

# Neighbourhood News & Views

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AINSLIE WOOD / WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION  
Autumn 2004  
OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.

*"Building community  
block by block"*



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## Our Police Liaison is Woman of the Year

JANET WOODWARD

**Betty Bechtel** describes her experience the evening of May 20 as akin to having root-canal surgery. That evening, at the Hamilton Convention Centre, the Hamilton Status of Women Committee named her Hamilton's Woman of the Year in community service for her work in reducing problems in our community. So, you ask, why was it so painful for Betty? Because Betty dislikes being "in the limelight" and feels there are so many people who do so much for the community. But she rose to the occasion, surrounded and supported by family and friends who cheered her on, showering her with flowers and accolades.

Following is an excerpt from Betty's acceptance speech:

*I am deeply moved by this special honour and by all of the people who supported my nomination. I feel so many people share in this honour. First, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Status of Women Committee for organizing tonight's celebration of women's gifts, and to the many nominees for their gifts to our city. We are fortunate to live in this part of the world where we can have such a celebration.*

*I work with some amazing people: First are the members of the board of the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association of Resident Homeowners Inc. These are remarkable and talented people who have donated years of their lives and their expertise to helping our community. They are a joy to know. I am very grateful for **Janet Woodward's** comprehensive work in having me nominated. Janet is our hard-working membership secretary and co-ordinating editor of our award-winning newsletter. **Loreen Jerome**, our equally hard-working treasurer, is with us tonight, as well as our former president, **Phyllis Tresidder**.*

*Hamilton has Canada's first community-based policing in a university neigh-*

*bourhood, and it is being used as a model for other areas. There is remarkable collaboration among police, bylaw offi-*

*cers, our ward councillor, city officials, community members, the Westdale Business Improvement Area, and McMaster students, administration, and security staff. People in similar communities see us as a role model.*

*Because I am our association's police liaison, my husband, Jim, and I have had the pleasure of meeting many outstanding police and bylaw officers. I continue to be amazed at their ongoing willingness to help, to communicate, to educate, and their resourcefulness in initiating new methods of handling problems. Because we have so many police cruisers in front of our home, Jim is glad we do not have curious neighbours*

*Last, but definitely not least, I wish to thank Jim and the rest of my family for their interest and encouragement. Jim enjoys attending various events and meeting and entertaining community members, police, and students as much as I do. Thank you to all who have helped to make Hamilton a better place to live.*

Letters of support for Betty's nomination were not hard to obtain. Those who wrote volunteered readily and enthusiastically, including former mayor **Bob Morrow**; McMaster president **Dr. Peter George**; several from the police department, including **Police Superintendent Mike Shea**, **Sergeant Al Smethurst**, and **Police Constable Jack Vander Pol**; co-chair of the Westdale BIA **Shelagh Snider**; and many other community members.

Congratulations Betty!



Betty Bechtel with flowers from the AWWCA and the Status of Women Committee.  
Photo: Judi Moffat

# community NEWS



The Greenspace.

Photo: Janet Woodward

## The OMB: We Won One!

PHYLLIS TRESIDDER

Sometimes a significant win is a long time in the making—1998 to 2004 in this case. It took five hearings before the Ontario Municipal Board, several mediation sessions, countless community meetings, a day of street demonstrations, four legal-sized file boxes of quarterly reports to the OMB, pages and pages and pages of carefully prepared case argument and testimony, close to 100 filed exhibits, and, not least, a passionate, tenacious, and articulate community to take McMaster University's decision regarding its land-use planning before the OMB.

The university wanted to sever and sell the Main Street West greenspace between Dalewood Avenue and Forsyth Avenue South. The sale of the severed lands would have created oversized lots on Traymore Avenue—lots that could have supported monster-sized houses.

In 1998, Hamilton's Committee of Adjustment, despite considerable neighbourhood objection, supported the university's application. To many of us in the neighbourhood, this constituted yet another example of ad hoc and incremental land-use change that would have had a profoundly negative impact on the surrounding community. As well, it was proceeding in the absence of any cohesive or comprehensive long-term planning by either the

university or the municipality. At the time, Westdale had no neighbourhood plan.

Because of this, a small neighbourhood group decided to appeal the decision to the OMB. (This appeal began before the AWWCA's inception.) The net benefits of that OMB appeal by the neighbourhood group have been substantial. But what did we really gain?

Apart from the fact that, for now, that scrappy bit of green space is still green, supports a few trees, and provides an important spatial respite from the roaring torrent of traffic on Main Street West, our neighbourhoods have achieved a full secondary-plan process, and McMaster has developed its master plan (neither existed before). In addition, the appeal process identified the need for a credible and organized community association and thus contributed directly to the birth of the AWWCA.

Coincidentally, a great many of us have learned a tremendous amount about the municipal planning process. **J. R. Mills**, the OMB chair for this case, gave a wise, if prolonged, decision, and this community can be proud of its challenge to unplanned development on the part of the university. It would be appropriate to say we won more than we could have dared to dream.

To all who participated and supported our citizens' appeal, congratulations and thank you.

*Phyllis was AWWCA president from 1998 to 2001 and Woman of the Year for community service 2000.*

## Congratulations Michelle and Bob!

JANET WOODWARD

Congratulations to **Michelle** and **Bob Edmonds** of Electra Communications, who received an award of merit for *Neighbourhood News & Views* for the period winter 2002 to autumn 2003. Certificates of recognition were awarded to **Carolyn Kinsley**, copy editor, **Malcolm Horsnell**, editorial consultant, and **Janet Woodward**, newsletter co-ordinator.

In the fall of 2001 Michelle and Bob volunteered to provide design and layout of our newsletter. The first issue they produced was spring 2002, when the name *Neighbourhood News & Views* was introduced. Last spring, they decided to enter the newsletters into a competition.

The award was presented April 1 at the Canadian Public Relations Society Pinnacle Awards ceremony in Jordan, Ontario. *Neighbourhood News & Views* was entered in the newsletter category, described as "Typically, though not exclusively, 8.5 x 11 format, low-cost, text-oriented publications for internal and/or external audiences." In contrast to *Neighbourhood News & Views*, most other submissions were fully funded, four-colour publications printed on high-quality paper.

An independent panel of judges from various cities evaluated submissions according to a national grading system. The program notes for the awards ceremony stated: "Judges were looking for



L to R: Malcolm Horsnell, Janet Woodward, and Michelle and Bob Edmonds.

specific factors and criteria as well as adherence to sound communication planning methods. An Award of Merit will go to the second highest scoring submission above 75 per cent. If no entry scores 75 per cent or above in a category, no award will be given [our score was more than 85 per cent]. Winning entries

showed originality, met clearly stated objectives, and showed measurable results. The judges looked for careful planning and documentation of an entry's success at meeting stated objectives. Judges also considered how well the newsletter was conceived, created and executed."

In May, both *The Hamilton Spectator* and the *Dundas Star News* (which used the headline "Little newsletter that could") published stories about the award accompanied by a picture of Michelle and Bob with the award.

Thank you, Michelle and Bob, for designing and producing a newsletter we can be proud of and for volunteering your time and expertise for the improvement of our community.

# Organization for Hamilton Neighbourhood Groups Is Formed



L to R: Walter Squazzin, Delta West; Russell Elman, Durand; Cathy Gazzola, Durand; Jan Lucas, Ancaster; Loreen Jerome (standing), AWWCA; Dale Brown, Kirkendale; Bill Hustie (behind Dale), North End Neighbourhood Association (NENA); James Novak, Harbour West; Bill Barnard (standing), facilitator; Mike Poweroznyk, NENA; Al McKinnon and Julie Brezden, Red Hill; Janice Brown, Durand; Diane Lethbridge and Deborah McLean, St. Clair Neighbourhood Association. Not in photo: Walter Novak, Harbour West; Ann Buckle, NENA; Rob Payne, AWWCA.

LOREEN JEROME

The organization of neighbourhood groups in the City of Hamilton has finally become a reality. This initiative began late last fall, and the steering committee's first meeting was in January. The structure of the organization was finalized at the sixth meeting on April 24.

The new organization will be known as the **Federation of Hamilton Neighbourhood Associations**. The first general meeting was held at the Central Memorial Recreation Centre on May 25 at 7 p.m. **James Novak** was the chairperson. A motion by **Dale Brown** to accept the constitution was seconded by **Walter Squazzin**. The constitution was accepted by a unanimous vote.

The first executive meeting will be held Sept. 9. The agenda will consist of the election of officers and action plans. The federation requires a minimum of four officers up to a maximum of 10. Executive meetings will be held September, November, February, and May of each year. Stay tuned for updates.

## Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods – It's FUN

### *A Year in Review – Highlights of the Annual General Meeting*

JANICE BROWN

The annual general meeting for the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods Inc. took place in Toronto on May 1. Following is a brief overview of the day's highlights:

President **Gloria McGinn-McTeer** reported this past year was one of consolidation, with emphasis on better communication with the membership. To that end, newsletters and our website, [www.urbanneighbourhoods.ca](http://www.urbanneighbourhoods.ca), were launched.

Rather than taking on too many issues, FUN has concentrated on a few that members agreed were most critical. We studied and produced a position paper on postsecondary-student-housing issues and sent a representative to the Town and Gown Symposium in Waterloo. We sent letters to the government of Ontario on development

charges for new construction, on school closures, on reform of the Ontario Municipal Board, and on the reinstatement of free on-line access to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation's data base. Our president and our secretary, **Susan Bentley**, met with their local MPP in London to urge her to arrange a meeting with Attorney General **Michael Bryant** and Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister **John Gerretsen** to push for OMB reform and for support over the student-housing issue. And, finally, FUN produced a paper on Municipal Election Act reforms.

FUN also provided support and encouragement for the development of two new umbrella groups in Hamilton and Guelph. FUN currently represents 45 community associations representing 135,000 citizens. The membership includes umbrella groups in Hamilton (see previous article), Guelph, London, and Ottawa, as well as stand-alone associations.

We were delighted to have **Dr. Barry Wellar**, our special policy advisor from the

University of Ottawa, present. He discussed OMB reform and suggested strategies to continue moving forward on this issue.

Our last guest was **Frank Clarke**, senior constituency assistant from the office of Bill Graham, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs and MP for Toronto Centre—Rosedale. Mr. Clarke fielded questions about gasoline-tax revenues. He also discussed the idea of tri-level municipal, provincial, and federal agreements as an alternative to broader government levels working in concert.

Constitutional amendments were made and accepted. The slate of officers was elected for the upcoming year: president, **Gloria McGinn-McTeer**; vice-president, **Ernie Dyck**; treasurer, **Archie Campbell**; secretary, **Susan Bentley**; membership co-ordinator, **Janice Brown**; and members-at-large, **John Caron**, **Liz Millar**, **Bill Phillips**, and **Madelyn Webb**.

FUN has much to be proud of, and we look forward to growing our organization and continuing to help and support community groups across the province.

# AROUND the NEIGHBOURHOOD

## Speedwatch

Residents who are concerned about speeding can request that Speedwatch be set up on their street for a limited time. Speedwatch shows drivers how fast they are going; if they are in serious violation of the speed limit, they receive a letter of caution from the police. The Speedwatch program also helps police decide where enforcement units should be sent. Contact **P.C. Scott Moreton** at the Community Policing Centre, 905-540-6664, or [smoreton@hamiltonpolice.on.ca](mailto:smoreton@hamiltonpolice.on.ca).

## The AWWCA Supports Olympian in Our Neighbourhood

**Nada Pasko**, organizer of the "Sue Palmer-Komar 2004 Olympic Fundraiser," wishes to send a big thank you to the AWWCA, for our participation this summer. When Nada, a Friend of the AWWCA, approached board members for assistance, the AWWCA helped to get the word out, and local residents and businesses stepped up to lend a hand to our neighbourhood Olympian cyclist and AWWCA member, **Sue Palmer-Komar**, on her journey to Athens. All contributions, big and small, were tremendously appreciated.

Acceptance of monetary donations will be ongoing throughout the fall, as Sue will be returning from Athens with the debts from her cycling expenses. In addition, our high-performance athlete will incur more expenses in the fall, when she represents Canada (and Ainslie Wood/Westdale) at the Road Cycling World Championships in Verona, Italy. You may send your contribution to Sue at 30 Harold Street, Hamilton L8S 2R6. Questions? Contact Nada at 905-528-2382 or [nadapasko@sympatico.ca](mailto:nadapasko@sympatico.ca).



Photo courtesy of the Canadian Cycling Association, [www.canadian-cycling.com](http://www.canadian-cycling.com).

# Dromore and Haddon Neighbours Meet

AWWCA block representative **Kenneth Sherman** organized a meeting of his neighbours on Dromore Crescent and Haddon Avenue North to discuss several issues that have been raised with the City of Hamilton during the secondary planning process. About 70 people, or 15 per cent of the residents of the targeted blocks, attended a public meeting at the Westdale Library in March to discuss street infrastructure, the Sterling Street bikeway, and the "monster house" bylaw.

"A major issue for me is the infrastructure needs of our 70-year old sewer and water system under our streets," Ken said. "Our streets have had several waterline breakdowns in the past few years, and they are badly in need of paving. We would expect the city to improve matters before the next election." During the last election campaign, Ken circulated a petition, signed by 25 families on his block, demanding something be done.

**Gerry Davis**, acting director of Hamilton's public-works department, described his department's 10-year plan to improve infrastructure. He reported: "This year the Westdale neighbourhood sewer system will have a special liner installed in it to prevent leakage." Some of that leakage has caused the serious potholes and depressions on our streets. He said improvements to the water-

lines and street surfaces are not planned for the immediate future. There is only enough money budgeted for them on a emergency basis.

When asked why the city's budget does not have money for improvements, **Councillor Brian McHattie** explained it was a matter of priorities. "Unfortunately, priorities right now are going to road projects like the Red Hill Expressway rather than for our neighbourhood." Ken pressed his case that "when the budget is ready for waterline replacements and street repaving, Dromore and Haddon need to be at the top of the list."

After the discussion on street infrastructure Ken presented the city's plans for marked bikeway lanes on both sides of Sterling from King Street West to the McMaster campus entrance. The plans incorrectly called for parking to be eliminated from the north side of Sterling, as shown in the last AWWCA newsletter, to make room for the dedicated bikeway lane. Parking was ultimately eliminated from the south side. The bikeway was completed by midsummer, making it safer for all users and helping to calm traffic.

Regarding the monster-house bylaw, Ken and Dromore Crescent resident **Ruth Ann Horwood** spoke about variance proceedings that were of much interest to neighbours. Owners of 5 Dromore Crescent had requested a variance to lift their roof to a three-storey level to accommodate two side dormers. Such a request, if granted, would have set a precedent on the block and ruined the streetscape's historical character. The variance was approved by the Committee of Adjustment but was overturned on Ken's appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board. He subpoenaed a city staff person as his expert witness in the matter, since staff was opposed to the expansion.

On Haddon Avenue North, there have been three requests for variances. One resulted in a compromise, one was supported by neighbours and was approved, and a third request is still under consideration.

Ruth Ann said, "I encourage neighbours to take an active interest in what is happening in their neighbourhood and on their block, to challenge requests if necessary, and to work on compromises if possible."

*The above article was submitted by Kenneth Sherman*



The new Sterling Street bikeway.

# The Westdale Children's School

LYNN AITKEN

The Westdale Children's School was formed in 1996 by a group of parents from Westdale and surrounding areas. We chose St. Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church for its central location and easy access to the trails of the Royal Botanical Gardens, as our weekly hike is such an important part of our program.

The founding parents chose to follow the principles of Waldorf education for the kindergarten. Waldorf education began 85 years ago when the philosopher Rudolf Steiner was asked to organize a school for the children of factory workers in Stuttgart, Germany. Waldorf schools are now found all over the world, including many here in Ontario.

Our school provides a nurturing, homelike environment for children three to six years old. We have kindergarten four mornings a week and a parent-and-child program one morning a week. Our balanced approach to early-childhood education supports the children's social, emotional, and intellectual growth.

The difference between Waldorf-based kindergartens and other kindergartens and nursery schools can be seen and felt as soon as you walk through the door. The warm and cozy atmosphere is immediately apparent, along with the soft colours and natural materials. Our program includes storytelling, singing, games, watercolour painting, bread making, wood-working, handwork, and a weekly hike in the woods. Snacks always include cooked grains as well as fresh fruit and vegetables. All our activities are carried out in daily and weekly rhythms. The seasons are celebrated in story, song, and verse as well as through participation in festivals. The children exercise their imaginations in free play—dressing up, building forts, playing with simple toys such as dolls and wooden blocks, all made of natural materials. In almost all weather, every day, the children enjoy outdoor playtime at both the beginning and the end of the program.

Ursula and I have been with the school for several years now. Ursula is an early-childhood educator trained in Germany, and I am one of the founding parents, bringing extensive experience in caring for and teaching children of all ages. Both staff members have attended many training courses specifically for Waldorf kindergarten teachers.

Anyone interested in learning more is welcome to visit the school any weekday between noon and 12:30 p.m. Call 905-529-4678.



Some of the students at the Westdale Children's School; Maia McNaughton, four years old, in foreground.

## Durand Tour of Homes

Durand Tour of Homes, sponsored by the Durand Neighbourhood Association and the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, takes place September 25 from 10 a.m.

to 4 p.m. For tickets call 905-523-4784 or go to [www.durandna.com](http://www.durandna.com). Tickets are also on sale at Bryan Prince Bookseller in Westdale.



Photo courtesy of the Durand Neighbourhood Association, [www.durandna.com](http://www.durandna.com).

## Please Join Us!

EFFIE YORK

West Hamilton seniors and retirees continue to meet on the third Wednesday of each month in Grace Hall, Grace Lutheran Church, 1107 Main St. West, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Meeting dates for the fall season are Sept. 15, Oct. 20, Nov. 17, and Dec. 15.

Some of our programs will include musical presentations, euchre, bridge, board games, and shuffleboard competitions.

If interest warrants, we will offer craft and quilting instruction groups. Please refer to the "Too Good to Miss" column in *The Hamilton Spectator* the Monday preceding our scheduled meeting.

For further information, please call 905-522-6256 or 905-527-5137.

## Westdale Co-op Preschool

MARGARET MORSE

In 2004 Westdale Co-op Preschool, located at 99 North Oval in Westdale, is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Our longstanding reputation in the Westdale/Ainslie Wood area is due, in part, to the importance of a co-operative preschool in the lives of our munchkins and to the community spirit that is derived from families working with other families. Our children make new friends, explore new activities, become familiar with school routines, and become more independent. We parents find the co-operative experience affordable and can actively participate in the governance of the school. We are the only co-operative preschool located in the Westdale/Ainslie Wood area and we serve children aged 2½ to five years. The preschool is now registering for September 2004. For more information, please call us at 905-381-2667 (905-381-COOP).

## Seniors' Stories

Congratulations to AWWCA police liaison **Betty Bechtel** for being chosen an active senior by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. Their Seniors' Month Advisory Committee, made up of representatives from the seniors community and staff members of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, reviews and selects up to 30 stories that best convey the theme of active living in body, mind, and spirit. Betty's story appeared on the Ontario government's website throughout seniors' month—the month of June.

# green NEWS

## Third Annual Westdale Cleanup

DMITRI MALAKHOV

This is the third consecutive year that I report on the annual cleanup of Westdale in this newsletter. From the beginning I have expressed the hope that the project would grow into a big, annual event.

I extend my thanks to **Tina Di Clemente**, **Ken Sherman**, and **Dianne Sicinski**, who helped me with the distribution of flyers. I am grateful to the **Barn in Westdale**, the **Westdale Business Improvement Area** (especially **David Dayler**), and **Mailboxes**



The Westdale cleanup crew.

Photo: Janet Woodward

for their monetary contributions. Finally, thanks to **Janet Woodward** for sending out e-mail reminders and for general guidance. Most important, naturally, are those who gave up two hours of their time to help out on May 1. Careful examination of the picture reveals the number of very young participants. What a wonderful example they set!

We handed out nearly 1,000 flyers, advertised in this newsletter, the AWWCA e-mail

list, and the *Dundas Star News*. About 25 people came to the cleanup, and 20 bags of garbage were collected.

As always, please send your suggestions and comments on how to improve the project and attract more volunteers to me at [malakhdd@mcmaster.ca](mailto:malakhdd@mcmaster.ca). Thank you.

*Dmitri Malakhov is a McMaster University student and an AWWCA member.*

## First Annual Rail-Trail Cleanup

KENNETH SHERMAN

On a cool, wet Saturday morning in May, over 20 volunteers gathered at 9 a.m. to participate in a cleanup of about a half mile of the abandoned railroad corridor from Rifle Range Road to Stroud before the rains wiped them out.

"It is important that our community gets behind an effort to convert this abandoned rail corridor into public use as a multiuse trail," said **Kenneth Sherman**, organizer of the event. "Although nothing ever happens quickly at City Hall we are pleased the city and CP Rail are currently in discussions to make a rail trail happen and help avoid its use as a dumping ground. We do not plan to wait a decade to get this rail trail built."

"I plan to let the city know the level of concern and co-operation the railway is getting from the community," said **Michael Fitzpatrick**, of Canadian Pacific Railway. "Please pass along my thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this happen."



The rail-trail cleanup crew.  
Photo: Kenneth Sherman

Participants included the AWWCA, **St. Mary's High School Environment Club**, **McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations**, and **Ward 1 Councillor Brian McHattie**. If you are interested in being part of the organizing committee for the 2005 cleanup, contact Ken Sherman at 905-524-2898 or [k\\_e\\_sherman@yahoo.ca](mailto:k_e_sherman@yahoo.ca).



Debris collected by the crew. Photo: Kenneth Sherman

## Police Volunteers

The community thanks the officers who volunteered for the spring rail-trail cleanup.



## Vision 2020

The latest Vision 2020 Annual Sustainability Indicators Report and Report Card are available at [www.vision2020.hamilton.ca/about/indicators.asp](http://www.vision2020.hamilton.ca/about/indicators.asp) and at libraries and municipal services centres across Hamilton. To order a copy, contact Linda Harvey in the planning and development department, 905-546-2424, extension 1276, or [liharvey@hamilton.ca](mailto:liharvey@hamilton.ca).

Since 1995, the indicator report has measured social, economic, and environmental factors affecting day-to-day life. It includes sections on "Things You Can Do to Help" and useful references under "Places to Get More Information."

The indicators provide a simple way to keep people informed of the community's progress in working toward Vision 2020, information to guide decision-making and generate debate and action to create a sustainable community, and a way to see whether we are working against ourselves by making decisions in one area that have a negative effect in another area.

You can help improve your community by completing an on-line survey or sending your comments by mail. The survey results are used by the City of Hamilton and community members to analyze the effectiveness of the current indicators.

## Brian McHattie's Campaign Team Wins a McMaster Environmental Recognition Award

MACgreen honoured the work of Brian McHattie's campaign team on April 7 with an award at their third annual Environmental Recognition Night. This is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the McMaster and Hamilton environmental communities by recognizing groups or individuals who have promoted sustainable living, encouraged a reduction in ecological footprints, or educated citizens about environmental issues. For more information about MACgreen contact the director at [green@msu.mcmaster.ca](mailto:green@msu.mcmaster.ca) or see [www.msu.mcmaster.ca/macgreen](http://www.msu.mcmaster.ca/macgreen).

## Who Is Polluting in Our Community?

You can easily find out who is polluting in our community at [www.pollutionwatch.org](http://www.pollutionwatch.org). PollutionWatch is a collaborative project of Environmental Defence Canada, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. It is funded

by the Joyce Foundation of Chicago, the EJLB Foundation, and the Salamander Foundation. The data presented on the site have been compiled by Environment Canada from industry sources, available at [www.ec.gc.ca/npri](http://www.ec.gc.ca/npri).



## CP Arranges Relocation of Railway Ties

DALE BROWN

At least a year ago, **Martin Smith**, from Haddon Avenue South, brought to the attention of the AWWCA that CP Rail stockpiles railway ties on the other side of the railway bridge over Highway 403. He said that, in the warm weather especially, the neighbours are unable to sit outside because of the odour given off by these ties.

On April 21, **Councillor Brian McHattie** and his assistant, **Dale Brown**, along with AWWCA board member **Loreen Jerome**, met with **Paul Thurston**, manager, public affairs and media relations for CPR; **P.C. Michael Fitzpatrick**, CPR Police Service; and **Dennis Tasch**, track-maintenance supervisor, for a tour of the Aberdeen railyard. The issue of the railway ties was discussed, and CP agreed to relocate the ties to the middle of the railyard, away from the homes.



L to R: Paul Thurston, P.C. Michael Fitzpatrick, Dale Brown, Councillor Brian McHattie, and Dennis Tasch.

Photo: Loreen Jerome



Railway ties removed for recycling and moved to new location on CP Rail property. Photo: Loreen Jerome

# green NEWS

## The Westdale Tree Committee

SUSAN WHITESIDE

I grew up in Westdale and am an AWWCA member and block representative. I have been a board member of the Conserver Society of Hamilton and District since 2001 and work as an audiologist at Hamilton Health Sciences. I would like to tell you about the Westdale Tree Committee, a new sub-committee of the AWWCA. We held our first public meeting, entitled Taking Care of Westdale's Trees, on May 4 at the Westdale Library. The speaker, **Paul O'Hara**, is the owner and operator of Blue Oak Native Landscapes. He is a local ecologist, restorationist, and native-plant gardening expert with over 12 years of science and horticultural experience, working with such diverse organizations as the Royal Botanical Gardens, conservation authorities, and local municipalities.

Mr. O'Hara presented a

slide show of trees native to the Westdale area. They include red oak, white oak, black oak, white pine, tulip tree, shagbark hickory, black cherry, balsam poplar, white birch, and serviceberry, among many others. He gave Churchill Park as an example of an area that could be returned to its origins as an oak savannah. By definition, an oak savannah has approximately 30 per cent tree cover, with prairie wildflowers and grasses giving a parklike effect. He discouraged the planting of non-native species such as the Norway maple. The seeds from the Norway maple are easily carried from residential gardens to our ravines and woodlands, where they are

crowding out our native species.

To encourage birds in our gardens, Mr. O'Hara suggested taking down the bird feeder and instead planting a bird thicket with, for example, viburnum and dogwood. The "take home" message at the end of his talk was for all of us to go out and celebrate our local natural heritage. Let's all be a witness to nature.

Following the presentation, the Westdale Tree Committee was introduced. At present it is made up of



L to R: Linda Bryant, Susan Whiteside, Karen Poyner, Bev Blunt, and Mary Louise Piggott standing with the tulip tree planted by Linda last year to replace the dying maple tree in the background. Photo: Mike Kukucska

individuals who worked with Environment Hamilton to develop recommendations from the 2003 Westdale tree inventory.

The Westdale Tree Committee is looking for additional members. Upcoming activities include a display table and fundraising for tree planting at the Westitalia event in September and, later in the fall and winter, designating heritage trees in Westdale. If you would like to join the committee or help out with fundraising or tree planting, please contact **Mary Louise Piggott** at 905-524-2423 (mlpiggott@sympatico.ca).

### *Recommendations for the Westdale community include:*

1. Extending the lifespan of Westdale's large silver maples and white oaks as long as possible through proper maintenance. Planting a variety of large-caliper native trees to eventually replace them.
2. Encouraging residents of Westdale to regularly mulch and water their trees regularly, as well as publicly owned trees near their property during dry conditions. Owners should only remove trees as a last resort, and the lost tree should be replaced within one year.
3. Encouraging the schools of Westdale to plant native trees wherever feasible and to involve the children in planting and caring for trees on school property.
4. Planting Carolinian species, including native red maples and sugar maples.
5. Publicly recognizing and honoring heritage trees.
6. Protecting, and promoting the planting of, rare or endangered tree species, including bur oak, pin oak, red oak, white oak, and butternut.
7. Undertaking a community program to plant native trees in as many of the 125 locations identified by the tree inventory as possible over the next two years.
8. Developing a tree-propagation program in Westdale to collect and plant seeds of heritage and rare trees in Westdale. Original trees that were not planted or trees over 100 years old can be used as seed sources.
9. Educating the public about the value and maintenance of trees, through workshops, lectures, and an annual tree festival.
10. Carrying out tree inventories in other sections of Westdale or nearby neighbourhoods.

### *Recommendations for the municipal government of Hamilton include:*

1. Rapidly replacing all trees lost in Westdale in the past 10 years with native trees, as well as replacing all future losses.
2. Improving tree health through proper maintenance of the more than 40 per cent of city-owned trees that are currently in poor condition. Replacing within one year any trees that are removed.
3. Prohibiting the installation of parking pads on front lawns and limiting the installation of other hard surfacing that reduces the size and number of areas where trees can be planted. Reducing impervious surfaces beneath the dripline of existing trees.
4. Re-establishing an oak savanna habitat in Churchill Park and planting additional trees on other city-owned property.
5. Educating the public, with the Westdale Tree Committee, about the value and maintenance of trees.



## Councillor's Report

BRIAN MCHATTIE

The last couple of times *The Hamilton Spectator* quoted me in one of their stories, they have stopped using the term "rookie councillor," so after 10 months on the job it seems I am now on my way to being a veteran! I would like to update you on several issues that are keeping **Dale Brown**, **Kay Morden**, and me busy in the Chedoke-Cootes—Ward 1 office.

The AWWCA and the city are working together to produce a computerized map depicting student-housing density, and I am working with our planning department to prepare a report on student-housing issues similar to the City of Waterloo's study. I learned that rental apartments at the city-owned building on Hess Street South are now housing over 150 McMaster University students—a good example of municipal non-profit housing being used to assist the community.

We are also working on finalizing the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan. This plan will allow for higher densities on Main Street West across from McMaster, providing a good opportunity to construct student housing in proximity to the university. We are investigating the idea of a planning workshop to facilitate redevelopment in this area.

The city's new draft housing policy, *Keys to the Home: A Housing Strategy for Hamilton*, notes that McMaster University is the only Ontario university without a downtown residence. In light of recent comments by McMaster president **Dr. Peter George** expressing interest in the downtown, I am working with **Mayor Larry Di Ianni** and staff to develop a proposal for a downtown McMaster campus/residence.

Another issue I have been working on is tax assessment. Ward 8 **Councillor Terry Whitehead** and I will be meeting with the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation to investigate ways student houses owned by investors can be assessed differently from family homes.

We have also established a task force with the McMaster Students Union and others, including the AWWCA's **Michael Bordin**, to improve the student Universal Bus Pass. The bus pass allows students to live farther away from campus. The benefits of improved Hamilton Street Railway service will also assist residents in the AWWCA area.

Many of you have attended our regular Chedoke-Cootes community meetings. We have held meetings on the city's budget challenges, possible uses of the Camco lands, and Hamilton's tree programs. I urge you to let us know what additional topics you would like to see addressed—our next meeting will be in October and will be a joint session with local school board trustee **Judith Bishop**.

I am now chairing the city's Pesticide Committee and the Hamilton Non-Profit Housing Corporation (known as City Housing Hamilton) and am Hamilton's representative on the Niagara Escarpment Commission. I would appreciate your views on those subjects and others. Please visit my website at [www.brianmchattie.ca](http://www.brianmchattie.ca) for more details. I am committed to involving you in municipal decision making on an ongoing basis and I invite you to communicate with me at City Hall at (905) 546-2416 or via e-mail at [bmchattie@hamilton.ca](mailto:bmchattie@hamilton.ca).

## Chedoke-Cootes (Ward 1) Community Meeting Reports

LOREEN JEROME

### *City of Hamilton 2004 Budget and Social Services*

The first in a series of community meetings hosted by **Councillor Brian McHattie**, his staff, and volunteers was held March 3 at City Hall. With well over 125 people in attendance, there were some very lively discussions sparked by the two guest speakers: **Tom Cooper**, from McQueston Legal and Community Services, and **Don McLean**, an environmental activist. Mr. McHattie began the meeting by asking how many had been in Council Chambers before; over half the audience raised their hands. He said, "People should feel comfortable here—a second home you may visit."

Mr. Cooper explained that the \$83-million operating deficit the city faces is directly attributable to provincial downloading of

the costs of social-services administration, social housing, ambulance services, GO transit, and public-health services. Hamilton has the second highest poverty rate in Ontario, with 100,000 people below the poverty line, including one-quarter of Hamilton's children. We have 5,000 households applying for social housing and 6,000 people using food banks monthly. All city revenue comes from property taxes. With our declining industrial tax base (i.e., Camco, Levi Strauss, Procter and Gamble, and Slater Steel), the homeowner is being asked to shoulder the ever-increasing burden of higher taxes. A social-services tax on a \$200,000 home in 2001 in Toronto was \$244 versus \$550 in Hamilton. Mr. Cooper suggested a short-term solution for Hamilton would be to pool social services—either by forming a Hamilton-Niagara-Halton social-services pool or by joining the Greater Toronto Area pool. A desirable scenario would be the removal

of social-services costs from property taxes entirely and creation of provincial pooling.

Mr. McLean stated the budget is centred on cutting to save, rather than asking, "How did we get into this mess and how do we correct it." Besides the above-mentioned problems, Hamilton has had no job growth in the last 20 years, 28 per cent (55,000) of the workforce works outside the city, 60,000 fewer people live in the old city than in 1971, and there are over 4,000 empty commercial units.

As it turned out, city council approved a balanced budget in April thanks to a \$19.5-million one-time payment by the provincial government to support Hamilton's social-services costs. As Mr. Cooper noted, the city continues to discuss a sustainable funding mechanism with the province, which could involve participation in the GTA social-services funding pool, where adjacent municipalities subsidize Toronto's costs in recognition of its role as a regional centre for social services—the same role Hamilton plays.

Despite a decision to continue with the Red Hill Expressway, positive aspects of the

See **REPORTS** on page 10

## REPORTS from page 9

final budget included: over \$1-million for planting trees, a similar amount for cycling infrastructure, and a decision not to raise Hamilton Street Railway fares—a clear



move to support public transit.

### Future Use of Camco Site

I attended a community meeting April 7 with approximately 60 people. This was the second in a series of meetings held by Chedoke-Cootes Councillor Brian McHattie. The first part of the meeting

consisted of educational presentations by City Hall staff: **Neil Everson** outlined the role of the economic-development department and how it works with other city departments; **Paul Mallard**, of the planning and development department, explained that part of its function was processing applications for zoning and variances. **J. J. Barnicki**, the real-estate agent for Camco, also attended.

The second part of the meeting was devoted to questions and brainstorming regarding the future use of the Camco site at 606 Aberdeen Ave. The property includes 15.5 acres with a warehouse on the west side of Longwood Road South and 21.5 acres on the east side of Longwood. The site is zoned K—heavy industrial (1975 Neighbourhood Plan). K-zoning would permit retail and commercial activity, but residential use would not be allowed without a zoning change.

It was generally felt that the property is very desirable due to the proximity to Highway 403 and CP Rail. Participants stressed numerous times that the future development of this site must add to the quality of life in the city. Some of the uses suggested were a health facility, townhouses, low-rise condominiums, a sports complex, and student housing for both undergraduates and graduates.

### Hamilton's Tree Programs

In June about 45 people attended the third community meeting hosted by Councillor Brian McHattie. Hamilton's manager of forestry **Rick Gadawski** outlined Hamilton's tree-planting and tree-health programs, Trees Count manager **Don McLean** spoke about the urban-tree-inventory program, and Hamilton's natural-heritage planner **Catherine Plosz** spoke about efforts to enact a tree-cutting bylaw.

*Loreen Jerome is the AWWCA's treasurer.*

## parliament NEWS

CAROLYN KINSLEY

On April 23 **Rob Payne**, **John Wigle**, and I met for an hour with our new Liberal MPP, **Judy Marsales**, and her assistant, **Jim McGreal**, at her constituency office on Main Street West. She asked us to tell her what our concerns were and then let us talk, just asking a question now and again. Both she and her assistant took notes. Some of the points we made:

Zoning is a provincial matter. We're concerned about the enforcement of the low-density C-zoning (single-family dwellings) in our area because the city says it doesn't have the teeth to prevent illegal conversions. Mr. McGreal was aware of the news stories in *The Hamilton Spectator* about illegal duplexes and triplexes across the city. He elaborated a bit on the etiquette of how municipalities and the province negotiate so that the province isn't seen to be stepping on the toes of a municipality. The city should approach the province if it wants changes in enabling legislation.

Provincial funding for universities fails to include money for residences. We pointed out that at a meeting of the President's Advisory Committee on Community

## Meeting our New Liberal Member of Provincial Parliament



L to R: Rob Payne, MPP Judy Marsales, John Wigle, and Carolyn Kinsley.

Relations the night before we had heard **Roger Trull** and the outgoing McMaster Students Union president again mention that there is no provincial funding for such "ancillary" services.

The Waterloo symposium and the follow-up conference in Hamilton May 19 and 20 may lead to a co-ordinated request for action by the province from the participating municipalities. Rob had given Ms. Marsales the summary of the Waterloo proceedings, and she had read them. We also talked about the need for balance in the community, because we are losing families with children in local schools and want to keep all ages from young to old as well as university students. We also countered the misconception that we are anti-university and anti-student. Ms. Marsales was glad to hear that we would like to see McMaster develop a satellite campus in downtown Hamilton rather than lose it to Burlington. We also pointed out that the majority of our members have close ties to McMaster, we're pushing for safety standards for off-campus student housing, we support student initiatives, we support the university's Alternative Commuting and Transportation office, etc.

Ms. Marsales asked about the history of the AWWCA. I told her it was founded in 1998 by resident homeowners who were concerned about the effect of the university's growth on the surrounding neighbourhood, which was changing from a very stable residential area to one increasingly full of transient students who move every 8-12 months.

# REAL ESTATE NEWS

## *How to Avoid Unscrupulous Investors When Selling Your Home*

MICHAEL BORDIN

In recent years we have heard of friends and neighbours who have been duped by unscrupulous investors into believing they were selling their homes to families. Some have even sold for thousands less than they could have received if they had sold to investors. Believing they were selling to families, they were willing to accept less for their properties.

We have in the past given tips on how to avoid selling your home to investors. In this article, we suggest another approach to use to try to protect yourself from unscrupulous investors and to promote the sale of your home to a resident homeowner.

When you sell your home you may ask the purchaser to agree not to use the home as a

rental property. This would be a contract between the buyer and the seller of the property. This would not be a restrictive covenant that attaches to land. Only the seller of the property can enforce the contract, and the contract can only be enforced on the buyer.

It is important to get legal advice on how to implement this strategy. Here are some suggestions:

The Agreement of Purchase and Sale would require the buyers to contract not to use the home as a rental property for a certain period of time agreed to by the seller and buyer.

The contract would provide consequences for a breach of the contract. The consequences could require the buyer to pay an additional sum of money over and above the purchase price. The seller could agree to waive the consequences for a breach of contract in the seller's sole discretion. The seller needs to be prepared that if the buyer breaches the contract, the buyer may not readily pay the additional purchase price. The seller may then sue the buyer to recover the money.

Because the contract would only be binding on the original buyer, terms could be inserted to discourage the buyer from turning around and immediately selling the property or transferring the property to

another person in order to avoid the contract and rent the property. To cover such a situation, a term could be included which requires the buyer, upon such sale or transfer of the property within a specified period of time, to pay an additional amount over and above the purchase price.

Investors would likely be reluctant to enter into this kind of contract. However, as the seller, you may seek to impose this contract as a condition of selling your home. Buyers who are not intending to use the home as a rental property need not be concerned with this type of contract, which may help to preserve the community they will be living in. Remember that, as the seller, you can agree to waive the additional purchase price if, for example, the buyer has to sell as a result of having to move out of the city or because of the loss of a job.

When preparing to sell your home you should consider speaking to a lawyer who is willing to work with you and help you in obtaining this type of contract.

By using this type of contract you may be able to protect yourself from abuse by unscrupulous investors and you may be able to help preserve the neighbourhood by maintaining a healthy balanced community.

*Michael Bordin is an AWWCA board member.*

## PROPERTY STANDARDS VIOLATION

This house on Haddon Avenue South has been in violation of property standards for months. The city was asked to enforce the law.



Photo: AWWCA's roving reporter.

## Real-Estate Advertising

### *Acceptable Advertising*

We suggest that our members use agents whose policy is not to advertise as investment properties houses zoned "single-family dwellings."

Judy Marsales took prompt action when it was pointed out to her in June that one of her agents violated her advertising policy. For listings and advertising for the West Hamilton area, the policy of **Judy Marsales Real Estate Ltd.** is to refrain from using "student rental," "income potential," "investment opportunity," or similar terms in advertising copy. If you see any such words in Marsales' advertisements, please contact her at 905-522-3300 or [judy@judymarsales.com](mailto:judy@judymarsales.com).

If you know of agents who have a similar policy, ask them for their written policy, send it to us, and we will pass it on to our members.

### *Unacceptable Advertising?*



Is this unacceptable advertising in our area, zoned for single family housing?

# Do Neighbourhoods M A T T E R ?

ROB PAYNE

One of our members sent me an article from *The Globe and Mail*, "Do Neighbourhoods Matter?" It quotes the current mayor of Toronto, who stated, "Neighbourhoods are what make this city great. We must value what is distinct about our neighbourhoods, and recognize that which has value beyond its cost" (**David Miller**, inaugural address, Dec. 2, 2003). This sentiment seems especially relevant to the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods, as we examine the potential impact of continued expansion of university enrolment on our community.

The planned community of Westdale has been extremely successful, with both recreational and commercial areas within easy walking distance for residents. The recent stress created by McMaster University's expansion by 5,600 students over the last four years has brought into sharp focus a need to define a vision for the neighbourhood.

This "vision" has been formally structured within the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan and Community Strategy, which envisions "a balanced, stable community in which the diverse needs of all residents and citizens are met" (Apr. 13, 2004, draft, p. 18). While the plan acknowledges that our community will require a density strategy in accord with smart-growth principles, its clear goal is that "the predominantly low density residential character of the Ainslie Wood Westdale neighbourhoods will be preserved and restored" (p. 18).

Studies on the impact of "studentification"—changes caused by a large number of students moving into a neighbourhood—have found that a community tipping point occurs when rental properties approach 25 per cent of a neighbourhood's housing

stock. School and church closures, declining property maintenance, and congested parking and traffic due to unplanned density increases are all results of a neighbourhood's loss of "balance." Ainslie Wood and Westdale are currently at this tipping point.



Rob Payne, AWWCA President

**Jane Jacobs**, the internationally renowned urban planner, has stated, "A successful city neighbourhood is a place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them" (*The Death and Life of Great American Cities*). The AWWCA is spending much of its volunteer time keeping abreast of potential repercussions on our community as a result of McMaster's growth.

The need to educate more students is a demographic certainty in Ontario, where forecasts call for a 30 per cent increase in demand during the next decade. **Dr. Ken Norrie**, provost of McMaster University, acknowledges in his article, "Refining Directions: Long Range Planning; What Does It Mean?" that just "the university taking its share" of demographic growth would result in an increase of 9,000 students.

The major issue for the city, university, and community is what to do if the Secondary Plan's vision of "balanced" communities is at odds with any decision to "grow" the existing university campus beyond its current size. Where this growth occurs needs to be balanced against the health of the community, as the resultant loss of residential family homes will put our venerable first planned community in Canada in decline.

"Increasingly, cities and countries around the world are recognizing the importance of healthy, inviting and affordable neighbourhoods as a critical element in attracting and retaining the kind of qualified workforce required to successfully compete in

## URBAN issues

the knowledge based, global economy" ("Do Neighbourhoods Matter?"). For Hamilton's sake, it is important not only that McMaster attracts top-quality undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, researchers, and staff but that their experience in our community encourages them to remain here.

It is extremely important that a joint planning program of the city, university, and community stakeholders be established to ensure the needs of both McMaster and the community are met. Failure to do this at an early stage will result in a sharper focus on the university's need to expand versus the neighbourhood's need to remain balanced and vibrant.

The AWWCA has worked on development of a joint planning model since our inception in 1998. In fact, during 1999, a petition from our neighbourhood, signed by over 400 residents, was submitted to the university's board of governors. This petition highlighted the risk to the surrounding community's health by not taking into account the housing needs of students as enrolment increased. Hamilton City Council created the McMaster University Area Neighbourhoods Task Force in 1997. Its recommendation number 17.3 of May 1999 suggested that "McMaster University take a proactive position with respect to provision of housing; new enrolment should be linked to new housing options." Since then, McMaster has increased enrolment by approximately 5,600 students, while at the same time increasing on-campus residence capacity by only 280 student beds.

It is time to revisit the notion of linking new enrolment to new housing, as recommended by the task force in 1999. The university has advised us that the Refining Directions process is the one that most directly focuses on housing issues. Let us make this process the focus of our efforts. And let us hope the city and the university will come to the same conclusion as the mayor of Toronto, and agree, "Neighbourhoods do matter."

## *"Building community block by block"*

# How Do We Become a Great University Neighbourhood?

ROB PAYNE

Our neighbourhood surrounding McMaster University has the "good bones" to become the best campus town in North America. What we lack is a joint vision and action plan on how to make this happen.

During the recent Refining Directions meeting held June 1 at St. Mary's Secondary School, it became quite apparent that (1) we have a wealth of talented, passionate, and articulate residents in the community and (2) the university administration could do much more to enlist the surrounding neighbourhoods' support "to achieve international distinction for creativity, innovation and excellence" (McMaster Refining Directions summary).

Why not apply the university vision to both the university and the surrounding community? Why not "take risks and innovate?" Our progress in finding joint solutions to issues around off-campus housing, traffic, parking, and bylaw enforcement has been painfully slow and needs a dose of innovative thinking. The Refining Directions brochure stated: "Innovation is far more than just developing a new program. It is inspired by an attitude that there is always a better way. This attitude must pervade the entire institution." (p. 6). How do we find this "better way," recognizing we have little time left to start the progress toward becoming a great university town?

The City of Milwaukee and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) have developed a program that is a good example of how we can proceed. They share a situation similar to ours, with the university being located in one of Milwaukee's highest-quality neighbourhoods. They recognized that "while the university is an asset to the neighbourhood in many regards, recent increasing demand for on-street parking, near-campus student housing, and student-oriented services [has] directly impacted the character of the adjacent neighbourhoods and the quality of life for the residents" ("A Strategy and Vision for the UWM Neighbourhood," City of Milwaukee website: [www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/UWM/](http://www.mkedcd.org/planning/plans/UWM/)).

The UWM study, funded by the university and managed by the city, looked at what actions needed to be taken to "advance the UWM campus and surrounding environs as a great university neighbourhood." It defined a great university neighbourhood as one that is "known for a desirable quality of life that stems from their diverse population, pleasing physical character, and cultural/commercial amenities." This 62-page report offers many actions that could be taken to meet this vision.

The current planning processes being undertaken by both Hamilton (the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan and Community Strategy) and McMaster (Refining Directions) give us a perfect opportunity to begin to "institutionalize" our joint commitment to our future.

Our neighbourhood looks to McMaster—a top employer in Hamilton—to provide leadership in working toward creating "the best campus town in North America." We are glad to see McMaster recognize in the Refining Directions brochure that "communities are united when they share a mission and a vision" (p. 5). We urge the university to take advantage of the many community assets available to make this happen.

## REFINING DIRECTIONS

### *Reflections on Directions*

The Impact of "Refining Directions" on the Ainslie Wood and Westdale Community

Refining Directions is McMaster University's strategic plan that was recently updated to guide the growth and development of the university over the next five to 10 years. This plan was made available to community members in the form of a glossy 12-page brochure as well as on the website: [www.mcmaster.ca/pres/refining/](http://www.mcmaster.ca/pres/refining/).

A town-hall meeting was held June 1 at St. Mary's Secondary School to provide an overview of the strategic plan, the implementation process, and a review of three possible enrolment targets, along with the pros and cons of each.

An estimated 150 people were in the audience facing the university's senior administration (president **Peter George**, provost **Ken Norrie**, and Refining Directions project co-ordinator **Andy Hrymak**) and a panel of community representatives (**Councillor Brian McHattie**, AWWCA president **Rob Payne**, and Westdale Business Improvement Area executive director **David Dayler**). The meeting was chaired by **Roger Trull**, vice-president, university advancement (formerly known as public relations). The evening meeting was held at the AWWCA's request, and Dr. Hrymak enthusiastically supported the idea.

The AWWCA asked some community members, the BIA, and Dr. George to write their personal impressions of the meeting. Excerpts from their reflections are included in the reports that follow.

### *Reflections on Directions*

MICHAEL  
LADOUCEUR

I am a resident homeowner, McMaster faculty member, and AWWCA block representative, and would like to share a few personal reflections on the town-hall meeting of June 1.

The administration's arguments for growth in student enrolment were reasonable and transparent, including increased participation rates, economy of scale, and critical mass. I appreciated the facts and figures presented, including the proportion of students from Hamilton and elsewhere and the proportion of graduate students needed at a research-intensive university. The fact that 30 per cent of the students commute from Toronto was surprising. These data are not easy to get, and I'd love to see these numbers and breakdowns on a single sheet of paper. One number I would like to have heard is the number of student beds on campus as a proportion of the overall student enrolment (in comparison with other universities).

The university administrators took 1½ hours to make their presentations, but left a



Michael Ladouceur

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## REFINING DIRECTIONS *from page 13*

scant 45 minutes for community members to respond, clearly a "no-no" in terms of fostering dialogue. I think they presented themselves in an unnecessarily officious manner, which did not help their cause. Instead of wearing dark suits, it would have been smarter if they'd worn golf shirts in order to reduce the "us versus them" dynamic, but that is a minor issue.

I thought the questions and points posed by community members were some of the most articulate and reasoned I've heard. There were responses made by a real-estate agent, a member of McMaster's Senate, McMaster alumni, parents of McMaster students, and concerned citizens. I especially noted the woman who quoted from Maclean's magazine that McMaster is known to have a problem with its surrounding community! Other points were: the good example of how McGill works with its local

community, the need for McMaster to work with developers and to contribute to the cost of policing, and a request for McMaster to cease listing landlords unless their premises have been inspected. The internal issue about the university Senate not being given timely and complete information about the enrolment targets was an interesting one.

In the end, the university administration appeared to blame demographics, lack of funding, and intergovernmental politics for not being able to address the concerns raised by community members. In the end, Dr. Peter George was called upon to defend the position of the university. I think it was then that I realized the university had no new ideas or intentions of addressing the issue of student housing (either on or off campus) in the near future.

Therefore, some outstanding questions remain: Is increased student enrolment

already decided? Are there other stakeholders who need to be consulted? Will increased student enrolment dilute the faculty-to-student ratio? If there is to be a reduction in parking spots on campus, what is the plan for transportation to and from the university? Is the City of Hamilton supportive of increased demand for public transit to and from the university? Who will pay for the added cost of police services, bylaw enforcement, and garbage pickup due to high-density housing adjacent to the university but technically "off campus"?

I don't know where this meeting takes us, but I do see a very concerned and organized community prepared to work with the university and the city to find win-win solutions to issues that affect us all. I hope the university will keep this channel of communication with the community open. Maintaining this momentum and producing solutions will be one of our next challenges.

## Reflections on Directions

MARY JOHNSON

I have enjoyed raising my family in the McMaster community for 24 years, am an AWWCA member, graduated from McMaster, and have worked with youth in the public-education system as my life's vocation. I have read the Refining Directions document and reflected on its message. I am convinced more dialogue needs to occur between McMaster University and the members of the community in which McMaster lives and thrives, and that includes the resident homeowners.

### The Meeting on June 1

I want to sincerely thank all those who were involved in planning this meeting. My primary impression is that we were there to be informed. Major decisions have been, and are being made, without much consultation with resident homeowners.

I applaud McMaster's mission and vision as stated in Refining Directions. Having a copy before the meeting would have been helpful. McMaster says good communication is a priority, but this is not shown by their actions with regard to resident homeowners.

I was struck by the lack of information the university had of current happenings in the neighbourhood, for example, the fact that the Westdale Community Policing Centre had been closed for some time. The university is supposed to be a "partner" in this community endeavour. I was also surprised at the answers we were given regarding the university becoming more involved in bylaw and policing enforcement. We were told McMaster has "no say" in these matters. The reality is, as one of the top 10 employers in Hamilton, they have clout. McMaster should and could be more involved in pushing for stronger enforcement of bylaws and policing issues when they pertain to the safety of their students and the "tone" of the neighbourhood in which the university resides.

Many solutions to the growing number of housing issues have been given to the university in the past, including those at the

Housing Options and Alternatives breakout session at the Community Forum on Feb. 10. Have any of these suggested options been acted upon other than the new residence being built on campus? The invitation to the meeting said: "The input from local community members on these planning issues is very important to us at the university." Taking action would demonstrate the sincerity of this statement.

### Refining Directions

In reading this document I was very impressed with the mission and vision for the future of the university. I highlighted over and over a commitment to community, both internal and external. Words like "collaboration," "teamwork," "inclusiveness," "shared purpose," and "accountable" are prominent in the document. They need to be demonstrated in more concrete actions out in the community.

I was encouraged when I went on to read the section stating, "Relationship building did not figure prominently in 'Directions' but since has come to be recognized as a key success factor. McMaster's best ambassadors are its students." I believed the document was onto something but then was disappointed when the paragraph proceeded to discuss fundraising potential with

alumni and did not include students' relations with their neighbours in the community. There was, however, a recognition that more work needs to be done: "Relationships, communication and support for community issues that have been established in recent years need to be strengthened and maintained."

Having read Refining Directions several times, I am impressed with what it says. A year has passed since the document was authored, however, and I am not yet convinced the McMaster vision includes people like me, a resident homeowner in the neighbourhood. I am not convinced the voices of parents raising their children, professionals working in the community, and retirees young and old are being heard. If heard, I am not convinced these voices really matter to the university. Please show me if I am wrong!

I look forward to dialogue with members of the AWWCA and members of the McMaster University administration.



Mary Johnson



## Reflections on Directions

SHELAGH SNIDER AND DAVID DAYLER

Dr. Peter George, in his opening remarks to the Refining Directions town-hall meeting, said: "In the years ahead, McMaster will be a better place to learn, to work, and to teach."

When one partner as dynamic as McMaster redefines its directions, it forces us all to redefine our directions. Any growth of this magnitude, by its very nature, will have a ripple effect throughout the entire community that will necessitate a readjustment in partnerships within the community to accommodate both the positive and the negative effects of this growth. McMaster's town-hall session provided the community with a much-needed opportunity to redefine the direction in which we would like to see our community grow.

During the question-and-answer period, each audience member spoke with sincerity and love for their community. A collective rod of steel was being rolled as, one by one, citizens brought their concerns forward to the university and, more importantly, to their neighbours. We say "more importantly, to their neighbours" because we have the power to decide the type of community in which we would like to live and work. We must call upon McMaster, as a large economic engine in Hamilton, to use its influence both locally and provincially to ensure property-standards bylaws are proactively, not reactively, enforced in our neighbourhoods. If laws need to be changed to bring about the type of community we would like to leave to our children, then all the partners in the community have an obligation to see that these changes are made.

We wholeheartedly agreed with many in the audience who felt more McMaster faculty and staff should reside in the Westdale and Ainslie Wood community. We believe that, as stated by Dr. George, with the expansion of the graduate program and retention of graduate students, we could see new young families moving into our area. However, it is of utmost importance for the three members of this partnership to find ways to facilitate the reclamation of student housing for resident homeowners.

Our community is at a crossroads. It is up to every citizen in the community to engage in discussion with their neighbours, their families, their associations, and elected politicians to ensure the legacy we leave for our children in 20 years will be a healthy, vibrant community we will be proud to have helped shape. Given the current move to revise the Municipal Act, now is the time to be sure our concerns are heard with regard to property standards and other issues directly affecting our community. As united partners we can forcefully address the lack of bite in the Municipal Act and the Building Code that results in many of the negative developments in our community.

As suggested by McMaster's presenters, it is vital that we lobby the new Bob Rae Task Force that will be looking into the funding of universities. This funding will play a major role in how the growth of universities affects the communities in which they exist. Inadequate funding for universities will force them to grow at a pace that will not allow their neighbourhoods to absorb the impact, a pace that will weaken and destroy the very communities that are such a vital part of the life of our universities.

We must not work in isolation. Together we can form a coalition that will have a strong voice for sustaining and managing our entire community. If we act separately, while we may achieve what appear to be our individual goals, we will weaken the fabric of the community as a whole and thus disrupt an essential balance necessary for sustainability.



Shelagh Snider, co-chair, Westdale BIA; David Dayler, executive director, Westdale BIA. Photo: Janet Woodward



Dr. Peter George, McMaster University President

## Reflections on Directions

PETER GEORGE

It was a pleasure to see a great turnout of local residents to the town-hall meeting hosted by McMaster University and our community partners on June 1. The purpose was to share information and discuss McMaster's strategic plan, Refining Directions, and its implementation, including

possible options for the university's growth. The discussion focused largely on the growth of the university, enrolment targets, the need for more student housing, and initiatives to preserve the quality of life for local residents.

The discussion clearly indicated there is a need for improved communication between the university and the community for two key reasons: to help local residents understand more about the issues that McMaster faces in order to maintain and improve the quality of the university, and to afford an opportunity for local resi-

dents to provide input about the issues.

McMaster takes pride in the quality of education it provides, but there are many challenges to be addressed if the university is to maintain its standards.

We can talk at length about decreased government funding over the last 20 years, funding restrictions, and the tuition freeze implemented by the new provincial government. Demographic trends and the double cohort need to be addressed by the university on an ongoing basis, as these significantly affect the demand for student enrolment. Declining public resources leave few options but growth to secure the funding needed to maintain or improve service levels and facilities such as student residences, which receive no government funding.

The growth of the university to date has been required to increase revenue and to meet our share of provincial enrolment demand. Had the expansion of the campus and number of students not occurred, McMaster would not be sustainable as we know it. The lack of such growth would have significant negative impacts on the university as well as the local economy and community.

The issue of university funding is now being reviewed by the Bob Rae Task Force, with recommendations due early in 2005. Mr. Rae's mandate is to advise the provincial government on developing a more co-ordinated, collaborative, and differentiated postsecondary educational system, and

See **REFINING DIRECTIONS** on page 16

to develop a sustainable funding framework. We would appreciate community support for greater public investment in the quality of Ontario higher education, capital renewal, and student assistance. Correspondence may be sent to:

The Postsecondary Education Review  
Attention: Mr. Bob Rae, Advisor to The Premier and The Minister  
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
Mowat Block, 3rd Floor  
900 Bay Street  
Toronto, ON M7A 1L2  
or fax: 416-326-1656

Once the review's outcome is known, we will determine future enrolment targets.

We are aware of the impact the university has on the surrounding community—both good and bad—and we are working to address your concerns about more student housing, the quality of off-campus rental properties, and transportation and parking issues. Some of our current initiatives include:

- Developing a student-housing strategy;
- Preparing to build another student residence on campus to open in 2006; we also remain open to proposals that make sound business sense for residences on or off campus;
- Pursuing improved public transit and off-campus parking;
- Implementing an accredited system for rental-housing postings to designate those that have undergone and passed required safety inspections;
- Hosting public-information sessions with landlords, community, and industry representatives.

The university works closely with the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Police Service, the AWWCA, and the Westdale Business Improvement Area to address issues of mutual concern and opportunity. These working relationships are important to us, and we appreciate the ongoing co-operation of each organization. I look forward to improving McMaster's communications with local community members to achieve our common goal of preserving the quality of life we all enjoy in West Hamilton.

## Reflections on Directions

ROB PAYNE

I believe the neighbourhood message to the university can be summarized as follows:

1. McMaster needs to take responsibility for student housing, both on and off campus.
2. Student safety in off-campus housing is a major concern for all residents, and currently is an accident waiting to happen.
3. McMaster expansion that is not tied to formal housing plans puts our neighbourhood, which is already under stress, at a breaking point.
4. The university may have reached its limit in size for its present location.

The questions and statements from the audience were reasoned and passionate. It was a sign of success that your AWWCA board did not have a chance to give its input, because we could not have improved on the input from audience members.

We also heard of some encouraging progress on a number of issues:

1. **Councillor McHattie** mentioned that he is working with **Councillor Whitehead** (Mohawk College's ward councillor) to find a way to assess rental houses at a higher property-tax rate than residential houses. This is a good step toward formally defining them as businesses while protecting family homes from tax assessments driven up by speculators.
2. I mentioned at the meeting that the AWWCA is working with universities, municipalities, and neighbourhood groups across Ontario to improve town-and-gown neighbourhoods. The issues brought up at the meeting are shared by many other university communities across Ontario.
3. McMaster president **Dr. George** mentioned that a satellite campus may be needed if McMaster decides to enlarge the university. This would be a logical step forward, and follows the footsteps of the University of Toronto and Wilfred Laurier University



Rob Payne, AWWCA President Photo: Janet Woodward

in handling additional growth. Let us hope the city does a good job of "selling" downtown to the university as a possible expansion site. This has not been done to date. Expanding to another city, such as Burlington, is a more likely alternative but would be a negative development for Hamilton. Councillor McHattie took note of Dr. George's comment that there could be some interest in downtown if potential sites could be clustered. The Camco property would also be a step forward in this regard.

The continued interest by residents who attended the meeting in "preserving and enhancing our community" will, I believe,

also come to be appreciated by both students and university administration.

Two quotes from Refining Directions best sum up what we hope to achieve: "Communities are united when they share a mission and a vision." It is our hope that the university and the surrounding neighbourhood can reach a shared vision.

"Innovation is far more than developing a new program. It is inspired by an attitude that there is always a better way. This attitude must pervade the entire institution." We hope this also applies to the issues that affect the surrounding neighbourhoods. The AWWCA believes wholeheartedly in this statement. Let's innovate to find a "better way" together.



# Because we care

*"Building community  
block by block"*

# STUDENT HOUSING

## Landlord Information Session

MICHAEL BORDIN

McMaster's Off-Campus Resource Centre (OCRC) hosted an information night for landlords on May 17. The speakers included **Jim Winn** from Hamilton Emergency Services—Fire; **Judy Downey**, co-ordinator of standards and licensing for the City of Hamilton; representatives from the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal; **Peter Neziol** of Neziol Insurance; Ward 1 Councillor **Brian McHattie**; and **Michael Bordin**.

**Jennifer Kleven**, co-ordinator of the OCRC, reported there were many vacant student houses in May. The OCRC is preparing to introduce a voluntary house-inspection program later this year. The details of this program are not yet finalized, but it is anticipated it will include inspections for fire safety and building-code compliance. Landlords would receive some form of certification that would be posted on the OCRC website.

Mr. Winn spoke of the students' right to safe housing and the corresponding obligation of landlords to ensure it is safe. The requirements for fire safety in homes being rented as student houses appear to be relatively low, however. Mr. Winn confirmed the fire code does not require a second exit for single-family homes converted to student houses. If four or more students (but not more than 10) are living in a house as a single housekeeping unit, under the fire code the building is labeled a shared accommodation/lodging house and is required to have a minimum of an alternating-current, interconnected smoke-alarm system with one smoke alarm per floor, a battery-operated or wired-in smoke-alarm unit in each bedroom, and one two-amp, 10-pound, B-C-rated fire extinguisher. If there are three or fewer students living in a house, under the fire code the building is labeled a single-family dwelling and requires an operable smoke alarm (battery type is acceptable) outside each sleeping area. Building-code requirements were not discussed at the landlord information session; they are not the same as fire-code regulations.



Michael Bordin

Photo: Janet Woodward

Hamilton Emergency Services—Fire operates on the basis of complaints. They do not have the staff to do proactive inspections. A person making a complaint must provide enough evidence to allow the fire inspectors to enter the dwelling. The name of the person making the complaint will not be disclosed.

Judy Downey outlined the processes for complaints about noise and garbage/debris/grass. Students can be fined \$130 for a first charge for a noise violation. Subsequent charges could be laid under Part 3 of the *Provincial Offences Act*, which could result in fines up to \$5,000.

The property owner is responsible for garbage, debris, and maintenance of the lawn. Complaints can be made to the standards-and-licensing division at 905-546-2782, which will send a standard "fee for service" letter regarding the violation, advising the landlord that a fee of \$180 may be imposed and added to the owner's tax account. The letter will allow the landlord 10 days to bring the property into compliance. On the 11th day an inspector will visit the property, and the fee for service of \$180 may be levied. If the owner has not brought the property into compliance, an order will be issued giving the owner seven days to comply. If there is no compliance, the city will bring the property into compliance and may charge \$250 to the owner's tax account on every subsequent visit to the property if a violation still exists.

Mr. Neziol discussed insuring student houses. Although insurance companies do not have a big appetite for student rentals, there are a few that will insure them. Mr. Neziol pointed out that landlords who do not disclose that their single-family home is being used as a student rental and who do not advise their insurer when the home is vacant for more than 30 days may find the insurance company will deny them cover-

age if they make a claim. This creates a risk for landlords and for students living in those houses.

Ms. Kleven had invited me to attend as a representative of the AWWCA. This provided us with an opportunity to deliver our message to a number of current and potential landlords. More than half of the landlords in attendance lived outside the AWWCA area. I painted a picture for them of what life is like for residents living next to poorly managed rental houses and asked them to imagine how they would respond if their own neighbours neglected the care and maintenance of their property. I delivered the AWWCA's message that residents expect landlords to be responsible for their property and to set the tone for tenants living there. Well-cared-for property will draw respectful tenants and is in the best interests of the neighbourhood and the landlords. I emphasized that the landlords are responsible for insuring that their tenants and property comply with property-standards bylaws. This message was reinforced by Ms. Downey during the question-and-answer period. I encouraged the landlords to introduce themselves to the neighbours living near their rental houses and to provide them with contact information in case there is a problem. The landlords may benefit too, because vigilant neighbours will report problems with the property. Members of a healthy community need to work together to build and maintain it.

*Michael Bordin is an AWWCA board member.*

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## Insurance Increases Will Boost the Cost of Student Housing

In an article by **Hank Daniszewski** in the London Free Press Jan. 31, a group of landlords in London warns that "soaring insurance rates for student housing will boost rental rates and may take units off the market" ("Insurance rise hits landlords"). One landlord received two weeks' notice that "his policy was being dropped because he rented to students." This insurance company sent an investigator to the landlord's rental houses to determine if students were living there, and the company stated, "if landlords deny access, their coverage is automatically dropped." After checking with 15 companies, the landlord was able to find an insurer, but the rate was four times higher than what he had been paying. The article noted that **Bob Carter**, chief executive of the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario, is aware of the tightening market and said similar complaints have cropped up in Hamilton.

# TOWN AND GOWN

## Waterloo Town and Gown Symposium

JOHN M. WIGLE

On Thursday evening, March 4, and on Friday, March 5, the City of Waterloo hosted a Town and Gown Symposium aptly entitled *After the Double Cohort: Student-Community Relations*. It was held at the splendid Waterloo Memorial Recreation Centre. Waterloo was an appropriate venue. It has three postsecondary educational institutions within its boundaries, and approximately 25 per cent of the city's residents are students. As a result Waterloo, like West Hamilton and parts of the Hamilton mountain, must respond to a unique set of community-development and planning challenges. Factors such as the provincial government's recent restructuring of the secondary-school system, which resulted in two years of high-school graduates entering colleges and universities at the same time, and the failure or inability of those institutions to provide enough on-campus housing for their student populations have made those challenges even more daunting and obvious for cities, particularly for neighbourhoods close to the campuses.

There were 18 articulate, well-informed, and occasionally controversial presenters and panelists from across Southern Ontario and from a wide spectrum of occupational and volunteer backgrounds. They included two mayors, a university president (Wilfred Laurier University), urban planners, police, bylaw-enforcement officers (Hamilton's **Judy Downey**, among others), an innovative commercial landlord, a private consultant with extensive experience in downtown and neighbourhood regeneration, the president of a university student federation, and the president of a neighbourhood association, none other than our own **Rob Payne**, whose "Creating Directions" presentation was very well received at the Thursday evening panel discussion. You can view Rob's presentation at [www.hamilton.ca/town-and-gown](http://www.hamilton.ca/town-and-gown).

There were just over 120 participants, the majority of whom attended the plenary sessions and workshops on Friday. They, too, were from across Southern Ontario and were from diverse work and volunteer backgrounds. In addition to the groups previously described, there were municipal councillors (Hamilton's **Brian McHattie**, among others), their executive assistants, MPPs, lawyers from municipal legal departments, university representatives, and mem-

bers of community and neighbourhood associations. The AWWCA's small but vocal contingent was pleased to see four McMaster University representatives at the symposium, including **Dr. Phil Wood**, vice-president of student affairs. The only groups that were numerically underrepresented were students and provincial civil servants such as representatives from the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs. That was unfortunate. Student representatives need not have feared any "student bashing." The consistent approach throughout the symposium was one of civil, vigorous exchange of experiences and ideas.



L to R: Rob Payne, AWWCA President; Herb Epp, Mayor of Waterloo; Karen Redman, Waterloo MP; Mike Hancock, Mayor of Brantford; Robert Rosehart, President of Wilfred Laurier University. Photo: Alan Angold

The Waterloo symposium had two principal objectives. First, the organizers and presenters wanted to inform and explain to participants "best practices" on a range of issues related to the interaction between owner-occupiers and students generally and to off-campus student housing in particular. Best practices refer to municipal bylaws and to customs, procedures, and strategies without legislative imprimatur that have worked for "the town" in its various dealings with "the gown." Second, the organizers wanted feedback from the participants themselves in order to better define the ongoing and future challenges, with the hope of resolving them and possibly creating a larger and more permanent organization, such as a provincial or even a national town-and-gown association.

From my perspective the organizers and presenters achieved their first goal. Participants learned about the following initiatives and best practices, among others:

1. Wilfred Laurier University's successful development of a satellite campus in downtown Brantford;
2. a private developer's transformation of an historic but dilapidated hotel in Brantford's core into an attractive and safe residential facility for Wilfred Laurier students;
3. programs and funding offered by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, a federal crown agency, for the construction and renovation of

housing and neighbourhood merchant areas;

4. the experiences of several municipalities in passing and enforcing bylaws regarding fire hazards, noise, occupancy numbers, and property standards, and Waterloo's experience in defending bylaws in court as a result of a jurisdictional challenge brought by a private landlord;
5. the University of Western Ontario's appointment of a housing-mediation officer, who acts as a liaison between the community and students;
6. Queen's University's off-campus code of conduct for its students;
7. transportation issues, including the difficulties encountered by public-transit agencies and their responses; and
8. the eight-year struggle of a private consultant (**David Hall**) in reclaiming Toronto's crime-ridden Dufferin Mall and its adjacent neighbourhood, which was a disturbing but fascinating case study.

The organizers and workshop leaders received extensive and insightful comments and feedback, which are too numerous and detailed to attempt to summarize in this article. They are fully recorded in the final report of the symposium and are worth reading. However, one item of feedback should be mentioned here because of the frequency with which it was raised. There is growing frustration about the inadequacy of the legal and political powers currently available to municipalities that must deal with town-and-gown issues and about the lack of leadership in respect of these issues at the provincial-government level. (Remember, municipalities are creatures of the Ontario government and are, therefore, dependent upon the Ontario legislature.) During the symposium there was a recognition that the Ontario government has to grant more powers to municipalities and has to amend legislation to put in place an effective, province-wide approach to resolving these issues. Interestingly, this is a recommendation **Jane Jacobs** and other prominent Canadian thinkers about urban issues have been making for several years.

The March 4-5 symposium was an excellent forum and will provide a solid basis for future symposiums, not only in Waterloo but in other municipalities that have town-and-gown issues. The AWWCA board congratulates and thanks **Kathy Mortimer** and her team at the City of Waterloo for their vision, hard work, and results.

*John M. Wigle is an AWWCA director.*

# Breaking Down the Barriers

LIZ MILLAR

On May 19 and 20 representatives came to the Town and Gown Symposium at Mohawk College from numerous cities, including Brantford, Cambridge, Guelph, Hamilton, London, Oshawa, Ottawa, Kingston, Peterborough, St. Catharines, Thorold, Waterloo, and Windsor.

An important part of the symposium was the panel session Town and Gown in our Communities, in which I presented a position paper by the Federation of Ontario Neighbourhoods (Ontario), "Housing Issues in Municipalities with Populations of Less than 750,000 that Contain Institutions for Post-Secondary Education." Also on the panel were **Anthony Cascella**, vice-president, Mohawk Students' Association; **David Dayler**, executive director, Westdale Business Improvement Area; **Jessica Fedoruk**, director, Student Community-Support Network, McMaster Students Union; **Carolyn Gray**, vice-president, student, community, and economic development, Mohawk College; and **Roger Trull**, vice-president, university advancement, McMaster University.

I felt it was a very positive evening, an excellent event, and a timely follow-up from the Waterloo Town and Gown Symposium March 4-5. Delegates and speakers were focused on the issues and topics at hand. The agenda was well organized and covered a wide range of pertinent topics. Keynote facilitator **Larry D'Andrea** provided guidance for the breakout groups to "develop the infrastructure toward an action plan" from the mandate statements.

A follow-up meeting was held July 7 at the Wilfred Laurier campus in Brantford. Brock University in St. Catharines is planning to hold a national town-and-gown symposium in June 2005.

For progress updates and meeting reports, go to [www.hamilton.ca/town-and-gown](http://www.hamilton.ca/town-and-gown).

Congratulations to all involved in organizing this successful event.

*Liz Millar is a board member and past president of the AWWCA, and a member-at-large of FUN.*

## A Strong Organization

AWWCA police liaison Betty Bechtel reports: At the Town and Gown Symposium at Mohawk College on May 20, a town planner in Waterloo told me that the AWWCA is probably the strongest organization of its kind in Canada!

# Security Update

BETTY BECHTEL, AWWCA POLICE LIAISON

As you know, we have the only community-based policing in a university area in Canada. There is remarkable co-operation between police, bylaw officers, our Ward 1 councillor, city staff, the AWWCA community, the Westdale Business Improvement Area, and McMaster's Security Department, students, and administration. Police need the community to be their eyes and ears; they cannot solve problems alone, and they appreciate having community organizations working with them. Two of their safety suggestions are to keep house, car doors, and windows locked at all times and to look up and down your street before going to bed. If you see something suspicious, call the police. People go to bed at different times. If everyone did this, it would provide extra checks. Police continue to monitor multi-problem areas in the west end and have policing strategies in place for the fall session.

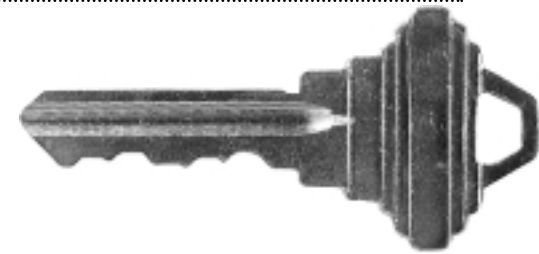
## A Note from the Police About Canvassers

Youths posing as canvassers went around door to door in some areas of our commu-

nity in February. Usually organizations contact the police to let them know they will be canvassing. If residents are not sure about canvassers, they can contact police at 905-546-4925 and report as much information as possible (location, description of the people, etc.). Canvassers are required to wear photo identification and to provide a phone number to call. Do not let them in your house. They should not be rude or pushy about donating money. It is a shame that some people take advantage of legitimate organizations to get some quick cash or identify potential houses to break into. Be careful, and do not be afraid to report people you are unsure about. An AWWCA member said, "After one of these impostors came to my door and I found out about this scam through an AWWCA e-mail alert, I stopped opening the door to canvassers and salespeople I don't know—I talk to them through the window at the side of my door. I worry about their pushing their way in—a home invasion."

## Reporting Problems

Police emphasize they need to hear about problems even if a community mem-



ber feels a single incident is not important enough to call them. The police keep records by location as reports are received, as this may help them identify trouble spots where they need to focus their resources. **Call police at 905-546-4925** and ask for **Communications**. After you reach the dispatcher, he or she will decide whether the call can be put through to the call-management branch. For example, a report of a broken mirror on a car, with no suspects, could be done over the phone.



## Because we care

# NEWS from the BLUES

## On the Beat

BETTY BECHTEL

### Our Thanks to P.C. Jack Vander Pol

**Police Constable Jack Vander Pol** will no longer be assigned to our Beat 691, although he will continue as the high-school-liaison officer. Over the last six years, P.C. Vander Pol went far beyond the call of duty to help our community, working many hours of overtime in addition to his very active work with the schools. He wants residents to know how much he has appreciated working with us over the years. He found it very satisfying because of the co-operation he received from the community. He believes our community-based policing has made a difference.

### Superintendent and Sergeants

**Division 1** (*West of Sherman Avenue to the Dundas border and from the base of the mountain to the bay*)

The superintendent is **John Petz**. **Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin** provides police-communication updates to the community. Three sergeants, in addition to their regular supervisory duties, are now assigned to specific areas of responsibility: **Sergeant Jarvie** is the neighbourhood and business-association contact, **Sergeant Reed** maintains contact with schools and churches, and **Sergeant Narozniak** maintains contact with McMaster University and hospitals.

## We Miss Our Commander

BETTY BECHTEL

For the past two years, **Superintendent Michael Shea** was commander of Division 1, which encompasses the AWWCA areas. Mike brought to his work a wealth of personal attributes. In the fall of 2002, he graduated from the University of Western Ontario with an MBA, which he had obtained in addition to his regular policing duties.

Officers speak very highly of Mike's integrity, leadership style, and approachable, positive, and keen manner. An excellent communicator, he kept business and community representatives informed and reassured by the comprehensive research and planning he achieved with officers under his command. Mike took a personal interest in our community, attending AWWCA, McMaster, and Westdale Business Improvement Area meetings and going out in a patrol car to assess strategies during peak problem times.

The Administrative Services Division now claims Mike's attention. We wish him every success, but we miss him!



Superintendent Michael Shea

## Please Do Not Go There!

Repeatedly over the years, the police have cautioned homeowners not to attempt to reason with people engaged in breaking laws and bylaws. Noisy parties are prime examples. It is not safe to intervene.

Last year, there was an article in *The Globe and Mail* about a Vancouver lawyer who was beaten to death by teenagers while trying to reason with them about a nearby noisy party. While that is the extreme, there have been unpleasant consequences for some in our community who have tried to handle offensive situations. Unpredictable and abusive behav-

our, related to alcohol and illicit drugs, is one. Another is that homeowners have had their homes vandalized and defaced by debris-throwing bullies who assume, rightly or wrongly, that the homeowner has reported them to the police or bylaw officers. I've also received about one report a year for the past three years of what is thought to be a gun being fired. These incidents were reported to the police.

It is not safe to attempt to reason with offenders. Please enjoy and communicate with your neighbours under normal conditions, but leave offenders to the police and bylaw officers. Thank you.

### New Officers

**Beat 691** (*the AWWCA area*): P.C. Bushell, P.C. Matsushita, P.C. Dam, and P.C. Anderson.

### Patrol Car

**Beat 692**: P.C. Steckley. A second car from Beat 692 patrols Beat 691 as often as the police can manage it.

# Westitalia in Westdale

The Westdale Business Improvement Area is holding a brand new event—the first annual Westitalia—on Sept. 11 and 12. It is a family celebration of all things Italian. The event will include a chalk-art-on-the-street competition, musical performers, an Italian-idol competition, food served on the streets and patios throughout the village, fashion shows, theme-based activities, bocce tournaments, and

specialty programs for kids. There will be activities for all ages.

In consideration of nearby residents, the music will stop at 11:30 p.m. Also, the BIA has hired 24-hour security officers. A litter team will ensure the village is free of debris throughout the day and evening, and the overnight officers will do a final cleanup. For more information, call the BIA office at 905-526-6134.



# Westdale Community Policing Centre

*Police Constable Scott Moreton and Donna Quigley*

In the spring issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views* the history and opening of the Community Policing Centre were documented by AWWCA police liaison **Betty Bechtel**. The centre officially opened last September with limited hours but was closed during the summer. We are pleased to announce the centre is re-opening Sept. 7.

The purpose of the center is to provide the community with convenient access to police services. The centre will be operated by volunteers who are trained to answer questions related to personal property, local bylaws, individual rights, and crime prevention.

Applications for volunteer positions are available at the centre. Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older. However, high-school students may fulfill their required 40 hours of community service by assisting the volunteers. A formal interview and police check (paid for by the Hamilton Police Service) are required for all volunteers.



P.C. Scott Moreton

This community-partnership project is sponsored by McMaster University, McMaster Students Union, and the Hamilton Regional Police Service. We acknowledge ongoing support and planning input from the Westdale Business Improvement Area and the AWWCA.

## Westdale Community Policing Centre

Address: 1045 King St. West (above The Picture Frame)

Phone Numbers: 905-546-8951 and 905-546-8952

Hours: Monday to Thursday, 2 to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community Barbecue: Thursday, Sept. 16, noon to 2 p.m.

Contacts:

Donna Quigley, Westdale Community Policing Centre co-coordinator  
905-546-8951 or donna.quigley@sympatico.ca

P.C. Scott Moreton, Westdale Community Policing Centre officer  
905-540-6664 or smoreton@hamiltonpolice.on.ca

## BUILDING PERMITS

**Jorge Caetano** of the city's building and licensing division has provided the following information about building permits:

The city's building and licensing division has up to one year after the time when construction starts to commence legal proceedings against an owner who is building without a permit. However, unless a city inspector actually sees the construction taking place, it can be difficult to enforce this time limit. But if someone builds something that contravenes the Hamilton zoning bylaw, the city can charge them at any time, as there is no time limit for enforcement.

If you want to lodge a complaint regarding construction or zoning matters or want to determine if a particular address has a permit for work being done, call the city's building and licensing division at 905-546-2720 or e-mail [building@hamilton.ca](mailto:building@hamilton.ca). Please be sure to include your name, address, and phone number, the nature of the complaint, and the address of the property you are complaining about. The complainant's information is never divulged, nor can it be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

## Q&A

**Q:** *What is the purpose of the AWWCA's house sign? Who is the message for, and will they understand? I'm not sure what it actually means. What is a "radiant house sign"? And "Because We Care"—about what? Let me know so I can consider putting one up.*

**A:** The message is for all passers-by, to show them there is an organization whose members care about their community. The full name of the AWWCA is on the sign. But the visual image tells us much.

Local artist and AWWCA member **Marla Panko** designed our logo when the AWWCA began in 1998. It is a simple line drawing of a house set into a few gentle curves, crowned with a series of radiating lines. The image of the house is quite simply one of brightness, joy, happiness, and contentment. We refer to it as the "radiant house"—a glowing example of a home nestled snugly in the gentle confines of a neighbourhood.

There are times, when the going is tough, that one might be tempted to consider changing the radiant lines to droplets of sweat and the tipping house to one that is barely hanging on—which it does—much like the "little engine that could."

The AWWCA's mission is to preserve, protect, and enhance the Ainslie Wood Westdale community environment and the quality of life for all residents. We aim to promote balance in our community and our vision is a safe, inviting, beautiful community where all can experience enjoyment of their homes. And just like the little engine, "We think we can... We think we can." We've certainly done a glowing job so far.

We recommend members put the sign in a prominent place in a window facing the street. The sign arouses curiosity and provides a conversational point whereby members can explain to others what the AWWCA is. Having learned about the AWWCA after inquiring about the sign, some have become members. Also, residents are encouraged when they see the house signs in the community and know they are part of a much larger and positive force in our community.

*Answer courtesy of Phyllis Tresidder, AWWCA president emerita.*

# VAR-SITY NEWS

## McMaster's New Entrance

The new entrance and the paving of Main Street West will not take place until the summer of 2005. McMaster's designs weren't ready in time to complete the work before September. The city and McMaster will put out tenders together in the fall.

## City Arranges Additional Garbage Pickups During McMaster Moveout

Thank you to acting supervisor of collection **Mike Castiglione** and his department, waste management (public works), for proactive co-operation in scheduling additional pickups during the McMaster Swap-O-Rama and moveout at the end of April.

## Henkel Parking Site

McMaster University has submitted plans to the city to use the Henkel parking site (near Prince Philip Elementary School) as a parking lot for faculty and staff. As a result of the number of concerns expressed about the use of this site, **Councillor McHattie** has been meeting with McMaster and city staff. A public meeting is planned for September. Meeting dates will be posted at [www.brianmchattie.ca](http://www.brianmchattie.ca).



## Safety Inspections for Rental Houses

AWWCA board member **John Wigle** is putting together a proposal for McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations on how to do safety inspections of student rental houses. The Fire Department has agreed to do the inspections. Landlords who agree to this voluntary program will pay for them and enter into an agreement with the university.

## INTERNATIONAL VAR-SITY NEWS

### *Did Anyone Ask You If You Wanted 3,000 More Students in Worcester, England?*

An article with the above title says: "Experts have predicted that most university towns will be affected if better accommodation strategies are not found in the next few years. They have even invented a name for the syndrome—studentification—which has been likened to the gentrification of the 1960s when the middle classes forced the working classes out of affordable housing in poor areas of cities." This is why it is so important for McMaster to have a formal, inclusive housing plan. (See: [www.thisisworcestershire.co.uk/worcestershire/archive/2003/10/20/wen\\_news\\_features\\_phillpot134ZM.html](http://www.thisisworcestershire.co.uk/worcestershire/archive/2003/10/20/wen_news_features_phillpot134ZM.html).)

## A Story That Parallels Our Own

"The Battle for Bayview" is the cover story of the April 15, 2004, issue of the *North Coast Journal Weekly*. It tells how the neighbourhood surrounding Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, convinced the university to change its expansion plans. You can read the story at [www.northcoastjournal.com/041504/cover0415.html](http://www.northcoastjournal.com/041504/cover0415.html).

## When Tragedy Strikes

AWWCA president **Rob Payne** sent a clipping about a fire that killed three students at Minnesota State University to McMaster Students Union then-president **Neville Boney** last fall, to illustrate how quickly policies change when disaster happens. Since the fire, Minnesota officials have made housing inspections a priority. Rob said: "Fires in student rentals are one of my biggest fears in our community, and we are working much too slowly to prevent them from happening."

## Density Issues in University Communities

Given the poor state of our aging sewers in Hamilton, overcrowded student housing is an issue for our community. You can read about the density issue at Kansas State in the *Kansas State Collegian*, Dec. 3, 2003, at [www.kstatecollegian.com/stories/120303/new\\_rezoning.shtml](http://www.kstatecollegian.com/stories/120303/new_rezoning.shtml).

The AWWCA board of directors holds its monthly meetings at the Westdale Community Policing Centre, 1045 King St. West, at 7 p.m. on the first Monday of each month. We welcome those interested in attending.

## Ripping the Heart Out of Communities

The current-affairs program *Inside Out*, "Matriculation Invasion," aired on BBC television in May, stated: "Purpose-built student accommodation should be a government priority to prevent expanding student numbers ripping the heart out of communities. . . [due to] an ambitious and rapidly expanding university. No university, anywhere, should be allowed to expand without providing the accommodation needed to house the additional students implied by the expansion. This could be new build in areas of high demand or conversion of existing dwellings in areas of low demand. Whatever the source, universities need to show that provision is being made for the students they wish to attract and who will live away from home. Expanding student numbers mean more accommodation is needed. Local families and communities should not be asked to pay the price for that expansion. Local authorities should have the planning powers to block expansion where provision is not made to house the additional students." In university cities internationally, we read the same complaint—universities are negligent in providing appropriate housing for their students. It has always been the position of the AWWCA that McMaster needs to have a housing plan to accommodate any additional students.

# members' CORNER

## My Old Neighbourhood

*I'm always glad to read about my old neighbourhood [Ainslie Wood] and to learn of the AWWCA's many activities. It sounds as though you have some good support from your new local councillor—that's just great, and I'm sure the group will really appreciate working with Brian McHattie. He obviously knows and cares about the neighbourhood. I wish you continued success in your endeavours. By the way, I'm still in touch by e-mail with the woman who bought my house. She tells me how the garden is doing and about improvements the next-door neighbour is making to his property. I drove by at Christmas and saw that she had the house beautifully decorated. It's nice to know that my little house is still much loved.*

Sheila Fletcher, Friend of the AWWCA.

## A Newsy Newsletter

*What a "newsy" newsletter and very well put together!! Please forward it to me in the spring and fall. Deb Downey, senior editor of the Dundas Star News and Ancaster News.*

## Ward 10 Councillor Writes

*Recently, I received a copy of your spring 2004 Neighbourhood News & Views, and I was most impressed with the design and content. As a former resident of Westdale, whose parents still reside in this area, I am very interested in keeping up with the happenings of this community. Thank you for sending your newsletter, and I hope you will continue to send me subsequent editions. Maria Pearson, Ward 10 Councillor, Stoney Creek.*

## A Very Nice Officer

In March, a senior resident phoned the AWWCA's police liaison, **Betty Bechtel**, to say that "a very nice officer," **P. C. Mike Matsushita**, had visited her, and she was able to voice her concerns about a nearby problem house. He had already visited the tenants. She said she feels less frightened and will call police if she has a problem in the future. She was very grateful for Betty's actions. Shortly after, another senior resident contacted Betty to say that after some

serious damage had been done to her car, she was visited by "a wonderful officer who seemed eager to help. You sure know whom to talk to." It was the same P.C. Matsushita.

## Resident Thanks Scotiabank

*In April, the outside wall of Scotiabank in Westdale was defaced (to me graffiti is never "art"). As I was entering the bank, a firm was there removing the mess and restoring the wall. I congratulated the manager. As has been shown elsewhere, keeping graffiti cleaned up keeps up the neighbourhood and the bank deserves a pat on the back.*

Ken Ockenden, AWWCA member.

## Westdale Business Improvement Area Congratulates the AWWCA

*Thanks for the update. Hope the AWWCA enters their latest newsletter in a contest. It is fantastic. You outdo yourselves with each issue. I can't imagine the hours it must take. Congratulations to one and all for a job well done.*

Shelagh Snider, co-chair, Westdale BIA.

## Reading the Riot Act

*There was an article in The Hamilton Spectator April 1 about Jack Vander Pol making pre-emptive visits to problem houses to read the riot act in case of any shenanigans during exam period. This is what we must do all the time in order to maintain decorum in our community. Kudos to Jack.*

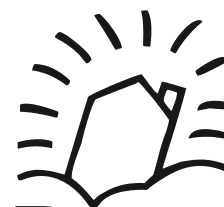
Michael Ladoceur, block representative.

## AWWCA on Councillor's Website

Councillor McHattie has made space available on his website for community groups to post notices and information. To view AWWCA notices and some past newsletters, go to [www.brianmchattie.ca/awwca/intro.htm](http://www.brianmchattie.ca/awwca/intro.htm).

## Our Police Liaison on TV

**Police Constable Jack Vander Pol** asked **Betty** and **Jim Bechtel** to attend a media event at McMaster on March 31. Betty was interviewed by a *Hamilton Spectator* reporter and by CHCH TV.



# 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:

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Autumn 2004



*"Building community  
block by block"*

# The Way We Were

## The House That Jacob Built

LOREEN JEROME

### Part 1

How many times have you passed by the stately old stone house on the north side of Sanders Boulevard at the end of Binkley Road and wondered about its origin?

In the 18th century, the area was part of Upper Canada. George III was King of England when the original Crown land patent, dated 1796, granted

900 acres to the Johnston sisters, Jemima, Sarah, and Mary, daughters of Chief (Lieutenant) Brant Johnston, a white man who had married an Indian woman. That same year, the Johnston sisters sold the West Hamilton portion to John Mackay.

The Binkleys purchased 800 acres from John Mackay in 1803 and gave their name to Binkley's Hollow. They were Palatine Germans, forced to leave their country for religious reasons. Hans and Mary Binkley emigrated from Switzerland to England and later to America, landing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1735, where they settled in Lancaster County. In 1783, after the War of Independence, their son Marx Binkley (1748-1805), with his wife Magdalene and family of three boys and two girls, spent two months traveling in Conestoga wagons, originally bound for Kitchener. But when they reached the mountain brow at the top of Horning Road and stayed at the home of Abraham Horning, the beauty of the valley below them was irresistible, so they decided to start a new life there.

Marx Binkley and his family cleared land for crops that was heavily wooded with oak, maple, black walnut, pine, spruce, and hickory. Log cabins were built from the materials at hand. Later, impressive homes



Binkley House.

Photo: Loreen Jerome

were constructed with limestone quarried from the escarpment. This was a time when settlers, after a hard day's work, had to stand guard through the night fearing not only thieves but also attacks by wolves, bears, and wildcats on their sheep, pigs, horses, and cows.

Jacob Binkley (1806-67), great-grandson of Marx, built the handsome stone house that still stands at 54 Sanders Blvd. at the head of a ravine. The house was completed in 1847 and named Lakelet Vale, as it had a little spring-fed lake at the rear. Binkley's Pond, as it was known, was used for skating, fishing, and good times. It is now the Zone 6 parking lot at McMaster University on the west side of Cootes Drive.

A tree-lined avenue, now Binkley Road, ran to the house from Dundas Road, now Main Street West. Some of the property's trees, such as magnolias and tulips, were rare in the district. The nearby carriage house for the cutters and carriages also housed implements for a carpenter and blacksmith shop. A large wooden barn 100 yards west has long since disappeared.

Love of one's surroundings often leads to the desire to be buried nearby.

Common practice at that time among farm families was to be buried on their own land, and in this instance the Binkley families left two local cemeteries as part of their lasting heritage.



Binkley Coach House

Photo: Loreen Jerome

*Part 2 of this story will identify other Binkley houses and the legacy this early family left for future generations.*

Sources: Herbert Fairbairn Gardiner (compiler), *Gardiner's Scrapbook*, Vols. 77 and 102; A. Anderson and Grace Buttrum (compilers), *Other Days, Other Ways: Historical Sketches of the Binkley School District*; David N. Jardine, *West Hamilton, a Village and a Church* (Hamilton: West Hamilton Heritage Society, ca.1990).

Mailing Label