A response rate of 5 per cent is generally acceptable for this type of survey. A return of 10 per cent would be higher than expected. The actual response rate of almost 14 per cent was well above average, indicating the level of interest and concern among local residents. Many thanks to all those who responded. Complete results will be available by the end of September.
- The transportation and infrastructure components of this comprehensive study have been identified. The terms of reference have been expanded to include these areas of study. McCormick Rankin consultants have been hired to work with staff on the analysis of these issues.
- ASPECT, the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan Advisory Committee and Team, has been established and has met six times to date. Progress includes identifying key stakeholders, reviewing the study terms of reference, refining the committee role and mandate,

and noting specific issues of concern.

- ASPECT held a walking and driving tour of the study area on August 1. It highlighted several areas of concern and some opportunities, such as property-standards violations, lands available for redevelopment, the rail trail and its possible extension, and compatibility between industry and houses. A second tour, to look at other areas of concern including parks and the impact of students moving in, was held on September 10.
- Staff is preparing a background-information report that will provide an inventory of demographics, assets, services, and other conditions in the area to assist staff in establishing a current profile of the area. This will be completed by the end of September.
- The next ASPECT meeting is November 7 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. ASPECT meetings are open to observers, space permitting. See contact information below. All meetings are held at Hamilton City Hall, Room 219.
- A facilitated workshop will be held October 29 from 4:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Hamilton City Hall. The purpose is to identify specific issues, concerns, and priorities and take an initial look at approaches for addressing them. Representatives of all major interest groups will be invit-

ed to participate, as well as ASPECT members and other interested citizens, up to a maximum of 50 to 60 people.

- Public information centres will also be held to invite input from the general public on land use, transportation, and infrastructure issues, as these are identified. One such information centre will be held in conjunction with the October 29 workshop. The dates for subsequent public open houses will be released as soon as they are available.
- A web page for the study will be established shortly on the City of Hamilton website. This will provide details on the study's purpose, issues identified, dates of public information centres, progress on the study, as well as an opportunity for feedback.

We project the final report will be completed by June 2003, after several series of public meetings to enable input, review, and revision.

If you have questions or comments or wish to participate in the October 29 workshop, please contact me at 905-643-1262, extension 263 (phone), or at 905-643-7250 (fax), or via e-mail at vgrupe@city.hamilton.on.ca.

Vanessa Grupe is the planning and development department's senior planner for long-range planning and design, and the project manager for the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan.

Bothered by Noise?

In Hamilton the noise bylaw is in effect 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. During key noisy periods, the city employs additional noise-bylaw officers.



The noise bylaw prohibits excessive noise and allows for fines to be levied on the leaseholder and/or the property owner. In the case of a noisy party the fine can be levied against all occupants. The minimum fine is \$130 and can increase in severity. Anyone can initiate a noise complaint, and here's how:

1. Provide details of the problem, including house number, and your name, address, and phone number—complainants' names are kept confidential. This will provide follow-up information for the inspectors.



- Call **905-546-2489 (CITY)** 24 hours a day for **noise-bylaw inspectors**, or call the noise-bylaw department at 905-546-2782.
- Call **905-546-4925** 24 hours a day for **police**. Noise complaints have lower priority if police are dealing with more serious crimes. If violence, such as fighting, is occurring, state this, as your call will receive higher priority. If you are not satisfied with the response at the above police number, call **904-546-4772**, which is the police front desk. Describe the

situation and then state, "I am getting frustrated," or "There are a number of people who are getting very angry," and add: "Could you please send a squad car to deal with this?" If still

not satisfied, call **911** with the same message. A staff sergeant has assured a member that this would be an appropriate use of the 911 number.

2. After you have reported the noise, call **Judy Downey**, coordinator of standards and licensing, building and licensing division of the

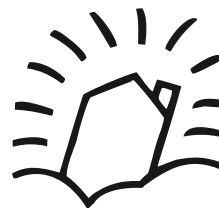
planning and development department of the City of Hamilton, at 905-540-6108, or e-mail her at jdowney@city.hamilton.on.ca to advise her that you have reported the noise. She will send an inspector to talk to the alleged offender(s) and will send a letter to the property owner. The city can lay charges within 30 days of the alleged offence, but to ensure success it is important that more than one neighbour lodges a complaint.

3. Also, please report the problem to the AWWCA's police liaison, **Betty Bechtel**, at 905-526-1714, or betjim@interlynx.net. Betty compiles a list of anonymous complaints that she forwards to appropriate authorities such as the police, bylaw officers, and our councillor.

It's important to keep notes of problems—the date and the time reported. It's important to be persistent.

If you have a problem with dogs barking excessively, call bylaw services at 905-540-6000 or 905-546-2489 (CITY).

*The information in this article was compiled by **Betty Bechtel** and **Janet Woodward**. Our thanks to **Judy Downey** at City Hall and AWWCA block representative Michael Ladouceur for their input.*



Because we care

The AWWCA is a volunteer, nonprofit association whose mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the Ainslie Wood/Westdale community environment and the quality of life for all residents, and to organize, communicate, lobby, and pursue the needs of the members of the association. The AWWCA newsletter, *Neighbourhood News & Views*, is published and distributed to members. The opinions expressed within the newsletter are those of the writers unless otherwise specified and do not necessarily represent the views of the AWWCA.

Submissions welcomed. Please send all news, story ideas, and photographs (no Polaroids please) to:

AWWCA

1063 King Street West, Suite 221
Hamilton, Ontario
L8S 4S3

GENERAL INQUIRIES.
905-526-9101 or
905-525-7386

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR
Janet Woodward

COPY EDITOR
Carolyn Kinsley

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Bob Edmonds, Michelle Edmonds

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Malcolm Horsnell

Autumn 2002



*"Building community
block by block"*

The Way We Were

Westdale's Own Ring

ARNOLD BEALE

How many people have noticed the brass ring in the ground on Paisley Avenue North?

Many years ago, I asked my mother about the brass ring on my street. I



The very young Arnold Beale.

asked, "Who would leave a piece of brass partly buried in the grass? I nearly tripped over it beside the sidewalk!"

My mother assured me that the brass ring I asked her about played an important part in my early life. Shortly after I was born and then taken home, my uncle John McLeod, who lived in the east end of Hamilton, decided he would like to see the new arrival. So he mounted his horse and rode across town to see the newborn. When he arrived, he dismounted and tied his horse to the brass ring before walking down the street to see me. I'm told he was delighted with his new little nephew, Arnold.

Before Westdale was developed as an organized community in the early and mid-1920s, the area was farmland owned by Hattie Stinson. Most farms had trails that crossed them, and where they intersected with other trails, rid-

ers would dismount to chat and exchange information. In what is now Westdale, they used the brass ring on Paisley Avenue North to tether their horses. The trail on Hattie's farm led out and around the swamp to Dundas. Later, Hattie sold her land, piece by piece. Part of her farm, in the Paisley area, became a brickyard.

I suspect the brass ring in our neighbourhood is 100 years old and possibly even older. It could go back to the 1840s, when the farms in this area



Uncle John with Arnold and his sister, Peggy.

“ Before Westdale was developed as an organized community in the early and mid-1920s, the area was farmland owned by Hattie Stinson. ”



were first laid out.

Unlike Frodo's ring, it may not hold the key to human survival, but it is Westdale's own ring. It serves as a connection to our historical past, and this enriches us.

Arnold Beale has been an AWWCA member and block representative for Paisley Avenue North since the first meeting of the AWWCA in September 1998.

Mailing Label