

Neighbourhood News & Views

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AINSLIE WOOD / WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Spring 2002 OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.

*"Building community
block by block"*



Capturing Rain
and Snow

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The AWWCA Meets with the Mayor

TOM BRYNER

At the annual general meeting of the AWWCA last September, our guest speaker, **Mayor Bob Wade**, invited the AWWCA executive to meet with him at any time. Your executive accepted his invitation and met with him January 18, 2002, at Hamilton City Hall. Also present were **Tara-Lynne Franco**, manager of policy and strategic planning, and Councillor Marvin Caplan's assistant, **Dale Brown**.

Janet Woodward began by thanking Mayor Wade for the efforts of the police and bylaw officers. **Gabrielle DiFrancesco**

continued by outlining the history of the AWWCA, citing how resident homeowners' feelings of frustration over the issue of student housing created the need for a cohesive voice. We explained to the mayor that student rentals owned by absentee landlords are operating as businesses within neighbourhoods zoned as residential. This has caused frustration for resident homeowners, severe pressure on infrastructure and services, increased traffic congestion, parking problems, and a lowering of property standards. We also expressed concern that the

approaching "double cohort" in 2003 will only exacerbate the problems.

We pointed out that McMaster's Draft Campus Plan does not offer any concrete plans for the university to devel-



l to r: Phyllis Tresidder, Janet Woodward, Jim Bechtel, Mayor Bob Wade, Betty Bechtel, Gabrielle DiFrancesco, Carolyn Kinsley, Loreen Jerome, Michael Bordin, Tom Bryner

op housing on or off campus. The need for new initiatives, such as student housing downtown, private partnerships with the university, and an increase in the number of resident homeowners renting a room to students were discussed. These proposed initiatives necessitate increased cooperation between the city, the community, and McMaster.

This cooperation is also needed for the implementation of the impending secondary plan for the AWWCA neighbourhoods. The plan needs to be in place before trying *See MAYOR on page 2*

to assess the intensification of single-housekeeping units being converted to student rentals and the suitability of such major developments as the proposed Fortino's super-store on Rifle Range Road.

Mayor Wade replied that the city wants to deal with the issues outlined and that he senses the resident homeowners' feelings of frustration. He agreed that our community is in crisis and stated that the city is ready and willing to support any McMaster efforts on the student-housing problem by facilitating planning procedures and permits, but emphasized that the city cannot force McMaster to take action. He wants to keep the channels of communication open between the city and the university.

We also discussed problems of multiple requests for the same variance (see page 11 of the winter newsletter) and the possibility of a change in the law to prevent such practices. The mayor replied that the law governing variance procedures is a provincial statute and promised to look into the issue and follow up with the executive.

We also asked Mayor Wade about the possibility of introducing bylaws to control the conversion of single housekeeping units to student lodgings. Janet Woodward pointed out that recommendation 3.1 of the McMaster Area Task Force Report calls for a study of this issue and states that a reduction in the concentration of student housing is necessary to maintain balanced and well-integrated neighbourhoods. The mayor was asked if Hamilton is in communication with other university cities on this issue; we specifically mentioned that the City of Waterloo has legislation governing the licensing of rental housing. Tara-Lynne Franco interjected: "And it's not working." Mayor Wade said it would be necessary to discuss bylaw changes with the planning and legal departments and that he would apprise the AWWCA of progress on the issues.

The need for comprehensive and innovative action from all parties was agreed to. The avenues of communication between all stakeholders must be kept open, and all must work toward making sure that whatever is done "does no harm," to repeat the adage that our mayor introduced at our annual general meeting.

green NEWS

Congratulations to the City of Hamilton

City's new waste- collection program is well received

Following is a copy of a letter sent March 26 to Mayor Wade and Councillor Howarth, chair of the Solid Waste Management Master Plan Steering Committee:

*Dear Mayor Wade and Councillor
Horwath,*

*I am writing to express to you how
happy I am with the new waste-collec-
tion services being implemented on
April 15. Having just reviewed my*

*waste-collection calendar, I wanted to
tell you that I found it simple to use
and very clear in the explanation of
the programs. I believe the new pro-
gram represents a big step forward for
our city, from an environmental per-
spective.*

*Resident homeowners in the
McMaster University area are looking
forward to an improvement in our
neighbourhoods due to the six bulk-
goods pickups scheduled for student
move-in and move-out times.*

*You are to be congratulated on your
efforts and hard work in putting the
program together.*

Many thanks.

Liz Millar, President

*Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community
Association of Resident Homeowners
Inc.*

*We received a response the same day
from Mayor Wade's office, reprinted
below:*

Dear Liz Millar:

*Mayor Wade has asked me to
respond to your message and to thank
you for taking the time to write with
your comments regarding the new*

*waste-collection services that are soon
to be implemented.*

*We are committed to providing reli-
able waste-collection service to all resi-
dents in the efforts to move ahead in
our aggressive waste-diversion goal of
65% by 2008.*

*Again, thank you for your message,
citizen feedback is extremely impor-
tant.*

Sincerely,

Marjorie Walker

Office of the Mayor

and from Councillor Andrea Horwath:

*Thanks very much, Liz, for your posi-
tive feedback. We have a very aggres-
sive Solid-Waste Master Plan that calls
for an increase in diversion from
landfill. The only way we can achieve
it is with the help of supporters like
yourself, and the way to foster that
support is by committing the city to a
system that is simple, reliable, and
convenient. The other big piece is to
make sure we are communicating
effectively with our community. Keep
the feedback coming, as it's very much
appreciated.*

Andrea

Capturing Rain and Snow

More and more municipalities across Canada and the U.S. are disconnecting their downspouts.

Why?

PETER WOBSCHALL,
Wise-Water-Use Coordinator,
Green Venture

In Hamilton, as well as many other municipalities, many of our downspouts are connected directly to the sewer system, or they are directed over surfaces that are poor at absorbing water. This can have negative effects on the environment and our individual and collective pocketbooks.

When runoff from a large rainstorm or snowmelt enters sewers from a direct downspout connection, it is mixed with wastewater from our homes and treated as sewage. Often this runoff contributes to excessive flows that the sewage-treatment plant is unable to process, with the result that it is released into the environment as untreated or only partially treated sewage. This contributes to excessive nutrient loading of Hamilton Harbour and poor water quality.

Downspouts that are connected directly to the sewer system can also affect your pocketbook. If debris or leaves plug the sewer connection between your house and the street, water from your downspouts will have no place to go except back into your basement. This can cause significant damage to anything that is stored in this area and is completely avoidable.

Even if your downspouts are not connected to the sewer directly, they can still have a negative impact on the envi-

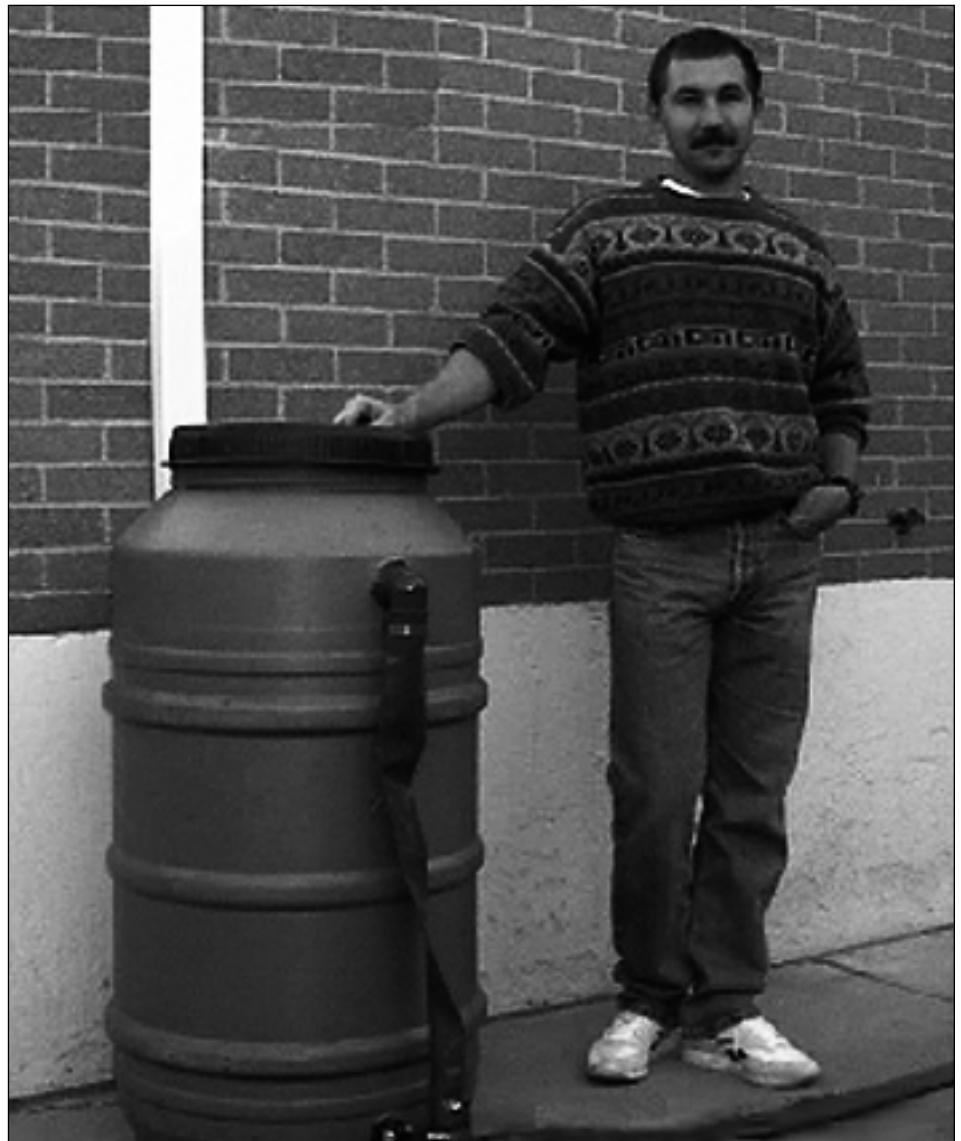
ronment if they are directed onto pavement. As water runs off across driveways and roads, it picks up various pollutants like antifreeze, motor oil, and bacteria from pet waste. When it finds its way into the sewer system it can create similar problems as mentioned above, except that the runoff is now even more polluted than if you had a direct connection.

What can you do?

Runoff has a number of benefits for our homes and gardens if we just capture and use it. Runoff is soft, chlorine-free water and costs nothing. One of many options is using rainbarrels to

capture runoff from your downspouts. At the very least, redirect downspouts to areas of your property where the water can soak into the ground where it belongs (grassed areas are best), not flow into the sewers where we, as a community, have to pay for it to be treated as sewage.

For more information, to purchase a rainbarrel, or to find out other methods of capturing runoff and using it in and around your home, please call Green Venture at 905-540-8787, ext. 17, or e-mail us at water@greenventure.on.ca.



Frank and his tank.

VARSITY NEWS

McMaster's New Provost Speaks about the Double Cohort

On March 12, a message was sent to the McMaster community: "McMaster University and the Double Cohort—A Message from **Ken Norrie**, provost and vice-president, academic." In it he says:

Full-time undergraduate enrolment this year is just over 13,000, about 400 more students than anticipated in the 1999 enrolment plan. . . . Just recently, we learned that these pressures may intensify. The latest

Ontario university application figures show a provincial increase of 20% for 2002-03, compared to a predicted increase of 12 to 15%.

McMaster's applications have increased almost 23%. The enrolment models have always assumed that the double graduating class would be absorbed over a number of years. McMaster's enrolment plan took this into account.

However, the latest figures demonstrate that a significantly higher number of students than anticipated have fast-tracked in high school and have applied for admission this fall.... We are also aware that as McMaster grows, so too do some of the pressures on the communities that surround the University. The new Campus Plan will provide significant guidance on how we deal with these issues, and

we will continue to work with the City of Hamilton and our local partners to help to maintain strong neighbourhoods around the University.

Several AWWCA members responded to the provost, questioning the lack of planning to accommodate the increased number of students. They were referred to McMaster's Public

Relations Department and were told, "The answer lies in the Campus Plan we are developing." The plan, however, does not include new residences. On March 12 an AWWCA member sent the following e-mail message to the provost about the housing crisis; at the time of publication, no response has been received:



The university really isn't doing anywhere close to enough re student accommodation.

One new student residence will hardly make a dent in housing the thousands of new students expected. The university needs to put multiple student residences at the top of its priorities, engage in aggressive fundraising to that end, and

take the load off West Hamilton resident homeowners. West Hamilton is slowly being trashed, and in some quarters has already been trashed, by the university's almost complete lack of concern for the impact of its corporate expansion on resident homeowners. West Hamilton cannot continue to

be the bedroom for McMaster University. Nothing less than the action proposed above will demonstrate that the university really cares about this residential community, as well as about its students, who often have to live in substandard, crammed housing run by absentee landlords who are in it only for profit and don't care about bylaws or

students. One of our AWWCA members recently wrote an article in our newsletter about this problem, and that article clearly indicates the university's complete lack of planning for student residences in its recent multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign. This is a sad and tragic omission. It suggests that the university is assuming that West Hamilton will be its bedroom. It is time for the university to do something, and immediately, to show that it is "listening," and cares. I have read and heard too much posturing on the part of the university. It will continue to ring hollow until action occurs.

One Major Disappointment

In the March 23 edition of *The Hamilton Spectator*, **Christine Cox** wrote about McMaster University's master plan for how the campus should look in the year 2030. In the article, **Phyllis Tresidder**, chair of the AWWCA's planning subcommittee, was quoted as saying that, overall, the AWWCA is pleased. She praised McMaster's administration for involving the community in the planning process but said there is one major disappointment: there isn't a desire on the part of the university to house a larger percentage of its students. Local residents want student housing to be a priority in the plan; although it identifies some possible sites on campus for student housing, no new residences are planned after the one scheduled to open this fall.



Surviving the Double Cohort

As reported in the winter newsletter, the residential community around McMaster is concerned about the impact of the extra enrolment of the double cohort, when the first students in the new four-year high-school program will graduate at the same time as those in the Ontario Academic Credit year of the old five-year program. Reprinted below are suggestions from AWWCA members that may help to preserve the integrity of the residential community and maintain 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. 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 houses operated by absentee landlords.
5. If a house near you is up for sale, put signs in your window "Resident Homeowners Welcomed." One member has done this and it worked. Contact the AWWCA if you need a sign.

If you have other suggestions, please let us know.

It's Still Spring, Isn't It?

Sometimes, an issue of the newsletter just runs into timing problems. Newsletter coordinator Janet Woodward sent the text to designers Michelle and Bob Edmonds just as they were preparing for a trade show in Calgary. Then the first draft of the layout went back to Janet, just as she left for Vancouver. Janet did her edits on the west coast, then e-mailed the materials to copy editor Cary Kinsley in Taipei. Cary had problems with the e-mail because the menu for Outlook Express was in Chinese! And so it went.

So this issue is a bit late, but in the effort to bring you good local content, it's already been halfway around the world.

NEWS *from the* PRESIDENT

LIZ MILLAR

With this new season we look to renewal and positive change in our neighbourhoods. As you read through this newsletter, you will see the many ways the AWWCA is seeking to fulfill its mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the AinslieWood/Westdale community environment and the quality of life for all residents. You are invited to attend board meetings, held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Monday of each month. Please contact the AWWCA for location.

On your behalf, the board of directors arranged for and attended a meeting with Fortino's/Loblaws real estate representatives, the planner, and traffic consultant on April 11 at City Hall. The purpose was to discuss our concerns about the proposed new Fortino's superstore on Main Street West at Rifle

Range Road. Ward 1 Councillor Marvin Caplan and Vanessa Grupe, senior planner for the city's long-range planning and design division, also attended.

We told the Fortino's/Loblaws team that all new development should fit into the comprehensive secondary plan for our neighbourhoods, which is now in process. We also asked that critical studies of environmental assessment, traffic and safety, and market impact be made available to the community before the application for the zoning change goes to council. We ask for your input on this or any other concerns, as we value your participation, "Because We Care."

*We wish you a
safe, happy,
and peaceful
summer.*

Yard-waste pickups
in AWWCA area

July 2, 15, 29

August 12, 26

September 9, 23

Bulk-goods pickups
in AWWCA area

July 8, September 16

Youth Crime in Westdale Village and Churchill Park

LIZ MILLAR

On April 10 about 30 members of the community gathered at the Westdale Library to address youth problems, occurring most recently over the Easter weekend, in Westdale Village and Churchill Park.

Major concerns included “tag art” graffiti again defacing local businesses. **Shelagh Snider** of the Westdale Business Improvement Area pointed out that graffiti mentioned at the October 2001 meeting, on property belonging to the city and Canada Post, had not been removed. Photos were available for viewing.

Churchill Park is suffering from misuse—benches torn out and moved to the woods, Friday-night drinking parties that are loud and disruptive to the neighbours, and the environment “trashed” with discarded beer and alcohol bottles. Some youths use the lawn-bowling greens for soccer and baseball.

Again, we heard **Officer Jack Vander Pol** say that youths come to this area for two reasons: they have nothing else to do, and it is safer to be here than downtown, where there is a greater police presence. It was overwhelmingly agreed that everyone must become part of the solution, and the following suggestions were agreed to:

1. Youths need to be involved and have a “sense of community.” We need to find out what they want to do.
2. Recreational activities need to be investigated.
3. “Mural art” at Limeridge Mall has been there for five years without being vandalized. A similar program should be considered here.
4. Parents and teachers need to be educated and made aware of what youths are drawing. Is it mere designs or writing that could indicate a “graffiti vandal”?
5. The 40-hour community-service work program for youths could be used to assist the neighbourhoods by cleaning up graffiti.
6. Youths need to be educated about the costs of vandalism.
7. Police enforcement is urgently needed now.
8. Police should continue to work with youths but enforce zero tolerance.
9. A community-policing centre needs to be established in our community.
10. Everyone in attendance—from law enforcement, city government, businesses, schools, and the community—agreed that a team effort is needed to succeed.

Judith Bishop, Shelagh Snider, and Phyllis Tresidder were asked to collaborate in using the many suggestions offered to come up with specific recommendations. Police will continue to monitor these areas, and another meeting will be held if needed.



**THE GRAFFITI ABATEMENT
PROJECT OF HAMILTON**

GRAFFITI HOT
LINE

905-546-GRAF
(905-547-4723)



TO REPORT
GRAFFITI ON
CANADA POST
MAILBOXES
CALL:
BRAD WALDES
SUPERINTENDENT
DEPOT 1
905-521-8755

Ainslie Wood and Westdale Secondary Plan

VANESSA GRUPE



As a senior planner with the city's planning department, and project manager for this study, I would like to outline the process for the secondary plans being prepared for the seven Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods. The secondary plan is a policy document that provides a framework for future land use and guidelines for (re)develop-

ment of all lands. An infrastructure master plan will be included. The plan will cover the area west of Highway 403 in the former City of Hamilton. The secondary plan, once completed, will be adopted into the city's official plan and will become approved policy.

The study is being carried out for the following reasons:

- to address land-use pressures in the area surrounding McMaster University, related to the double cohort (two grades graduating high school in one year);
- to complement the McMaster University Campus Master Plan;
- to update three plans prepared for the Ainslie Wood neighbourhoods in the early 1970s; and,
- to prepare plans for the Westdale neighbourhoods, which have never had them.

The secondary plan will answer such questions as:

- Should vacant lands in the area be used for housing, stores, or parks?
- Where should new seniors' apartments and student housing be located?
- If factories or schools close, what should these lands be used for?

The plan is being prepared by the City of Hamilton's planning and development department, with extensive input from the public. Timely, meaningful, and inclusive public participation will be hallmarks of the study. Participants will include:

- the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan Executive Study and Team (ASPECT), an executive committee of 12 citizens representing key groups and stakeholders, which meets monthly;
- a wider advisory team of 25-40 people who are major community stakeholders; and,
- the general public, all of whom are invited to participate.



The approaches for public participation will include:

- a questionnaire delivered to all residents and business operators in May 2002;
- facilitated workshops for all stakeholders, targeted for approximately early June and early November 2002, to identify issues and evaluate strategies and alternatives; and,
- open houses, in approximately late June and late November 2002, to review issues and alternatives and to seek input from the general public.

The study will produce the following:

- a neighbourhood profile (background information);
- a summary of the questionnaire responses;
- a secondary plan (a policy document and land-use map);
- an infrastructure master plan (re stormwater, sewers, traffic);
- likely amendments to the official plan and zoning bylaw; and,
- a design strategy for streetscaping and gateways.



The questionnaire is an important means for the city to obtain input on community issues and priorities. Help plan your neighbourhood!

The secondary plan study will require about 18 months, with the final plan going before City Council for approval in approximately September 2003. Dates for public workshops and open houses in the spring and fall of 2002 will be announced as soon as possible.

The city web site at www.city.hamilton.on.ca (planning department page) will provide further details, or you can call me at 905-643-1262, extension 263.



AROUND the NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Hamilton Aviary

MARION BRYNER

Some residents of the Ainslie Wood and Westdale areas may not be aware that they live near one of Hamilton's treasures. At the former Teaching Gardens (85 Oak Knoll Drive) you will find the Hamilton Aviary. The building that once was used for programs of the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) now houses about 200 tropical birds. From tiny finches to large macaws, there are over 50 varieties of birds on display.

The aviary was established at Dundurn Castle with a bequest from Thomas Gould, a citizen of Hamilton who died in 1900. He left \$3,000 to the Hamilton Zoological Society "to make the Dundurn Park Zoo more attractive for the little children." When it opened in June 1932, *The Hamilton Spectator* called it "second to none in the Dominion." In 1992, when the city decided to save money by closing the aviary,

June 1992 The Friends of Dundurn Aviary was established.

In 1995 Dundurn Castle was being renovated, so the birds were moved to the vacant police station on Kenilworth Avenue. Early in 1996 the decision was made that the aviary would not return to Dundurn Castle. At the same time, the RBG was consolidating its programs at its headquarters and was closing the Teaching Gardens. After consultation with the community, the aviary moved to its beautiful new home in July 1996. The City of Hamilton still provides basic operating costs, but the volunteers have to raise funds for any improvements. In the year 2000, registered-charity status was granted to The Friends of the Aviary. Volunteer crews come in daily to feed and care for the birds. They also work with other members of the aviculture community to improve the status of endangered species.

If you are interested in joining the 40 volunteers at the aviary, give us a call at 905-546-4842 and leave your name and phone number. No experience is required, just a love of birds and a will-



Millie, a *Grand eclectus* parrot.

tion to the aviary newsletter, an invitation to the annual spring fair, your name on the parents' list at the aviary, and a tax receipt for your donation. Adoptions make great gifts too!

Marion Bryner is secretary of The Friends of the Aviary.



A scarlet macaw named Scarlet.

some local bird lovers approached City Hall proposing that the aviary be kept open by volunteers. The city agreed, volunteers were recruited, and in



The Hamilton Aviary, seen from Oak Knoll Drive.

ingness to learn.

You can also support the aviary by becoming an Avian Adopter. Yearly sponsorship costs vary, depending on the bird, and range from \$20 a year for a finch to \$100 a year for a macaw. Your adoption package includes an adoption certificate, an information sheet about your bird, a year's subscrip-

Grounds open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. from Mother's Day to Thanksgiving. Most of the birds can be seen in outside flights then.

The aviary is open year round on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For group tours, call 905-546-4842.

G.R. Allan Public School Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary

On April 4 community members gathered at G. R. Allan Public School for an open house, silent auction, café, and concerts in celebration of its 75th anniversary. The event was organized by **Kelly Eaton**, president of the Home and School Association.

G. R. Allan was built in December 1927 and was the first school built in the brand new community of Westdale. The school is featured in the 1990 book *Ontario Architecture* by John Blumenson and is one of Hamilton's finest examples of collegiate Gothic architecture (Source: Hamilton archives). Some of our community businesses who generously donated to the 75th anniversary were **Bryan Prince Bookseller, Bean Bar, Explora-Toy, Garry's Pet Shop, Grapes & Hops, Lee McBrides', No Frills, Rolling Thunder, Runners Den, Second Cup, The Barn, The Casual Gourmet, The Music Gallery, The Tax Ladies, Tim Horton's, Weill's Bakery, and Write Impressions. Rendezvous Gardens** at 1134 Plains Road West in Burlington

donated the spring plants for the large planters to welcome visitors and beautify the school entrance. The AWWCA e-mailed members about the event, and many members volunteered time and donations, including **Mike Kukucska, William McMillan, Penny Palmer-Thomson, Mary Louise Piggott, William McMillan, and Joe Thivy**. All proceeds raised are going toward improving the school's library.



NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Neighbourhood Watch is planning its first annual Neighbourhood Watch Night Out this year, and volunteers are needed to help plan this exciting event in our community.

Please consider volunteering for this opportunity to strengthen the safety of our neighbourhoods.

Call P. C. Greg Doerr at 905-546-4906 if you would like to volunteer or if you would like more information.

Hamilton Cyclist Impressed with Westdale Residents

The March 2 issue of *The Hamilton Spectator* reported, under "Letters not printed," a letter from a Hamilton cyclist impressed that residents near Dromore Crescent and Oak Knoll cleared broken beer bottles that covered a large part of the road. A big thank you to those residents.

Rebecca Comes Home

Is it a goose or a homing pigeon?

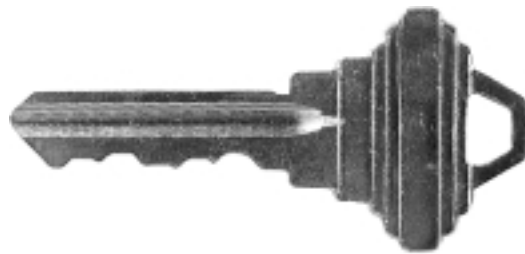
In the Spring 2000 newsletter, we asked readers to be on the lookout for a loose goose, last seen on our front lawn. So it was a big surprise to look out on May 1, 2002, and see that Rebecca had come home. There she was, all 60 pounds of concrete, decked out in her blue raingear and hat that she was wearing when she was last seen over two years ago.

*Glad for the safe return of Rebecca,
Liz Millar and Ed Oliver*



Security Update

BETTY BECHTEL



CALLING THE POLICE

To report lawbreaking, please call police directly at 905-546-4925 and use the following wording: "Please dispatch an official to investigate the _____ situation." The report will be forwarded to the police.

Police ask you to report kegs of beer being delivered to a house by calling 905-546-2489 (546-CITY) during business hours (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or 905-546-4925 after 5 p.m. State that you are calling to report kegs being delivered and give the address.

The spring security report starts with some hopeful news. **Officer Jack VanderPol** called in March to say that he had heard **Warren Oda** speak.

Warren is recreation supervisor, Youth Services, for the Department of Culture and Recreation of the City of Hamilton. Jack hopes that Mr. Oda may be able to help with the youth problems we are experiencing in our community. AWWCA member **Shelagh Snider** of the Westdale Business Improvement Area (BIA) and I have both contacted Mr. Oda

to follow up on this idea. The number of security incidents was down earlier this year. Following a surge of problems on the weekend of April 5, the community experienced another surge on the weekend of April 26 when exams were over. Poor weather and exams are the AWWCA's allies. Some of the problems that have affected our neighbourhoods in the past few months:

1. Keg parties continue to be held,

although it is illegal to sell alcohol without a license. Several keg parties were held recently at houses on Hollywood Street North, Thorndale Crescent, Forsyth Avenue South, and Sanders Boulevard. Noise and trails of red or white plastic beer cups for several blocks from the party locations suggest keg parties.

A party on Forsyth Avenue South in April lasted 24 hours. A car parked near the party ran its motor for

four hours in the middle of the night. Neighbours thought the occupant was dead, as they tried persistently to rouse him. Police responded, roused him, took him into custody, and had the car impounded.

At a party on King Street West, participants drank on couches on front lawns, smashed a TV set on the sidewalk, left it there, and threw fireworks into traffic. Broken glass and

other debris were left in a large area on King Street West where young children pass on their way to preschool at MacNeill Baptist Church and St. Paul's Anglican Church. A neighbour called the city on the weekend to clean it up, but this could not be done until the following weekday. Another nearby neighbour reported having a fireworks missile thrown at her house and expressed concern for her family's safety.

2. Car windows of an AWWCA member on Paisley Avenue South were smashed on two separate occasions this year.

3. A member of MacNeill Baptist Church reported that a memorial plaque was stolen and that on two occasions there were break-ins through an upper window and coats were stolen. In February, the caretaker's car was stolen.

4. Westdale United Church had to erect a fence, as there is a problem with loiterers, some of whom urinate on church property.

5. AWWCA members reported eggs thrown at houses on Hollywood Street North, King Street West, Paisley Avenue North, and Marion Avenue North. In an area near Paisley Avenue North, egg-throwing intruders were chased away by late-night dog walkers.

6. Members have reported serious vehicular accidents near Rifle Range Road and Main Street West, which is a dangerous intersection. Heavy traffic is a contributing factor.

7. Police and bylaw officers have again visited the house on Sanders Boulevard mentioned in our winter newsletter as problems continue. Officer Jack VanderPol phoned to say

“Police and bylaw officers have again visited the house on Sanders Boulevard. The “address has been flagged” because of its long history of problems.”

that the "address has been flagged" because of its long history of problems. Flagging the address means that a noise complaint about this house will receive higher priority than most noise complaints. Jack

“*Graffiti has defaced the Churchill Fields lawn-bowling clubhouse and the former TD Bank in Westdale Village.*”

reported the good news is that the occupants are leaving this term.

8. Graffiti has defaced the Churchill Fields lawn-bowling clubhouse and the former TD Bank in Westdale Village. Apparently the damage was done on Easter weekend. Graffiti is an increasing and costly problem for our community. In addition to the graffiti problems

at the Lawn Bowling Club, the greens are being damaged by youths playing other sports on the lawns.

9. Second Cup is again having problems with groups of youths loitering, marring washrooms with graffiti, and smashing windows.

Police Strategies: Officer Jack VanderPol reported that in addition to the regular policing service, undercover officers of the **High Enforcement**

Action Team (HEAT) patrolled the area on Friday, April 5. Youths were apprehended for illegal behaviour, including drinking violations. One was charged. Police took some of them to their homes in our neighbourhoods and

awakened their parents. Policing strategies for our neighbourhoods on the weekend of April 26 included extra officers assigned to this beat, some of whom were from the undercover

HEAT unit, as well as bicycle patrols and a police wagon.

In addition, police educated McMaster students through various media, and Officer

905-526-1714. Include the date, time, and details of the incident, calls to the police, and subsequent action. I give the list of incidents to the Hamilton Police Service, Councillor Marvin Caplan, city bylaw officers, and authorities at McMaster University. Police find it helpful to have one contact person with whom to exchange information.

Our thanks: We appreciate the continued help and support provided to our

WE ARE THE FIRST...

Officer Jack VanderPol attended conferences involving people from many communities. He reported that other university cities are envious of our community-based policing. We are the first and only community in Ontario to have this service. Jack urged the Westdale Business Improvement Area to adopt mechanisms similar to the AWWCA's to keep the police and members informed.

We encourage you to express your appreciation to our police and bylaw officers.

community from all levels of the Hamilton Police Service and from the bylaw officers. In spite of the numerous demands on their time, the officers have developed

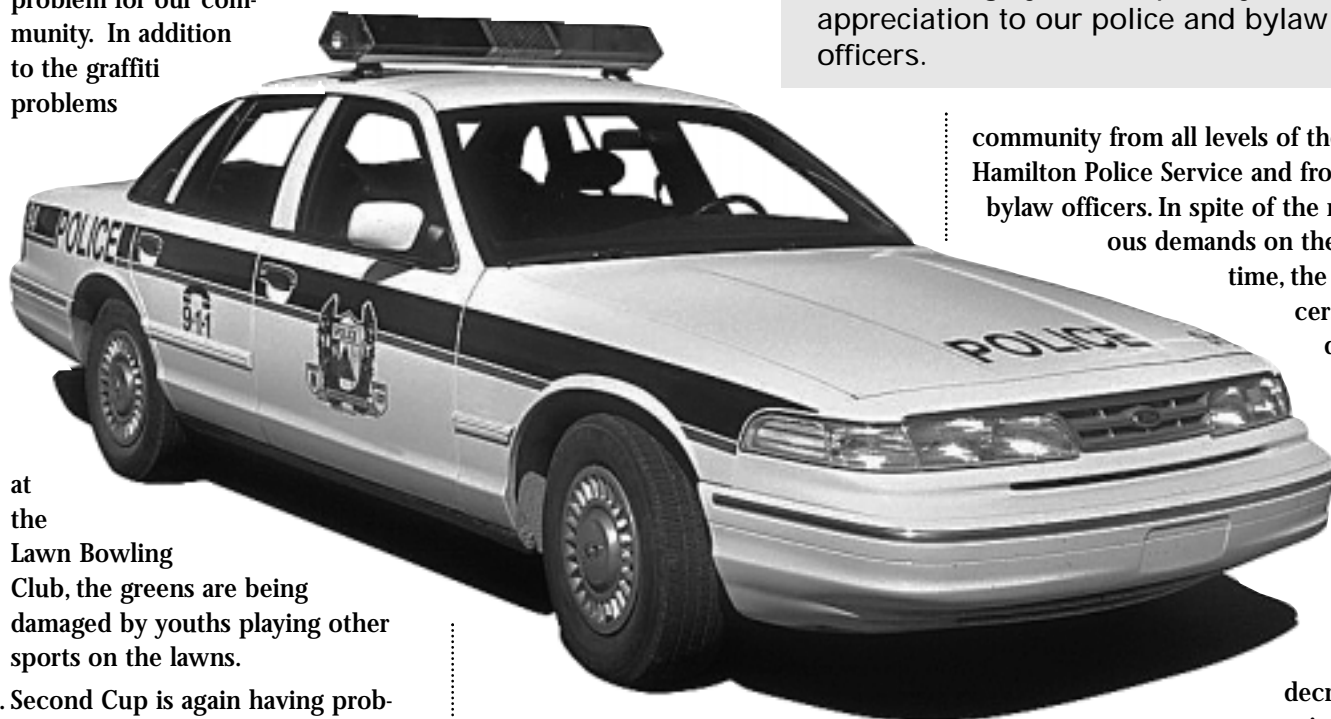
strategies to

decrease community problems.

Communication and education between our community members and police and bylaw officers are crime-prevention measures that help to reduce problems in our neighbourhoods.

VanderPol attended a planning meeting at McMaster in April.

Reporting problems to the AWWCA: After you have reported to the police, please e-mail me at: betjimb@interlynx.net or call me at



CITY HALL NEWS

The AWWCA Executive Meets with Our Councillor

TOM BRYNER

On January 30, shortly after the executive met with Mayor Wade, we met with Councillor Marvin Caplan and City Hall staff.

Among the issues discussed was the difficulty the AWWCA has in responding to applications for variances before the Committee of Adjustment. Because the hearings are held during the day when most AWWCA members are working, we cannot attend. In response to our request for evening hearings, Councillor Caplan said this had been discussed by the Transition Board but was not adopted. He said he would be willing to pursue the matter, considering there seemed to be some sentiment in favor on council.

We again expressed our concern about the proposed

Fortino's superstore on Rifle Range Road. This development will increase traffic on an already busy Main Street West and divert traffic to residential areas. We questioned the need for a development of this type at all. There are three full-service grocery stores nearby, and the proposed superstore will hurt small businesses on Main Street West, in Westdale, and in Dundas. Councillor Caplan said he would be willing to facilitate a meeting of the



A Fortino's superstore.

AWWCA, representatives from Loblaws, and city staff to discuss our concerns.

The AWWCA agreed that we would like to continue to be represented on MATRIC (McMaster University Area Neighbourhood Task Force Report Implementation Committee), which has now evolved into the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan Executive Committee and Team (ASPECT). However, there was some disagreement on the role of the AWWCA's representative on the committee. Councillor Caplan wanted to see our representative take a broad approach to the issues, while

we think that our representative must be responsive to community issues.

The executive agreed that the AWWCA would participate in discussions on community policing and bylaw enforcement and in talks with the McMaster Student Union, landlords, and city staff on problems encountered during the beginning and end of the school year.

The AWWCA stated that the problems in our neighbourhoods have been going on too long, that bylaws need to be enforced, and that the

implementation of the secondary plan is necessary to help guide future development.

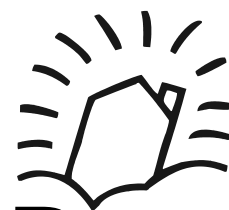
The meeting afforded an opportunity for the AWWCA

executive and our councillor to better understand each other's stance and

approach to issues. It was agreed that communication must be ongoing, information must be shared, and we must try to work together on community issues and common goals.



The problems in our neighbourhoods have been going on too long, bylaws need to be enforced and the implementation of the secondary plan is necessary to help guide future development.



Because we care

Our Councillor Responds

"Months ago, the AWWCA sent me a letter requesting my help on certain issues. Following is my response to all the issues raised in the letter, which was published in the winter and spring 2001 AWWCA newsletters:

McMaster Area Task Force Recommendation Implementation Committee (MATRIC)

All of the recommendations of the Task Force that required response by the city or the former regional government have been addressed. Not all recommendations have been adopted, but there is ongoing work to address them.

Sewer and Water Systems

Council has embarked on an ambitious program of moving to have our system self-sustaining through user fees over the next few years. Correcting the system necessitates universal metering and controlling the combined sewage overflows (CSOs). Council has made water meters mandatory, and they will probably be installed in Ward 1 by the spring of 2003. The community is involved in an environmental assessment for CSOs in the Westdale and Ainslie Wood areas. There is money in the 2003 capital budget to address the issue of sewage entering the environment.

Neighbourhood Plan

Members of MATRIC will form the nucleus of an executive committee that will be helping community and staff formulate a secondary plan for the AWWCA neighbourhoods.

[Editor's note: The plan is "secondary" to the city's official plan and will become part of the official plan.] **Phyllis Tresidder** and **Michael Bordin** will represent the AWWCA on the executive committee. The funding for this work has been approved, and the

group has started its work. The Main West/McMaster Entrance Advisory Committee has been dormant for a while, awaiting the recently completed McMaster campus plan. The new secondary plan for the AWWCA neighbourhoods will incorporate the information from the ongoing assessments, the previous work of MATRIC, and the advice of the community at large.

Bylaws

As bylaws are redone to harmonize the rules for the new city, I am watching to ensure that there is no relaxation of the rules that protect our property values, and that in fact we rise to the most restrictive bylaws available whenever possible. A number of new regulations and new methods of enforcement have been implemented, including an increase in noise bylaw officers from one to four.

Committee of Adjustment

Your association has asked me to be more active on a number of issues at the Committee of Adjustment and in our building department's enforcement of city regulations. While I continue to support the maintenance of low-density residential neighbourhoods, and occasionally write or appear before the committee on the most flagrant cases, I do not believe it is appropriate for me to interfere in the day-to-day levels of enforcement by our inspectors.

Absentee Landlords

I continue to work at the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and locally on resolving the difficulties of illegal "lodging homes" masquerading as single housekeeping units.

Noise, Trucks, Parking, and Lighting Problems on Our Roadways

I have been discussing with former

Transportation Minister Brad Clark issues around noise, light, and particulate-matter pollution affecting the residents abutting Highway 403. I have asked that a study be undertaken to determine if conditions have worsened. (I believe they have.) We have had several increased "blitzes" of enforcement of trucks outside of the truck routes, and the police continue to offer cooperation on the issue.

Several neighbourhoods have asked for and received more restrictive parking regulations. Should any block's representative wish to explore changing the parking regulations in their area, call my office and we will forward the information necessary to implement a change.

One of the issues on Main Street West that has long been contentious is the intersection at Rifle Range Road. So far a solution has not been found, but recent changes in ownership of land in the area may lead to some improvement.

Taxes

I am happy to work with residents who question unfair tax increases caused by changes in provincially mandated Actual Value Assessment. I am even happier to announce that the Assessment Review Board has reconsidered their position on local representation, and will again have local people work with members of council and the community. I lobbied the current chair of the board at the Regions Conference of the AMO, where I represented Hamilton last fall. I believe that my efforts had some influence on this welcome decision.

Other Issues

Space does not permit a discussion of several other issues that have been raised by the executive and members of the AWWCA, but you can contact me about any issue at City Hall, Hamilton L8P 4Y5, at 905-546-2416, or at mcaplan@city.hamilton.ca.

CSO Environmental Assessment Begins in Ward 1

KENNETH SHERMAN

Notice any new signs up in the neighbourhood lately? If you take a hard look you might find four. They read: "Warning . . . Combined Storm/ Sanitary Sewer Outfall . . . This water may be contaminated . . . Do not play in this immediate area . . . Keep away . . . City of Hamilton."

No, this is not a warning about a beach closing! But it is a warning to us, and our children. The city has placed signs like these at all 23 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) across the Hamilton waterfront. They include three in the AWWCA neighbourhood: at the corner of Royal and Stroud, in the ravine off Sterling by Forsythe, and at West Park and Ewen behind the Cootes Drive parking lot.

In the lower City of Hamilton,

combined sewer system was designed so that in a heavy rain, a combination of wastewater and stormwater in the system is allowed to overflow into our waterways rather than back up into our basements. This combination of untreated raw sewage and stormwater drains directly from all Ward 1 CSOs into Cootes Paradise. Children play in these creeks and dogs drink from them. Currently, some treatment in Ward 1 is provided by the Main/King CSO tank before it discharges water.



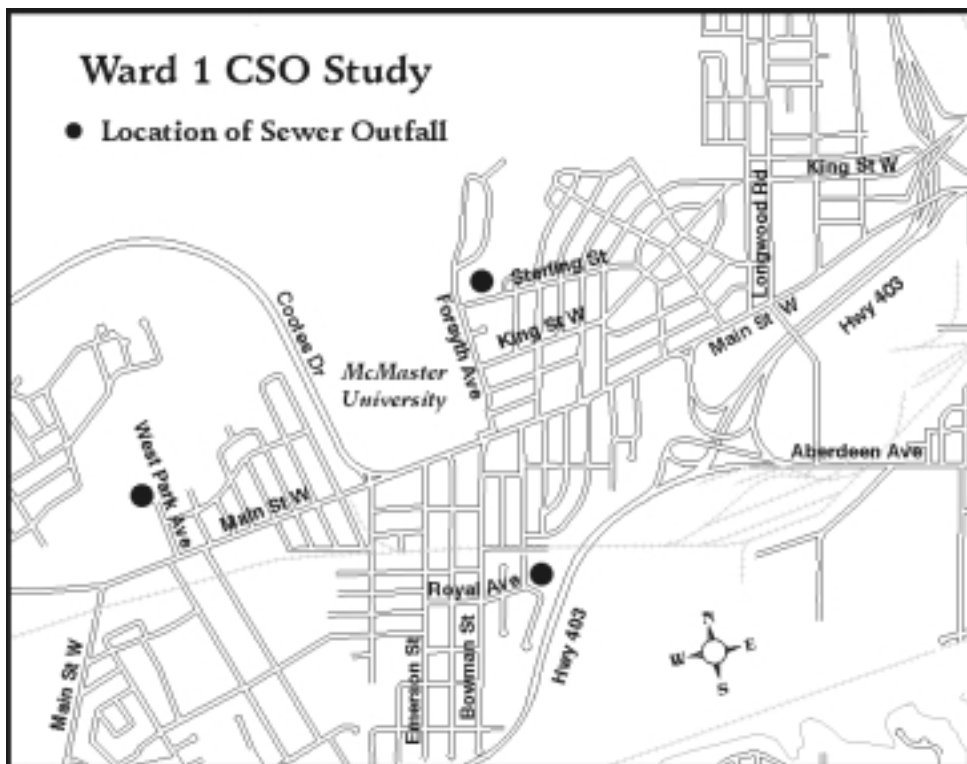
hectares. On average, it has 26 overflows a year of about 139,000 cubic metres.

The CSO at Sterling and Forsyth reaches Cootes Paradise through Forsyth Creek in the ravine by the The Hamilton Aviary. This CSO drains about 129 hectares. On average, it has 30 overflows a year, totalling about 52,000 cubic metres.

The CSO at West Park/Main/Ewen reaches Cootes Paradise through Coldwater/Spencer Creek. This CSO drains about 65 hectares. On average, it has 44 overflows a year, totalling about 72,000 cubic metres.

A year and a half ago, the AWWCA called upon the new city to conduct an environmental assessment of the overflows at the Sterling/Forsyth CSO following several complaints from neighbours. The request gathered steam as a result of two community meetings sponsored by the AWWCA environmental committee. The community has cried out that something has to be done.

At the second of these meetings **Councillor Marvin Caplan** announced that the city was prepared to do an environmental assessment, not only of



stormwater runoff and sewage are carried together in the same pipes to the wastewater treatment plants. The com-

Water from the CSOs at Royal/Stroud and Main/King reaches Cootes Paradise through Chedoke Creek. The Royal/Stroud CSO drains about 444

the Sterling/Forsyth CSO, but of all the others in Ward 1. He noted that the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan identified CSOs as a significant source of pollutants that impair use of the bay, and as a first priority the city effort would begin in the most ecosen- sitive part of the bay – Cootes Paradise.

The environmental process to find solutions for Ainslie Wood/Westdale has begun. The city endorsed the establishment of a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) made up of volunteer participants from Ward 1. Members include **Larry Belbeck, Barb Bloemhof, Dan Levy, Frank Palin, Joanna Ranieri, Ken Sherman, Arun Verma, and Roland Wieler.**

The CAC held its first public meeting



The Royal/Stroud CSO averages 26 overflows a year of about 139,000 cubic metres.



The CSO at Sterling and Forsyth has on average 30 overflows a year, totalling about 52,000 cubic metres.

March 21, and 75 residents of the area attended to learn about the issues. Several days later, 20 residents toured the area to get a firsthand look at the “outfalls” (the flow from the CSOs). They also visited the interior of the 75,000-cubic-metre Main/King storage tank just south of the King Street West overpass on the west side of Highway 403 to learn how it works.

The intent of the community meet- ing was to describe the problem and ask for input. At least two other public meetings are to follow over the next six months. At the next meeting in late

July, the CAC will present alternative solutions and identify the preferred solution(s). At the fall meeting alterna- tive designs for the preferred solu- tion(s) will be presented. All water- quality initiatives are funded 90 per cent by the wastewater budget and 10 per cent by the storm-sewer budget.

A big “thank you” to the ten residents who joined together on May 18 to clean up the Royal/Stroud regenera- tion area around the CSO outfall and rail tracks.

If you want to keep current with CSO meetings and proceedings, please call me at 905-524-2898 or e-mail me at k_e_sherman@yahoo.ca.



The CSO at West Park/Main/Ewen averages 44 overflows a year, totalling about 72,000 cubic metres.

Committee of Adjustment

PHYLLIS TRESIDDER

In early December last year we e-mailed AWWCA members about an application to the Committee of Adjustment of the City Council by Vector (Main West) Limited for permission to erect a two-sided, third-party (i.e., not concerned with Vector's own business) billboard roof sign at 1685 Main Street West (in the Main West Plaza opposite CNIB). Such signs are not permitted in the district. The public hearing was held December 5, 2001. The AWWCA executive opposed the variance and it was denied. (See the winter 2002 newsletter.)

Shortly after that denial, the same company, Vector, applied for another variance for a third-party billboard at the same location. This one was to be 49 per cent larger than the maximum permitted by law (37.16 square metres for each of two faces instead of the maximum permitted of 25 square metres per face).

The public hearing took place February 6. My husband, **Warren Tresidder** and I attended the Committee of Adjustment hearing on behalf of the AWWCA. Councillor Marvin Caplan's assistant, **Dale Brown**, also attended the hearing and advised the Tresidders that city planning staff recommended denial of the application.

The committee chair reported that all 11 letters received had been read by the committee and the applicant. I pre-

sented the AWWCA's letter of objection, signed by vice-president **Gabrielle DiFrancesco**, and it was read to all those attending the hearing. Vector's representative took issue with the letters.

Vector's representative complained that the company would be denied revenue of \$12,000 annually, which they were counting on to offset what he called the very high taxes they pay to the city. His second point was that there was already a high level of visual obstruction in the area, so it didn't matter if there was more, even though Vector's sign would be much bigger than any of the others.

The AWWCA's objection on behalf of its members was questioned by Vector's representative on the grounds they don't live immediately adjacent to the proposed billboard site so aren't

community and it's our space. In opposing this application, we are simply being consistent. The AWWCA actively objected to the illegal MAC-TRON sign at McMaster [see the summer 2000 AWWCA newsletter], and when they had to get rid of the third-party advertising, McMaster lost millions of dollars of revenue. And they are a nonprofit corporate entity. The issue of signs is taken seriously by the AWWCA, as they are obtrusive by nature and designed to be such. With regard to the issue of direct impact, we all move through this space and regard it as one of the major entrances to our neighbourhoods. We are actually hoping that with our secondary-plan process we can take an approach similar to what McMaster is taking in its master plan and target the major entrances to the neighbourhoods for amenity upgrades. And, frankly, we do not need yet another sign in our community."

The application was then denied on a four-to-two vote on the grounds that the variance asked for was not minor, was undesirable for the appropriate development of the land and building, and was inconsistent with the general intent and purpose of the bylaw and the official plan regarding the intensity of use of the land. In summary, the committee was of the opinion that the development would not be appropriate for the site.

Editor's Note: We are grateful to all those members who actively opposed this potential eyesore, to Phyllis and Warren for attending and speaking against the application, and to Councillor Caplan for sending a letter of opposition and being represented at the hearing by Dale Brown. If you are willing and able to devote some time to opposing such applications, please contact the AWWCA.



directly affected.

As chair of the AWWCA's planning sub-committee, I responded on behalf of the AWWCA. "The implication was that the site is like any other major urban commercial strip and is close to the Hydro right-of-way so it doesn't matter. We don't want it to be like any other urban commercial strip; it's our

members' CORNER

JANET WOODWARD

AWWCA Members Participate in Focus Group

On February 12, the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) conducted a focus group in our community to discuss harbour-related issues of importance to us. BARC is a confederation of community stakeholders devoted to revitalizing Hamilton Harbour and its watershed.

The AWWCA assisted BARC by contacting members to find out if any wanted to participate. Those who participated included **Jason Avery, Murray Babb, Tom Bryner, Bob Edmonds, Ken Sherman, Karen Snell** and **John Thomson**; the focus group leader said there was lots of good discussion.

In a letter dated February 19, **Marilyn Baxter**, manager of BARC, thanked us for our assistance: "Opinions and comments from Westdale residents will help BARC in its efforts to become more effective in encouraging the cleanup of Hamilton Harbour and Cootes Paradise marsh."

Our Newsletter is Appreciated

*"An effective newsletter informs, raises awareness and, finally, stirs the reader to practical action and participation. Congratulations to the staff of this excellent issue – **Bob Edmonds, Michelle Edmonds, Carolyn Kinsley, Malcolm Horsnell** and **Janet Woodward** – for their outstanding achievement in the winter 2002 edition of the AWWCA Neighbourhood News & Views.*

I found this newsletter bright, useful, readable, informative, and attractive in its layout and design. A salute to all the contributors. I send my

compliments on this impressive issue. Let us hope that well-informed readers respond and become involved members."

Bob Savelli, AWWCA area representative for Ainslie Wood West

*"I would like to convey some words of praise to **Eldon Y. Harris** for his article "Not One Cent" in the winter newsletter. His article reflects the quiet desperation we homeowners feel at seeing our lovely neighbourhoods destroyed year after year. I can remember the time when all of these houses were well-kept, attractive family homes. Thanks to **Eldon** for highlighting this issue."*

Betty Bechtel, AWWCA police liaison

"Congratulations on the winter newsletter and the new momentum of the association, particularly new executive members and officers. It's great!"

Ron Whyte

(Editor's note: The Whyte family is relocating east of Toronto due to job changes, and we will miss them. Ron was a founding member of the AWWCA and was instrumental in forming and revising the AWWCA's constitution and bylaws. Ron served on the McMaster University Area Neighbourhoods Task Force from its inception in 1997 to June 2000.)

An Informal Get-Together with Student Leaders

In early April **Betty** and **Jim Bechtel** enjoyed having to dinner **Kate MacDonald**, chair of the McMaster Student Union community relations committee, and **Evan Mackintosh**, MSU president-elect. Betty observed that these are committed student leaders and there were useful discussions about mutual neighbourhood issues. Evan invites neighbours to write articles for the MSU *Silhouette* and said that students would like to write articles for our newsletter. We hope that this dialogue will continue.

Bylaw Review

As noted in the president's report in the winter newsletter, a committee is working on revisions to the AWWCA's bylaws, to be presented at our September annual general meeting. Please contact the AWWCA at 905-526-9101 if you would like to make recommendations to the committee.

Membership Report

The AWWCA is now reporting only fully paid-up members in our membership report. As of April 30, we have 401 members in good standing. There are an additional 84 on our list whose membership is due for renewal. If you received a renewal form with your newsletter and you are still overdue, please renew now, to ensure continued receipt of your newsletter.

Keeping in Touch by E-mail

Please call **905-526-9101** with your e-mail address if you want to receive community information between newsletters.

Getting the Word Out

Both the winter and autumn 2001 newsletters were delivered with a covering letter to the mayor and all 15 councillors, and we will be distributing newsletters to them in the future. In addition, newsletters are distributed to a number of key people in the police department, senior administrators at McMaster University, the McMaster Students Union, the McMaster Faculty Association, and interested members of the press.

New Terminology

Now that we're incorporated, your executive is a board of directors, so you will see us referred to as board members.

Leadership Changes

Karen Snell has resigned as member-at-large, and **Phyllis Tresidder** was appointed to fill a vacancy until the next elections.

Why the AWWCA Is a Resident Homeowners' Association

BETTY BECHTEL and
JANET WOODWARD

The purpose of this article is to clarify why the AWWCA is committed to remaining an organization of resident homeowners. From time to time, people unfamiliar with our history and current problems ask questions about this.

Background

(Background history from McMaster University Area Neighbourhoods Task Force Recommendations, April 1999)

In the early 1920s Westdale was established as Canada's first planned residential community. In 1930 McMaster University relocated to Hamilton, and residential communities were later developed in Ainslie Wood.

The expansion of McMaster over the decades has put a strain on the residential community, as absentee landlords, taking advantage of the lack of student residences, have bought hundreds of residential homes and turned them into businesses to house students.

In the spring and summer of 1997, a series of meetings including students, landlords, permanent residents, and university officials was held to discuss the community's concerns. The result was a Community Manifesto documenting areas of concern, which was presented to the Planning and Development Committee of the City of Hamilton in October 1997. Subsequently, on October 28, 1997, Hamilton City Council created the McMaster University Area Neighbourhoods Task Force "for the purpose of reporting back to the Planning and Development Committee with recommendations to address the concerns of the McMaster University Area Neighbourhood."

The task force included permanent residents of the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods, representatives of McMaster University and its student union, representatives of the

city's legal, building, and planning departments, and Ward 1 aldermen. After a year of meetings, some task-force members (Irwin Feuerstein, Rick Grigg, and Ron Whyte) thought that resident homeowners needed an organization of their own to address their unique concerns. The AWWCA was initiated by **Linda Grigg** and **Joy James**, and a steering committee including **Betty** and **Jim Bechtel**, **Irwin Feuerstein**, **Linda** and **Rick Grigg**, **Joy James**, **Phyllis Tresidder**, **Ron Whyte**, and **Janet Woodward** was formed in August 1998. The first community general meeting was held in September 1998 in Dalewood School's auditorium, chaired by Joy James.

We believe that the AWWCA has grown in strength because it has stayed focused on the issues members have stated are important to them. Members are invited to list their concerns and suggested solutions when they fill out the membership form; our data base includes 330 comments. Members' two most pressing concerns are related:

1. McMaster University's lack of accommodation for its students.
2. Problems created by irresponsible absentee landlords, who tolerate noise, lawbreaking behaviour, and parking and property-standards violations, all of which require extra policing, bylaw enforcement, and inspections by the fire department.

We live next to an elephant, an ever-expanding university that does not plan for housing the thousands it invites to its door every fall and, to a lesser extent, every spring. McMaster has imposed an overload on the AWWCA community. What other organization brings thousands to its doors with so little planning for accommodation?

Resident Homeowners' Ongoing Problems

1. McMaster's enrolment has been

increasing rapidly for approximately two decades. On-campus residential accommodation has not kept up with the housing needs of the increasing student population. The surrounding neighbourhoods have taken the brunt of this expansion, with many single-family houses being turned into illegal, unsafe, and expensive rooming houses. Students need safe, affordable, and legal accommodation, both on and off campus. Resident homeowners have volunteered considerable time communicating with McMaster and with the city about the problem, but there are still no plans to ease the crisis situation in our community.

2. Each September and May, thousands of short-term student residents move into our neighbourhoods. This often has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of resident homeowners.
3. Declining property standards have become a major problem for resident homeowners. Some of our neighbourhoods have taken on a slumlike appearance. Resident homeowners spend considerable time contacting City Hall about these problems.
4. Health problems are an increasing concern, with poorly kept properties attracting rodents.
5. Rental houses may not meet fire safety codes, presenting a fire hazard for tenants.
6. The number of families with young children in the neighbourhoods has declined. This has changed the family nature of the areas and has affected enrolment in the public schools.
7. The AWWCA executive spends many hours preparing for and attending meetings at City Hall with staff and councillors (the main agenda item for the executive's meeting on January 18 this year with Mayor Wade was student housing); meet-

ings with senior administrators at McMaster; meetings in the community concerning issues of overdensity and illegal additions to houses; and attending Ontario Municipal Board hearings.

Why We Believe Renters and Absentee Landlords Are Not Compatible with a Resident Homeowners' Group

1. Absentee landlords are in the business of making money. Several absentee landlords own 10 to 20 or more boarding houses in the AWWCA area. They have changed residential neighbourhoods into business zones, violating the intent of the zoning regulations. AWWCA members are committed to preserving the residential integrity of the community.
2. McMaster endorses absentee landlords by listing their properties in the Off-Campus Housing Office (OCHO) even if they are illegal rooming houses or do not comply with Hamilton's bylaws. The AWWCA is trying to uphold the laws and zoning regulations. A few members want the AWWCA to admit absentee landlords. This would open the door to those who are operating illegally and whose interests are not compatible with ours. In March 2000 the AWWCA presented McMaster's Board of Governors with a petition, signed by well over 400 area residents, appealing for more student residences. Such a petition would not be supported by absentee landlords. Landlords who are living in their own homes in the AWWCA community are eligible for membership, and some are AWWCA members. We have no problem with resident homeowners renting out part of the house they live in; in fact we would like to see more of them do so to ease the housing crunch caused by the "double cohort" of students entering university as grade 13 is phased out.
3. In the fall of 1998 the AWWCA peti-

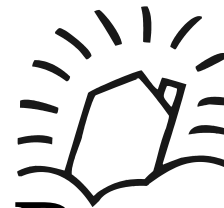
tioned City Council for reduced property taxes. Yet at the same time we want to maintain property standards and keep down noise. Enforcing the relevant bylaws is expensive because of irresponsible absentee landlords. Resident homeowners would like to see them reduced in number, and the best way to achieve that is to make illegal rooming houses unprofitable by providing more residences.

Suggestions for Going Forward

1. The present rental accommodation in our AWWCA community has not been part of any planned redevelopment or monitored infill housing. It needs to be a top priority of the secondary plan now in process.
2. Our community has dozens of special-interest groups, all of which have restrictions on membership, just as the AWWCA does. We counted more than 20 such groups without any effort. A separate umbrella group could be formed, inviting representatives from all groups.
3. Some renters already have formal organizations of their own. For example, students have the McMaster Area Student Support Team (MASST) and the McMaster Society for Off-Campus Housing (SOCS).
4. We can show apartment dwellers or other groups how to get organized, if they are prepared to do the organizational and maintenance work. In the past, we have helped tenants at Camelot Towers with their problems.

In summary, the AWWCA was formed to improve conditions for resident homeowners, and we believe our members' concerns are our first priority. Someone recently observed that we do certain things very well and successfully. Let's not take on more that we are able, or we risk losing the focus of our association.

If you'd like to express your opinion on this subject, please contact the AWWCA.



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. 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:

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Spring 2002



*"Building community
block by block"*

The Way We Were

The Sunken Gardens

LOREEN JEROME

In 1927 the City of Hamilton secured 400 acres of exceptional Westdale land, consisting of ravine lands and adjacent water lots in Cootes Paradise, in lieu of debts owed by the land-development company McKittrick Properties. The land was then passed on to Hamilton's Board of Parks Management. A 50-acre site situated near this land was a strong incentive in attracting McMaster University to Hamilton from Toronto in 1930. The Board of Parks Management offered to use some of their newly acquired land to create a public park to enhance the northwest entrance to the city and McMaster University.

Under the direction of Thomas McQuesten, a member of the Board of Parks Management and founder of the Royal Botanical Gardens, the famous "sunken gardens" were created. Massive evergreens surrounded the front of the campus and the sunken gardens. The gardens at the entrance to McMaster University were large and formal. The central feature was a reflecting pool with lily pads and large goldfish. There were concrete shelters, steps with balustrades, and formal plantings of flowers throughout. Numerous benches allowed visitors to view the reflecting pool and surround-

“Massive evergreens surrounded the front of the campus and the sunken gardens.”

ing beauty. People strolled through the gardens at a leisurely pace, admiring the flowers and taking photographs for future memories. It was a favourite place for wedding photos—my hus-



Photo credit: John Morris, Courtesy of Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library

band and I had our wedding pictures taken there 36 years ago this July.

In the early 1960s McMaster University bought approximately 98 acres of the park and other nearby property from the Royal Botanical Gardens to develop the east side of the campus. Major controversy arose over the planned blocking of King Street West, the demolition of homes, and the elimination of the sunken gardens to make way for building the McMaster University Health Sciences Centre. In the end, city council voted for the project.

Do you have any fond memories of

the sunken gardens? Did you ever take a stroll or attend a function there? If so, please call me at 905-525-7386. We would love to hear from you.

Sources for this article include the RBG newsletter *Pappus*, *The Hamilton Spectator*, May 12, 1927, and Cultural Landmarks of Hamilton-Wentworth's website:

<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/wentworth>

Mailing Label