

Neighbourhood News & Views

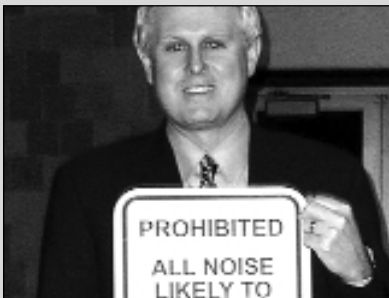
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AINSLIE WOOD / WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.
Spring 2006

"Building community block by block"



Teaching Gardens

6



Turning Down the Volume

17



Westdale Memories

24

An Outstanding Leader

TRACEY LINDSAY

The year 2006 has seen Hamilton Police Service add the new position of crime manager to the west end. We welcome **Acting Sergeant Jeff Copp** in this capacity. **Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin** will still be in charge overall, but some of his hands-on work has been taken over by A/Sgt. Copp.

Sgt. Rastin has brought an innovative approach to addressing the issues in the Ainslie Wood/Westdale area. His ability to work collaboratively with the various community partners has been instrumental in the development of many new programs designed to improve conditions in the west end.

The community-enhancement report is one of many initiatives he proposed and implemented. It provides an opportunity for members of our community to report concerns and to identify positive situations worthy of recognition. This is a new and positive way to encourage community members, whether student or homeowner, to contribute to the well-being of the neighbourhoods.

Sgt. Rastin was also instrumental in the establishment of additional police patrols on weekends around the university. This is a partnership between McMaster University, the McMaster Students Union, and the HPS, which is providing the vehicles for the patrols.

When there was a sudden spike in break-and-enters in this area, Sgt. Rastin quickly set up a special squad, resulting in a decrease in the number of such crimes in the past year.

Sgt. Rastin collaborated with many community partners in the development of the police business plan for 2005. One of the areas identified in the business plan was the reduction of graf-

fiti in the area. Sgt. Rastin has worked diligently with AWWCA board member **Dmitri Malakhov** to establish the Adopt-A-Box program. This was the first such initiative in Hamilton, and other areas are now establishing the same program.

An important part of the 2006 business plan is

the Off-Campus Student Restorative-Justice Program, which will address off-campus student conduct. Sgt. Rastin initiated this program, which will be implemented this September.

It was through Sgt. Rastin's dedication, interest, and commitment to the Ainslie Wood/Westdale area that these initiatives have been implemented.

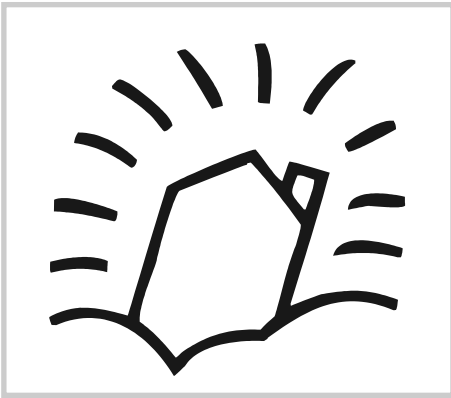
Former AWWCA police liaison **Betty Bechtel** said: "It was always fun working with Scott because his timely sense of humour kept the tone of the meetings on an upbeat note, and productive outcomes were achieved in an amicable manner. Scott is a masterful communicator, and our community has been kept informed of police progress through his e-mail reports, in addition to his reports at AWWCA board meetings. We have been fortunate to have Scott working with us."

The Ainslie Wood/Westdale community wishes to thank Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin for his outstanding leadership and his many progressive contributions to our community.

Tracey Lindsay is police liaison for the AWWCA.



Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin
Photo: Loreen Jerome



THIS IS OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

New Hazardous-Waste Site and Community Recycling Centre

Save yourself a trip to the east end and check out the new hazardous-waste site at 27 Olympic Drive, Dundas (adjacent to the Transfer Station), where you can dispose of a wide range of items and substances from your garage, garden shed, workshop, bathroom, kitchen, and laundry room, free of charge. This facility was opened by Hotz Environmental Services Inc. on April 3.

In addition, the Dundas Transfer Station has been expanded and transformed into a Community Recycling Centre where you can drop off dozens of household items, diverting them from landfill, at no cost (fees apply to commercial loads).

The sites are well-organized and nicely landscaped. Both locations are open Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For a complete list of acceptable items, go to myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/CityDepartments/PublicWorks/WasteManagement.



Planning charette for George R. Allan naturalization Feb. 21.

Photo: Janet Woodward

Let's Green George R. Allan

MARY LOUISE PIGOTT

The three-year-old effort to "green" the schoolgrounds at George R. Allan is moving into an exciting new phase. The Schoolground Improvement Committee hosted two design charettes at the Westdale Public Library in February of this year. They were led by horticulturalist and facilitator **Adam Bienenstock** and his team from Gardens for Living. A charette is a kind of brainstorming session that is often used as a tool in urban planning and landscape architecture as a means of consulting the various stakeholder groups involved in a project.

Attending the charettes over two nights were 38 parents and community members, including **Dmitri Malakhov**, **Alice Sabourin**, and **Janet Woodward**, representing the AWWCA board of directors; **Karyn Callaghan**, representing the Westdale Tree Committee, a sub-committee of the AWWCA; **Ursula Bethune** of the Westdale Children's School; and AWWCA members **Judith Armour**, **Joe Day**, **Penny Palmer**, **Bruce Simpson**, and **Elizabeth Weretilnyk**.

Adam began with slides showing some of the exciting things that have been done at other schools: introducing natural elements such as rocks, logs, native plantings and gardens, as well as sculptural approaches to seating, murals, and outdoor sculpture. The pos-

sibilities are as endless as they are inspiring. After the slide show, Adam and his team broke us up into working groups and challenged us to recall our own childhood experiences in nature and to come up with ways to bring similar opportunities into the more highly structured environment our children are living in. Lively, and at times wistful, discussions ensued, and we filled pages with ideas both fanciful and down to earth. The charettes were greatly enhanced by detailed plans of the schoolgrounds that had been drawn up by George R. Allan parent Joe Day, with assistance from **Joe Czarnuch**. Coffee was kindly provided by Penny Palmer of **Global Village**.

Similar sessions will be held with the staff and students at George R. Allan, who are the biggest stakeholders after all, following which Adam will generate a design for the schoolgrounds. We will be looking for community input again at that point. We are very excited about the possibilities for our schoolgrounds, and we are especially thrilled that several members of the wider community have taken an active interest in our efforts to provide our children with a healthier, more stimulating environment. If you would like to become involved, please contact me at 905-524-2423 or mlpigott@sympatico.ca.

Mary Louise Pigott is an AWWCA member.

Peer Gardening

Ed. note: In the spring issue of Neighbourhood News & Views we informed you of the launch of Green Yards-Healthy Neighbourhoods in our community. The project was developed to help citizens of Hamilton garden without pesticides. We also asked for volunteer peer gardeners to assist those who wanted to learn how to garden in a way that supports the environment. Pete Wobschall of Green Venture has provided us with an update on the project.

The first of three years for the Peer Gardening program has passed, and the Hamilton Coalition on Pesticide Issues (HCPI) has learned much, despite limited results. We are looking forward to a new approach for 2006 that includes your community and the entire City of Hamilton.

In the original proposal to the Hamilton Community Foundation in 2004, the success of the program was dependant on establishing a partnership with the AWWCA—a local, active neighbourhood association—to help recruit participants. Unfortunately, our efforts did not produce enough participants. The good news is that we have altered our approach to recruit participants and expanded our target area to include the whole city.

The HCPI is again looking for motivated individuals to act as peer gardeners and transitional gardeners. Peer gardeners must be willing to spend a few hours over the period of a year supporting one (or more) of their neighbours in phasing out chemical-pesticide use by:

1. Helping your neighbours (transitional gardeners) develop a customized plan to phase out chemical pesticides at the beginning of the season (about 30 minutes per plan—maximum number of participants to be determined by you).

2. Answering questions or concerns from transitional gardeners about their lawn and garden care if they approach you (you will be given support, guidance, information, and access to area experts to help you in your efforts).

3. Visiting the transitional gardeners four times during the growing season at scheduled times to offer support and advice if they haven't already approached you.

4. Attending a year-end celebration with your transitional gardeners and other participants from across the city that will include a fully funded barbecue and family activities.

That's it! We do the rest. The project co-ordinator will conduct a survey of

your neighbourhood to identify and select transitional gardeners based on the number of transitional gardeners you think you can handle (minimum one).

A degree of knowledge about maintaining lawns and gardens without chemical pesticides would be an asset, but not required, as you will have the project co-ordinator and area experts to help with any questions or concerns from your transitional gardeners.

The tasks are manageable and the results are real.

For more information please contact Pete Wobschall at water@greenventure.ca or 905-540-8787, ext.17.



Photo: Cecilia Irazusta

Art in the Village



Helga Morrison painting in her studio.

Photo: Randy Morrison

Helga Morrison opened her art studio in Westdale Village this spring. We asked her to tell us why she chose Westdale. She responded: "I could not have found a better location, tucked above Albert Snow Hair Design at 1036 King St. West. As a 13-year resident of Westdale, with its one-of-a kind shops, great schools, range of services, ample green space, and unique blend of residents (from original homeowners, to students and young families), I have grown truly fond of this neighbourhood that my family and I call home."

In the spring of 1999, Helga decided to return to school as a mature student and began working on an undergradu-

ate degree at McMaster University. Now a recent graduate of the university's art program and part of Hamilton's emerging art scene, she plans to become a permanent fixture in the village.

Helga invites you to stop by for a visit: "You will probably find me painting in the sun-drenched front room beyond the gallery space, by a wall of windows overlooking a thriving community of which I am proud to be a part." The studio is open for limited hours on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Helga can be reached at 905-730-4901 or helgamorrison@sympati-co.ca.

THIS IS OUR Neighbourhood

Talented Singer in Our Community

LOREEN JEROME

Ainslie Wood East has been home to **Diana Panton** all her life, and her parents are members of the AWWCA.

Diana released her first solo jazz CD, *Yesterday Perhaps*, July 9 at Hamilton Place Studio Theatre in an intimate club setting. Despite having known Diana for many years, this was the first time my husband and I had heard her sing live on stage. She was absolutely enchanting.

Introduced at an early age by her father to instrumental classics, some jazz, and eventually Ella Fitzgerald records, Diana's love of singing blossomed. She first sang as a young girl on her way home from Earl Kitchener and Ryerson Schools, where she attended French immersion classes. As close neighbours, my family and I were often delighted to hear Diana practice singing in her room or the family's backyard.

Diana received classical voice lessons from **Dr. Joan Heels** (an AWWCA member), a respected vocal teacher who lived in her neighbourhood; Dr. Heels urged Diana to try out for the Hamilton All-Star Jazz Band. She gained a place with the band in 1993 and stayed with them for 8 1/2 years.

Diana left for France in January 2000 and taught at the University of Paris until June 2002 before coming home and becoming a French sessional lecturer at McMaster. She soon earned a teaching certificate from Brock University and in September 2004 began teaching French at her alma mater, Westdale Secondary School.

Diana won Best Jazz Recording and Best Live Performance Award by People's Choice at the 2005 Hamilton Music Awards at the Dofasco Centre for the Performing Arts. Her release concert was chosen as a highlight of 2005



Diana Panton

Photo: José Crespo, Hamilton

in *The Hamilton Spectator*. She has been featured twice in *Hamilton Magazine*: on the cover of the fall 1998 issue and in a feature article in 2003. She was featured in the cover story for both Hamilton's *VIEW* magazine July 7-13, 2005, and Toronto's *NOW* magazine, Feb. 2-8, 2006. Diana's CD is available at The Westdale Bookworm, The Boutique, Global Village, and Vital Planet in Westdale. For more information: dianapanton.com.

Loreen Jerome is treasurer of the AWWCA.

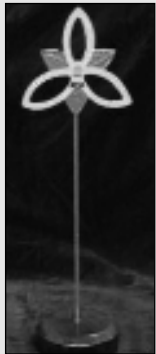
*"Building community
block by block"*



Beauty in Business

Congratulations to AWWCA member **Joe Thivy**, owner of **Grapes & Hops**, for winning one of the city's two Excellence in Property Awards for the Westdale Business Improvement Area in 2005. **Councillor Brian McHattie**, in his letter of congratulations to Joe, says: "The beautification and continual upkeep of 11 Paisley Ave. South are a demonstration of your dedication to the well being of the City's commercial districts. Your leadership in establishing a pedestrian scale environment on Paisley Avenue through your initial and continual investment is highly commended. Ultimately your efforts create a catalyst for other property and business owners to contribute towards the street's vibrancy."

Congratulations to Our White-Trillium Award Winners



White Trillium
Copyright City of
Hamilton 2001

Congratulations to AWWCA members Carol Davids, Janice and Jim Flaherty, Alan and Joan McArthur, Liz Millar and Ed Oliver, and Sandra Spree, who won white-trillium awards in 2005. The

Trillium Awards Program was established in Hamilton in 1956. It promotes and encourages community pride through the recognition of excellence in property beautification. During the month of July, over 300 volunteers judge every single-family residence in the city to look for trillium winners. The criteria for judging include curb appeal, maintenance, and principles and elements of landscape design, such as harmony, balance, focal area, proportion, texture, and colour.

Westdale and West Hamilton Seniors' Meeting

Westdale and West Hamilton seniors and retirees meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. at Grace Hall, Grace Lutheran Church, 1107 Main St. West. Join us for a relaxing afternoon and refreshments with a friendly, congenial group. New members are most welcome. Contacts are AWWCA members Pat Barton, 905-527-5137, and Effie York, 905-522-6256.



Ultimate Frisbee has scheduled at least six events at Churchill Park this summer. Disc kick-off day is May 13, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be clinics, a hat tournament, meet-and-greet, Ultimate information and merchandise, and the opportunity for new players to sign up. See hamiltonultimate.com.



Kathrine Hamilton with her dog Buttons.

Kathrine, Owner of Buttons

If you live in the Westdale neighbourhood you probably knew of Kathrine Hamilton, owner of a dog named Buttons. Before Buttons she had a dog named Angus. A resident of Barclay Street, she hobbled (she was waiting for knee surgery) about Westdale walking her dog several times a day, greeting everyone en route, always introducing herself and her dog. Says Penny Palmer, "I would look out my window on the bleakest of winter mornings and see her crossing Churchill Park over the ice, in super cold weather. She was always so pleasant and cheery, and she was an inspiration to all of us to get out and walk in the neighbourhood. I was sad to hear she passed away on April 1 at the age of 59. She had such a kind soul, and I know our family will miss her." Buttons is now in the safe care of Kathrine's brother.

local HERO

Teaching Gardens Get Tender Loving Care

MARY LOUISE PIGOTT

The old Teaching Gardens in Churchill Park have seen better days but are slowly being brought back to life thanks to the volunteer efforts and dedication of one man—Ainslie Wood resident and master gardener **Dan Riegler**.

The Herb Garden and the Plant Lover's Garden were originally created by the Royal Botanical Gardens' Auxiliary and were maintained

by its members until the city leased Churchill Park from the RBG in 1995. One of the conditions of the lease agreement was that the city would maintain the gardens to the same standard. In 1997 Peter Booker, manager of parks' beautification at the time, hired Paul Mackay to maintain the gardens, and they flourished for several years under his care. During this time, Dan often visited the gardens, exchanging plant knowledge with Paul, contributing many of his own rare medicinal plants, and giving interpretive tours of the gardens.

When Peter Booker left to become the head of horticulture at the RBG in



Master gardener Dan Riegler.

Photo: Mary Louise Pigott

the spring of 2004, Paul Mackay was let go. From that point on, maintenance of the gardens was limited to mowing and trimming the lawns, with occasional weeding. By August of 2004, according to Dan, the Herb and Plant Lover's gardens were "tangled jungles of overgrown weeds choking out the flowers and plants, which had already been decimated from not being watered all year." Twenty per cent of the plants had been lost through drought and strangulation.

Shocked and dismayed, Dan took it upon himself to begin watering, weeding, and planting in an effort to bring the gardens back to their former glory. Dan "put the garden to bed" in November 2004 and returned the following spring. He replaced all the plants that had been lost with plants from his own collection, added many more native and exotic medicinal plants, and began rearranging the layout of the Herb Garden to make it more functional and aesthetically pleasing. He also ensured that two of the large concrete urns that were being reclaimed by the RBG remained in the



Gardens before.

Photo: Dan Riegler

gardens. He dug the large holes needed to accommodate them and arranged for RBG crews to install them in front of the Plant Lover's Garden and inside the gate of the Herb Garden, where they



Gardens after.

Photo: Dan Riegler

create a striking and welcoming effect.

The city continues to mow the lawns and has weeded the Plant Lover's Garden; however, Dan believes it requires much more than basic horticultural knowledge to maintain the Herb Garden properly. According to Dan, "Many famous and important medicinal plants look like weeds—some actually are." He continues to give interpretive tours of the gardens. "Each plant is rich in mythology, cultural uses, and history. The simple signage with plant names cannot do the garden justice."

Dan was invited by the city to bid on the maintenance contract, but the cost of the required insurance would have exceeded the value of the contract, making it unfeasible. That hasn't stopped him from donating plant materials and countless hours to the gardens—more than 150 hours in the last year alone. Dan has taken to calling it the "Apothecary's Garden," as all the plants have medicinal value, even those whose use is primarily culinary. Says Dan, "There are over 300 medicinal plants in the garden, each with its own fascinating story to tell. It is a hidden treasure in our city, and still very much a teaching garden."

If you would like a tour of the "Apothecary's Garden," contact Dan Riegler at 905-297-9662.

The Ward Avenue Gardening Project

MARY LOUISE PIGOTT

In addition to his work in the Teaching Gardens, Ward Avenue resident Dan Riegler voluntarily gardens no fewer than 10 of the student-rental properties on his street. Dan's background is as a sculptor and jewelry designer, but he has also been studying plants and medicinal herbs for over 30 years, producing his own salves, creams, and tinctures from the herbs that he grows.

What he calls the GhettoGreen Project began four years ago. Having converted his small front lawn and most of his backyard from grass to gardens, Dan was running out of space for his expanding plant collection and needed nursery space for propagation, so he began approaching landlords on his street for permission to garden on their properties. It doesn't cost the landlords anything; Dan provides all the plant materials and labour free of charge, and it makes the properties more attractive. All he asks is that they leave the gardens alone and contact him if they have any problems. Of course, Dan also benefits from the increased garden space; otherwise he could not afford to do it. He has approached about 15 property owners, with only five rejections. One landlord was afraid that a garden might "intimidate" students! Another had a change of heart and ripped out \$900 worth of plant material without consulting Dan, who would have gladly removed it. However, most of his experiences have been positive. One landlord was particularly enthusiastic when the parents of a prospective tenant decided to rent the house after falling in love with the garden.

What started as a need for more garden space soon became a challenge to beautify his neighbourhood and make a difference. Some of the students on his street have been inspired by what they see and approached Dan to ask if there's anything they can do. He gives them free plants and asks only that they plant them at the front of the houses. Dan would love to see the project grow, but his small but growing professional gardening business is demanding more and more of his time these days. However, he would be happy to supply plants or advice to groups and individuals wishing to get involved in "ghettogreening." Dan is certainly a local hero on Ward Avenue.



Some of the cleanup participants with some of the garbage collected.

Photo: Richard Palmer

Major Hurdle Overcome on West Hamilton Rail Trail

RICHARD PALMER

The annual spring rail-trail cleanup in West Hamilton under the leadership of **Ken Sherman** took place on Saturday, April 29. Among the 30 volunteers were 10 from St. George's Reformed Episcopal Church on Emerson Street and Ward 1 Councillor **Brian McHattie**.

We had the same goal as many other groups across Canada: to pick up litter in our neighbourhoods during Pitch-in Week. We registered with the City of Hamilton and were given a kit containing gloves and garbage bags. With our bright yellow bags and a mission we started at 9 a.m. and continued to noon. We were able to clean from Fortino's to Stroud near Highway 403.

When the job was complete we had collected 50 bags of garbage and junk of all kinds—picnic tables, chairs, and other furniture; a computer; metal of all types; concrete; and plywood. We were happy to fill four blue boxes with recyclable items.

We were also delighted to hear that Canadian Pacific Railway has reached an agreement with the city to allow the rail trail to continue from Ewen Road to Aberdeen Avenue. It will cross Highway 403 on CP's right-of-way and continue through their rail yard to Aberdeen. "The entire project is estimated to cost more than \$1 million, said Mr. McHattie. The funding for the project will come partly from the city's cycling fund and partly from federal gas tax money." This agreement overcomes a major hurdle to completing the rail trail.

Let's try and keep the trail spotless.

Richard Palmer is a member of St. George's Reformed Episcopal Church

Ward 1 Chedoke- Cootes Councillor's Report

BRIAN MCHATTIE

Spring is here, and to me the best indicator of this most hopeful season of renewal is hearing the first frogs calling throughout the Dundas Valley. I will update you on my work in Ainslie Wood/Westdale, but, first, here are my tips for the best times and places to listen to the frogs: just after dusk (a light rain helps) at Slote Road ponds and McCormick Pond for spring peepers and, a bit later in the season, anywhere adjacent to Cootes Paradise marsh in the Royal Botanical Gardens lands for American Toad choruses. So when you see me sneak out of a late evening community meeting, you know where I'm going!

After much hard work by **Penny Palmer, Lesa van Loon, Janet Woodward**, and others in the community, we fast-tracked designs and will be constructing a beautiful new splash pad this summer adjacent to the children's playground in Churchill Park. Additional park trees and benches will be installed around the splash pad.

After several years of not spraying, some city parks reached predefined weed thresholds in 2005, so the Parks Department decided to renew the spray program. Based on your input, I have asked for no spraying in our parks. We are the only ward in the city to have taken this action, although Dundas is likely to follow. Now we need to develop our own community-based response, which may involve hand-pulling weeds, naturalization of park areas, and perhaps implementing turf health procedures such as overseeding and aerating, particularly in the sports field. City council has recognized Ward 1 with a \$15,000 allocation to assist us in our pilot project to stay pesticide free. We'll be inviting the AWWCA and others to a community meeting to develop a strategy on this in early spring.

I am the city and Ward 1 representative on the McMaster Innovation Park Site Plan Development Steering Committee. The process has been very interesting, and the park will be a great community asset that will attract families to the surrounding neighbour-

hoods. You can learn more at Hamilton.ca/whia.

I have also been working on other projects:

- Establishment of a committee to implement the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Secondary Plan.
- A new multistakeholder agreement to work together on stopping graffiti in the area.
- A new focus on preventing "mobile" noise caused by pedestrians moving through the neighbourhoods.
- A traffic-management strategy has been implemented around George R Allan school designed to protect children—this plan includes a new median to be installed on King Street West in front of the school to slow traffic and make it safer for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Work is ongoing to determine a better way to accommodate cycling traffic along King Street West from the McKittrick Bridge bike lanes to McMaster University.

Please visit brianmchattie.ca for more details on my City Hall committee work and projects listed above. I invite you to sign up for my e-mail list at brianmchattie.ca/contact.htm#subscribe and to communicate with me at 905 546-2416 or at bmchattie@hamilton.ca. Have a great spring, and bring on the spring peepers and bird migration!

Implementing the Plan for the AWWCA Community

DALE BROWN

The Community Strategy Implementation Committee of ASPECT (Ainslie Wood/Westdale Secondary Plan Executive Committee and Team) is the successor to the Advisory Committee of ASPECT as per Recommendation 2.8.1 of the Ainslie Wood Westdale Community Strategy report (July 2005). Its purpose is to monitor and advise on actions proposed and outlined in the strategy. The committee was organized through Ward 1 Chedoke-Cootes Councillor **Brian McHattie's** office.

The Implementation Committee has held two meetings to date to discuss both the structure of the committee and the Community Strategy recommendations. It is proposed that

this committee act as the steering and communications committee, although this structure hasn't been finalized yet. Other subcommittees may be set up on an as-needed basis.

There are 15 volunteers representing the different stakeholders, including the AWWCA, McMaster University, the Westdale Business Improvement Area, and the McMaster Students Union. AWWCA members include **Jeanne Bernard, Michael Bordin, Dieter Klaus, Dmitri Malakhov, Kenneth Moyle, Rob Payne, and Phyllis Tresidder**.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Mr. McHattie at bmchattie@hamilton.ca.

Dale Brown, executive assistant to Ward 1's councillor, was chair of ASPECT.

Signs, Signs, Everywhere...

LOREEN JEROME

On January 17 I attended the New Sign By-Law Consultation Session. At the meeting, proposals received by Hamilton council in December 2005 were outlined. Each proposal was reviewed, and those in attendance were invited to comment. Below is the letter I sent on behalf of the AWWCA on Feb. 20 to Dan Mousseau, co-ordinator of the new sign bylaw, with copies to the AWWCA board of directors, Councillor Brian McHattie, Dale Brown, Kay Morden, Colleen Wicken of the Mohawk College Neighbourhood Association, and Councillor Terry Whitehead.

Dear Mr. Mousseau:

As you are aware, I attended two of the New Sign Bylaw Public Consultation Meetings on behalf of the AWWCA. The last one took place January 17 at Dundas Town Hall.

I was pleased with the thorough method of reviewing the proposals set out in Report 1 and the recording of comments regarding proposals outlined in Report 1. This method allowed us to voice our opinions.

However, I was unimpressed with your dismissing For Rent signs as a zoning problem. The following paragraphs will refresh your memory of the predicament in the Ainslie Wood/Westdale neighbourhoods and also around Mohawk College.

The houses in our area are zoned single family and are mostly in areas designated low density in our new Secondary Plan (which became part of the city's Official Plan just last July).

The AWWCA'S February 2006 count

of student rental houses in the six areas surrounding McMaster University—Ainslie Wood, Ainslie Wood North, Ainslie Wood East, Ainslie Wood

tisement to thieves; student rental houses account for most of the residential break-ins in our area.

There is nothing in the proposed

new bylaw to regulate these signs. The AWWCA would like to propose that:

- in any zoning, House for Rent and House for Sale signs put up by the property owner follow the same regulations governing real estate agencies' signs as set out in the new bylaw;
- in single-family zoning, Room for Rent signs be restricted to being placed inside a window



A proliferation of For Rent signs plagues our neighbourhoods.

Photo: Loreen Jerome

West, Westdale North, and Westdale South—shows a significant percentage of student rentals in our area. Absentee landlords own most of the student rental houses. Many are operated illegally as de facto boarding or lodging houses.

This is a problem that is being attacked on many fronts, including developing purpose-built housing both on and off campus. Although the city has difficulty enforcing the zoning because it can't easily gain entry to the houses, it can control signage that makes it easier for landlords to break the law.

The proliferation of For Rent, Rooms for Rent, and Room for Rent signs is inappropriate for areas zoned single family. The signs are stuck in windows, tacked to porches, nailed to trees, and look tacky and transient. According to the police, the signs are also an adver-

or on the front door, limited to one per street face and to a maximum size of 8" X 12" or 12" X 19", respectively;

- in single-family zoning, Rooms (plural) for Rent signs be prohibited as implying a boarding or lodging house;
- in single-family zoning, only legal apartments with a multi-unit variance may be advertised; and
- in single-family zoning, For Rent signs be prohibited because they do not specify what is for rent.

It seems likely that enforcement would mostly depend on complaints from neighbours, but there should be penalties for non-compliance.

We urge the city to incorporate regulation of such signs as a highly visible and concrete step to restore the integrity and appearance of our neighbourhoods. Thank you for your consideration.

AWWCA Opposes Assessment Increases

When assessment notices arrived last October, we received many calls from members, some of whom mentioned increases of over 30 per cent. The AWWCA took action and will continue to work on this issue. Members on e-mail received messages on the topic from AWWCA president Rob Payne on Oct. 6, Oct. 30, Nov. 15, and Nov. 16, 2005, and on April 10 and April 20. Below is an edited version of his Nov. 15 message:

As you are aware, the AWWCA neighbourhoods have received the largest average assessment increase in Hamilton. This increase reflects in part the desirability of our community as a place to live.

The AWWCA is concerned that the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation unfairly compares the value of owner-occupied residential properties with residential properties used to generate income through rental.

Over the last month we have researched MPAC's procedures and have had meetings with our MPP, **Judy Marsales**, as well as with MPAC to discuss our neighbourhood's particular demographic. These meetings were arranged and attended by **Councillor Brian McHattie**, who is spending many hours helping Ward 1 with this issue.

The AWWCA's position on MPAC assessment is that owner-occupied housing should be assessed separately from non-owner-occupied residential

rental property. We think that MPAC should properly categorize residential investment properties under Code 366 (Off-Campus Student Housing) instead of under Code 301 (Residential Family Housing).

Our discussions with our MPP and MPAC focused on the need to make the assessment process as accurate as possible, which includes applying the appropriate code so as to be consistent with MPAC's intention of making a "like comparison" of properties. Unfortunately we have been unsuccessful in getting full support for this from MPAC.

We will continue to work with our councillor to establish a fair MPAC process for our community. Mr. McHattie has recently put a motion through council to address this issue (see below).

You can assist us by contacting our MPP at 905-529-1277 or jmarsales.mpp@liberal.ola.org and voice your support for developing an accurate MPAC assessment using Code 366 for off-campus student housing.

It is important to recognize that applying the appropriate code may have no immediate impact on the assessment values but will ensure that comparisons are between like properties.

As this is a work in progress, any ideas would be appreciated and can be sent directly to me at robpayne@sympatico.ca.

provincial ISSUES

Councillor McHattie's motion of Nov. 14, 2005, identifying student lodging homes as income producing:

Whereas in Ward 1 student lodging homes are selling for \$80-100K higher than assessed value,

And whereas this category of homes is artificially driving the assessed values of adjacent family homes,

And whereas student lodging homes earn the owner from \$2,500 to \$5,000 per month in income,

And whereas MPAC has an assessment code (Code 366) for off-campus student lodging homes and is using this code in Waterloo,

Therefore be it resolved:

That staff be requested to implement a method to legally identify student lodging homes as income-producing properties including, but not limited to, a student-lodging-home bylaw.

FUN News

JANICE BROWN, MEMBERSHIP
CO-ORDINATOR, FUN

One of the top priorities for the Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods in 2006 is reform of the Ontario Municipal Board. FUN is continuing to recommend a stronger requirement to honour a municipal council's decision in planning matters, to request funding for citizens' groups who wish to appeal to the OMB, and to ask that all OMB hearings be recorded. This formed the basis of our submission to the Legislative Committee regarding reform of the OMB.

FUN continues to press for changes to the Municipal Elections Act and is demanding that contributions by corpo-



rations and trade unions be prohibited. FUN is also recommending that our member associations only support candidates who do not accept donations from corporations and trade unions.

Our president, Bill Phillips, has been attending meetings of a coalition seeking to cap increases in Current Value Assessments to soften increases in homeowners' property taxes. FUN will continue to follow this issue and keep its membership informed about any new developments.

For those who wish to follow FUN's activities, go to urban-neighbourhoods.ca or contact Bill Phillips at funontario@rogers.com or 416-969-8994.

At our founding convention in Hamilton Nov. 24, 2001, we voted to establish a province-wide organization devoted to the interests of urban neighbourhoods; the AWWCA joined FUN that day.

What the AWWCA Is Doing About Assessment and Taxation Levels in our Community

ROB PAYNE

The AWWCA has been working at the municipal and provincial levels to address two issues of concern to you: unfair assessment and taxation levels and the related problem of unscrupulous investors and their agents who buy and insure residential property under false pretenses and then stuff them with students:

1. We are continuing to explore with the City of Hamilton how to make taxation more equitable and how to prevent "student stuffing" in residential houses. We have forwarded the City of London's recent five-bedroom bylaw to the city for consideration. This new bylaw has survived a challenge at the Ontario Municipal Board, so we view this as possibly useful for the City of Hamilton too.
 2. In December our **MPP, Judy Marsales**, sent a letter to the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation on our behalf. We are following this up with MPAC. Now that the ombudsman's report is out, we expect to see some response to our concerns. Recently we sent a letter to **Ontario Minister of Finance Dwight Duncan** that reflects this expectation.
 3. The Real Estate Council of Ontario is a regulatory body that oversees realtors in Ontario. The AWWCA is concerned that the current forms for agreement of purchase and sale do not adequately alert mortgagors and insurance companies that purchasers may intend to use near-campus housing for investment rental purposes.
- Led by AWWCA board member **John Wigle**, we have worked with members experienced in real estate issues, both practical and legal, to attempt to reduce the possibility for

non-disclosure of information.

Mortgage and insurance companies hold residential investment property to a higher bar (and higher cost) than owner-occupied residential property due to increased risk to their capital. It is hoped that our efforts in this area will ensure the mortgage and insurance systems work as intended by giving these companies more accurate information with which to make their decisions.

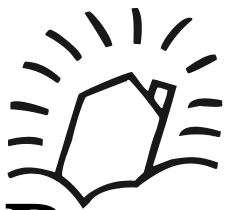
John and I met with **MPP Ted McMeekin** April 7 to discuss our concerns outlined in our letter to RECO. This meeting was arranged by Ms. Marsales, as she declared a conflict of interest due to her real estate business.

Mr. McMeekin understood our concerns that mortgagors and insurance companies may not be getting the most accurate information when making their business decisions. He deemed reasonable our proposal to put more onus on both the realtor and the purchaser to disclose intended use through a modification of the agreement of purchase and sale.

The AWWCA will keep Mr. McMeekin informed of our progress, as any success in this area would have a provincial impact.

We believe that success in more than one of these areas will be needed to ensure fair taxation within near-campus communities. If you have any comments or suggestions, we would appreciate your feedback.

A shorter version of the above article was published as a letter to the editor in *The Hamilton Spectator* April 15.



**Because
we care**

*"Building community
block by block"*

Town and Gown Website Launched

Rob Payne, AWWCA president and co-chair of the Town and Gown Association of Ontario, announced on April 13 the official launch of the TGAO website at tgao.ca.

The AWWCA has long recognized the need to develop a provincial presence to address near-campus issues, as many of the advantages and disadvantages of living near a university are shared across the province.

We were the first community association to join TGAO and have devoted many volunteer hours toward its development.

Dale Brown (executive assistant to Councillor Brian McHattie), **Vanessa Grupe** and **Doug Rose** (City of Hamilton), **Scott Moreton** and **Scott Rastin** (Hamilton Police Service), and **Liz Millar** and **Rob Payne** (AWWCA) have all served on the interim board.

Those of you interested in near-campus issues will no doubt find TGAO's website a useful resource.

Hwy 403 Noise and Light Problems Addressed

LOREEN JEROME

On Jan. 13, I wrote, on behalf of the AWWCA, to Kent Barber, consultant project manager for Highway 403 improvements from King Street westerly 12.5 km to Wilson Street. Following is an excerpt:

The purpose of writing this letter is to inform you, as project manager for the 403 improvements, of an area near the stretch of highway being considered for improvements that requires an extension of the existing noise wall, as well as additional dimming or baffling of the high-mast illumination standards. The area I am referring to is the east side of Haddon Avenue South running southerly from Westwood Avenue. Extension of the noise barrier and modification of the lighting are needed along Highway 403 between Aberdeen and the TH&B railway bridge over the highway.

In the early sixties, when Highway 403 was built, traffic was not as heavy as it is today, and the planners did not consider baffling necessary. Since the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway was completed, traffic has

increased tremendously on Highway 403, and late last fall the Highway 6 South extension was opened, adding further traffic.

Residents have been given many excuses over the years why the noise wall was not extended to the bridge. They have approached all levels of government trying to find a solution to the Highway 403 noise problems. The noise levels in this area are so bad that in some backyards one has to shout at times to be heard from one side of the backyard to the other. With the recently installed high-mast illumination standards, one could read a book in some backyards in the middle of the night. The illumination also deters sleep. These problems significantly detract from residents' right to enjoyment of their property.

Representatives of our association have a keen interest in meeting with you in the near future to discuss solving these problems as soon as possible. The Ward 1 City Councillor, Brian McHattie, also wishes to be part of the meeting. We also wish to receive any future e-mail regarding this project.

Please let us know when you can meet with us.

A letter of response was received March 10 from Nanda Kandiah, project engineer, in which she offered a meeting with staff if necessary. In it she said: "The analysis concluded that an extension of the existing noise wall would only reduce the noise level by less than one (1) decibel to the homes on Haddon Avenue South due to their elevated locations in relation to the highway. [A] change in noise level that is less than three (3) decibels cannot be perceived. Therefore, this site is not included on the Ministry's Candidate Sites for Noise Barrier Retrofit List. With regard to additional dimming of the high mast lighting, ministry electrical staff have advised me that shields were installed on three (3) high mast poles located on Highway 403 between Aberdeen Avenue and [the] TH&B underpass in September 2003 to address light trespass concerns raised by area residents." If you would like us to pursue this issue, please contact loreen.jerome@sympatico.ca or 905-525-7386 or Mr. McHattie at bmchatie@hamilton.ca or 905-546-2416.

living IN OUR campus town

Campus Town Association Update

ROB PAYNE

Last summer the Campus Town Association, a partnership between McMaster University, the Westdale Business Improvement Area, and the AWWCA, received \$27,000 from the Trillium Foundation to develop a report outlining a "toolbox" of assets as well as baseline benchmarks for our community. The goal is to use this information to improve the quality of life of all residents in our community through a

variety of planned activities. A key component is neighbourhood balance, since it is recognized that too large a transient population has a negative impact on our community.

Currently, the CTA has hired consultants to assemble and consolidate neighbourhood information from many different sources. A focus group will be conducted to gather from the community further information, as well as their "vision" for the future.

Last year the AWWCA spent over four months completing an impressive database of community assets under the guidance of vice-president **Alice Sabourin**. This will be shared with our community partners as the Trillium study goes forward.

The CTA intends to complete the initial process by June and to share this information, as well some "forward steps," at or before the AWWCA's annual general meeting in September.

THE ONTARIO
TRILLIUM
FOUNDATION



LA FONDATION
TRILLIUM
DE L'ONTARIO

From the Outgoing MSU President

TOMMY PIRIBAUER

It is my pleasure to write to you and detail the projects that the McMaster Students Union has been working on over the course of the year to maintain and improve relations between our students and the permanent residents in our community.



Pajama Parade 2003.

Photo: Tommy Piribauer

Permanent residents in our community share the unfortunate experience of having to deal with students who misbehave, parties that become exceedingly loud, and people making their way through the neighbourhood drunk, acting inappropriately, and even urinating on lawns. The MSU is often placed in a difficult situation; while we recognize the connection and responsibility that we inherently have with our students living off-campus, we also respect the autonomy of each student as an adult.

Outlined below are some of our initiatives. Our goal is to ensure that our students become more and more valued as contributing members of our community.

Policing program: For two years now, McMaster University and the McMaster Students Union has each contributed equally to funding two special-duty police officers to provide proactive enforcement to our community Friday and Saturday nights. Houses they visit early in the evening to warn of the noise bylaw rarely have to be revisited later in the night. The officers have also had success by stationing themselves outside local bars at closing time.

PJ parade: There has been rising concern from the community over the MSU's pajama parade that takes place the first Wednesday of each school year. The parade has escalated into offshoots that include significant drinking at various houses along the route, inappropriate dress and behaviour by students, and a lot of litter remaining after the event. In response, we are immediately committed to increasing the presence of police and security officers, providing a post-parade clean-up crew, and allocating more volunteers to help with the flow of the event. We have formed a committee that includes community members to address the entire PJ parade.



Tommy Piribauer Photo credit: McMaster Students Union

Late-night HSR bus service: The MSU and the university are working to fund an extension of late-night bus service during specific nights. We are looking at ways of transporting people through the community when establishments start to close, to ensure that the neighbourhood becomes less of a hub of loud late-night walkers.

It has been a real pleasure working with the community, and the AWWCA in particular, over the course of the year. The people I have worked with have displayed true patience and a keen interest in working for the betterment of the community as a whole. The dedication shown by community members to work toward positive relations has encouraged and inspired us to work equally hard to reach the same goals.

Spring Community Forum

On March 30 a community forum was held at St. Mary's High School. The keynote speaker was **Warren Price**, urban designer and associate with Urban Strategies Inc. He spoke on the topic What Makes a Great Community. Guests then chose either a session on the Campus Town Association or the McMaster Students Union pajama parade.

A signing ceremony took place for the 2006 policing plan for the Westdale Beat. It includes five goals: property issues, crime reduction, transportation and traffic, disorderly conduct, and communications.

The forum was jointly hosted by McMaster's President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations, the MSU, Councillor Brian McHattie,

the City of Hamilton, and the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association of Resident Homeowners Inc.



Representatives who signed the 2006 policing plan.

Photo: Loreen Jerome

What I Like About McMaster's New Research Park

JANET WOODWARD

Having attended two of the three public-information events regarding McMaster's new research park, I want to share with you a few of the reasons why I am enthusiastic about the project. The event held last November was sponsored by the Friends of Red Hill Valley and the Hamilton and Burlington Society of Architects. The guest speaker was **Donald Schmitt**, a principal in the firm **Diamond + Schmitt Architects Inc.**, designers of the master plan for the Innovation Park. The event drew an



Donald Schmitt speaking to community members, Nov. 9.
Photo: Janet Woodward

audience of over 300, evidence of the interest the community has in the project. In January I attended McMaster's open house at Westdale High School.

I am enthusiastic because the vision for the park is holistic, using sustain-



McMaster Innovation Park open house, Jan. 10.
Photo: Janet Woodward

able-design principles. It will include rooftop greenery to reduce heat loss, cisterns to collect rain, filters to clean rainwater, storm-water management ponds, a large central park, and a public square on the east side with a café. Scientists and researchers who will work and potentially live on the site will enjoy this ambient environment, as will residents.

The grid pattern of the streets will connect pedestrians with Longwood Road, which will be transformed with bike lanes, lots of trees, planter boxes with seating areas, on-street parking, and extra-wide sidewalks. Mr. Schmitt said: "A great sidewalk makes a great street," citing Fifth Avenue and the Champs Elysées as examples.



A street with the types of amenities proposed for Longwood Road.

Mr. Schmitt said the research park will "have the ability to bring innovation and research out of the ivory tower and into the street . . . it won't exist as an enclave but is to be integrated into the community."

The city's 63-page background report is available at hamilton.ca/whia. The information in the report was summarized in the display panels presented at the first public-information centre at St. Mary's High School on Oct. 11. Draft plans and illustrations can be viewed at mcmaster.ca/research/draft_plans.htm.

Janet Woodward is newsletter co-ordinator and membership secretary of the AWWCA.

"Building community block by block"

FIRE SAFETY

Our community was shocked by the massive and destructive fire Jan. 24 at a house recently converted to a student rental on Marion Ave. South. The following letters to the editor are reprinted with permission from *The Hamilton Spectator*:

Working toward solutions to student-housing safety

By Betty Bechtel, Hamilton, The Hamilton Spectator, Jan. 26

Re: 'Playing with fire?' (letter, Jan. 21)

In the United States, over 75 post-secondary students have lost their lives in student rental housing fires since 2000, 75 young people with promising futures, 75 families needlessly subjected to the unbearable pain from the loss of their loved ones. In Hamilton's west end, community leaders have worked diligently to reduce problems.

All are volunteers. Their work is a constructive way of dealing with the frustration of seeing family homes turned into illegal and unsafe rentals by absentee landlords.

Safety of students is paramount in the community leaders' focus. Most leaders have learned of horror stories of local student accommodation from students themselves.

There have been fires in nearby student housing. No one wants to wait till there is a fire death to spur action.

Hamilton's west end community is a leader in innovative ways to address problems related to living near an expanding university. Other communities tap our resources.

One of the key ingredients in this work is the remarkable collaboration between Councillor Brian McHattie, city hall elected officials and staff including bylaw officers, Hamilton

Police Service, McMaster University administration, McMaster Students Union, the Westdale Business Improvement Area and the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association of Resident Homeowners Inc. McHattie demonstrates a keen interest in working closely and constructively with representatives from all of the groups listed above. He meets regularly with these groups to achieve significant successes. We are fortunate to have his considerable help and support.

The innovations and successes which have been achieved in the west end are too numerous to mention in this space. The collaborative community continues to work on such issues as safe and legal housing for students and reducing problems related to alcohol abuse. We still have a long way to go, but it is heartwarming to work with so many dedicated and talented people.



George Eastwood, registered home inspector with Homestead Inspections Inc. Photo: Mike Ferguson



House at 43 Marion Ave. South gutted after fire January 24.

Photo: Janet Woodward

Inadequate Fire-Safety Standards Addressed

President **Rob Payne** reports: The AWWCA has been working through local and provincial avenues over the past year to address what we perceive as inadequate fire-safety standards for non-owner-occupied rental housing:

1. We have worked on fire safety through our membership in the Town and Gown Association of Ontario (tgao.ca). TGAO had a meeting with the Ontario Fire Marshall's office. Fire-risk management is statistically based, and student housing does not have its own category. TGAO has sent

a letter to the OFM, and we are hopeful that such a category will be instated to measure the risk in this type of property.

2. We have met with the Hamilton Fire Department. The statistics gathered locally show no higher fire risk for student housing, but it was agreed that interconnected hard-wired alarms are desirable. We will explore ways to have hard-wired fire-alarm systems applied to all non-owner-occupied rental housing in our neighbourhood.

Be smart; get fireproofed

By Brian McHattie, Ward 1 councillor; and Tommy Piribauer, president, McMaster Students Union, The Hamilton Spectator, Jan 27.

Re: 'Playing with fire?' (letter, Jan. 24)

Over the past few years, many fire safety concerns have been expressed with regard to student housing in Hamilton, concerns that were again brought to the fore-front following a recent fire in a student-occupied home in Westdale.

A specific goal of the Ward 1 councillor's office and Hamilton Emergency Services is to educate all citizens of Hamilton about fire safety in their homes and to ensure they understand their rights and obligations in making their homes safe from fire. We also need to note that an

important goal is to ensure Hamilton firefighters also remain safe; in the recent fire, three firefighters were injured.

Property owners, students, parents, the city and Hamilton Emergency Services all share a responsibility to ensure that homes used for student housing are in compliance with all applicable fire safety regulations. This same responsibility also applies to all other forms of rental housing. Occupants of all rental units and landlords are invited to contact the Fire Prevention Division of Hamilton Emergency Services at 905-546-2424, ext. 1380, to address any concerns or questions they have about safe housing or to register a complaint regarding a specific property.

Also, McMaster University students living in off-campus housing and their landlords can be provided with fire safe-

See FIREPROOFED on page 16

FIREPROOFED from page 15

ty pamphlets that have been designed specifically for students and landlords. In addition, McMaster University's Off-Campus Housing office holds regular landlord education meetings and runs a voluntary student home accreditation program, with 13 such houses accredited to date. [Ed. note: As of May 3, 24 have passed.]

Other efforts to ensure safe student housing include promoting the construction of purpose-built student housing along Main Street in West Hamilton—two such proposals that may have up to 800 new spaces for students are being reviewed by the city's planning department and Ward 1 councillor's office.

Over the past two years, there has been unprecedented co-operation between all sectors of the Ainslie Wood-Westdale and McMaster student communities, and all parties are committed to continuous improvement to ensure safe student housing and a vibrant near-campus community.

NEWS from the BLUES

We welcome **Acting Sergeant Jeff Copp** as the Hamilton Police Service's West Town Crime Manager under the Neighbourhood Safety Project. A/Sgt. Copp has been employed as a Hamilton police officer since January 1998. He has worked uniform patrol in the Central Patrol area; as a beat officer in the Stinson, Corktown, and Beasley areas; and also spent three years as a mountain-bike officer in the downtown core. For the past three years he has been a member of the HPS's Crowd Management/Ground Search unit.

A/Sgt. Copp said:

The Neighbourhood Safety Project (NSP) is a pilot project that has been operating in the east end of the city since 2004. The project was deemed a success in that area and has now

Making Student Housing Safer

ROB PAYNE

The discussions the AWWCA has had with McMaster's Off Campus Resource Centre over the past three years has led to an inspection program to differentiate between inspected and uninspected houses on OCRC's website. **Jennifer Kleven**, its manager, outlined the new Rental Accommodation Review Program in the spring 2005 issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views*.

In response to our request for an update on the program, Ms. Kleven replied: "As of May 3, we have reviewed 27 properties, 3 of which 'failed' and 24 'passed'; these properties comprise a total of 151 bedrooms. The majority of approved dwellings did not "pass" on the initial review. Many landlords had to go back and make some adjustments and do upgrades, such as installing 2A10BC fire extinguishers (2A10BC refers to the size and contents of the fire extinguisher). The fire department generally requires this size to be inside all kitchens in 'shared accommodations.' Also, they were required to have properly installed GFI (ground-fault interrupter) outlets in bathrooms and kitchens. What we've seen in some

homes are three-pronged outlets that, when tested, turned out not to be wired properly; they would give a false sense of security to someone using them. Landlords had to get the outlets wired properly by an electrician. As well, some had to install cover plates on switches, so as not to have exposed wiring."

Ms. Kleven has done a good job on this. You can check out the results at macocho.com. While this is a small step, it is the first taken by any university in Ontario to help screen housing for basic safety requirements. In March the program was selected as a feature article on the website of the Town and Gown Association of Ontario (tgao.ca).

We will continue to work with the OCRC, the next goal being to charge a lower fee to list houses that have successfully passed the safety inspection and have a landlord agreement with the university similar to that used by Dalhousie University. See www.housing.dal.ca/default.asp?mn=1.9.176. It is hoped that these measures will continue to reward landlords who provide high-quality housing.

Welcome, Acting Sergeant Jeff Copp #10

been rolled out to the entire city.

*The Ainslie Wood/Westdale communities are part of the West Town Sector; this sector includes the Kirkendall and Strathcona communities. There are approximately eight beat officers (twice the number assigned in 2005), one staff sergeant, and one acting sergeant (crime manager) assigned to the Ainslie Wood/Westdale communities. Beat officers in Ainslie Wood/Westdale are police constables **Keith Garnhum, Rob Hardy, James Howard, Ian McElroy, Tim O'Keefe, Cam Rumpel, and Steve Wowk.***

Crime manager is a newly created position within the NSP, and some of the many responsibilities are to take ownership of problems in the sector and attempt to solve them at the root

level, to drive proactive policing, and to be a liaison with the community. This is very important, as it is about collaborative problem solving—community members and the police working together.

I look forward to working with the Ainslie Wood/Westdale community and all other community stakeholders and can be contacted at 905-540-5093 or jcopp@hamiltonpolice.on.ca.

Acting Sergeant
Jeff Copp



Father of the Crime-Pipe Theory

STAFF SERGEANT SCOTT RASTIN

Superintendent John Petz has been in policing for over 30 years and has witnessed several changes in the way policing has been delivered to the community. He has used this experience to help remodel the way policing is done in Hamilton.

John discovered that in the 1980s beat officers were removed from their traditional role as proactive patrol officers in order to assist with criminal investigations. John suggests this was a mistake. His theory is that proactive patrols stop crime from entering what is known as the "crime pipe." (Crime goes in one end of the pipe and comes out the other, where it is investigated.) John discovered that when beat officers are given investigations they have less patrol time to stop crime from entering the crime pipe, which leads to more investigations. This in turn leads to more beat officers investigating crime rather than stopping it at the beginning of the pipe. It becomes a vicious cycle leading to lots of crime and not enough proactive patrols.

After developing this theory, John led a team that researched police-service delivery throughout the world. The project team developed the Neighbourhood Safety Project. This system of policing provides officers with more patrol time to proactively work with the community to identify and stop crime and also assigns a police crime manager to a patrol sector to work with the community and patrol officers to provide strategic direction as to where to focus their patrol time. This model has been a major reason for the very successful police/community relations we have in the Westdale Beat.

Supt. Petz is very pleased with the police partnerships that have developed in Westdale. He thinks that the Westdale Beat is a model of community policing not only in Hamilton but throughout North America.



Superintendent John Petz

Turning Down the Volume

STAFF SERGEANT SCOTT RASTIN

Last year we had a serious problem with student houses that partied loud and late. We addressed this issue by creating a list of the problem locations and having officers drop by these houses unannounced on a continual basis. It seemed to work, and we managed to reduce the number of calls about these houses.

This year, we have discovered a new problem: noisy pedestrian traffic. We have attempted to have the officers paid for by McMaster University keep a high profile and direct loud pedestrians to be quiet, but more needs to be done.

We are working with **Councillor Brian McHattie's** office on what we call Operation Hush. In the first week of April Mr. McHattie arranged to have 12 signs posted in the areas of Forsyth and Sterling, Forsyth and King, Sterling and King near the Pita Pit, Rifle Range and Main near Billy Bob's, and on the walkway between Cootes Drive and Sanders Boulevard, warning that unnecessary noise between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. is an offence that will lead to charges.

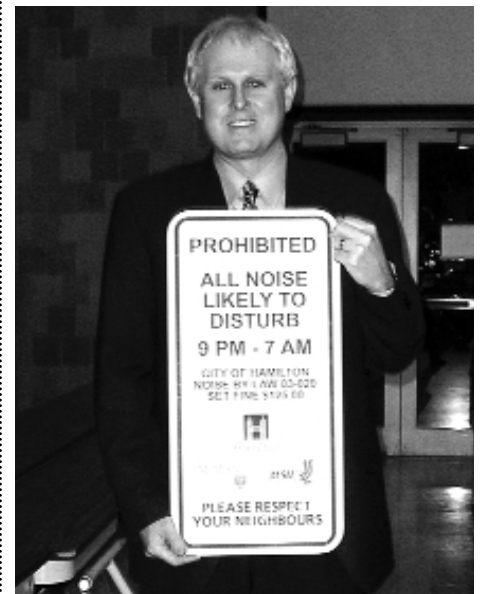
When the signs are posted in April, we will launch a media campaign to advise the community we will be issuing charges without warnings. When we start to charge some loud pedestrians, we hope the message will get out there.

Mr. McHattie chaired a meeting Jan. 9 involving bylaw and the police which led to the development of a system to track houses that have received a noise-complaint warning. Police and bylaw are now instructed to issue a charge to all houses that have received a warning within the last year. The bylaw office will send letters to the occupants and owners of such houses informing them they have been warned and future violations will lead to charges to both owners and occupants.

Mr. McHattie's office will co-ordinate

all the community-enhancement reports (introduced last spring) and disseminate them to the appropriate place. His office will ensure that your concerns are followed up and that the project co-ordinator is made aware of the results. You can download the report at brianmchattie.ca.

I would like to thank the many AWWCA volunteers who continue to work with the police to improve the quality of life in the Ainslie Wood/Westdale area. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated community residents. In 2006 the AWWCA, in partnership with several other community stakeholders, will be initiating several innovative programs to address community issues. Your involvement is paramount to the success of these programs and a major reason why your area is one of the best places to live in City of Hamilton.



Councillor McHattie with Operation Hush sign unveiled at community forum March 30. Photo: Loreen Jerome

Help reduce the risk of having your home broken into. If you want a free security audit of your home by a trained auxiliary police officer, please call the Operation Safeguard office at 905-546-4929. Feel free to pass on this number to any neighbour in your community, especially student neighbours. Good home security greatly reduces the chances that thieves will select your home.

Adopt-A-Box Up and Running

DMITRI MALAKHOV

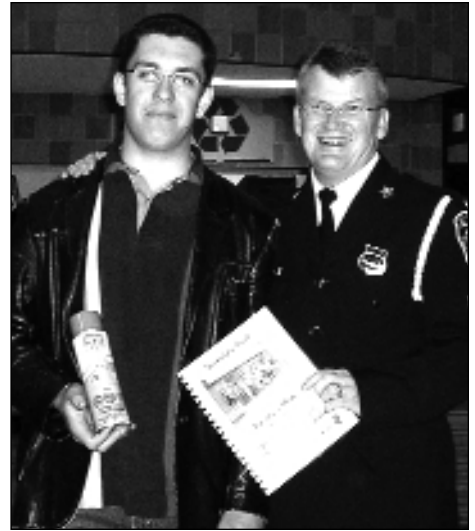
The Adopt-A-Box program that encourages residents to adopt Canada Post boxes near their homes to clean them of graffiti is up and running. We have almost 50 volunteers, who have adopted over 65 per cent of known boxes. Our goal is to adopt every box in West Hamilton this spring, and we ask for your help. Specifically, we are very short of volunteers in the area of Bond St. North. Yet-to-be-adopted boxes are scattered throughout Ainslie Wood and Westdale, just waiting to be claimed! By taking such ownership of our community, we are actively participating in driving vandals away. It is a simple task that has already produced observable results.

On Feb. 21 the police caught a 14-year-old Dundas male tagging one of our clean boxes at the intersection of Whitney Avenue and Mericourt Road. This is a box adopted by one of our very dedicated volunteers, who is looking after 10 boxes, thus making a very

significant dent in the graffiti culture in our neighbourhood.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of **Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin** and AWWCA member **Ken Ockenden**, who were instrumental in launching this first-of-its-kind program. They spent countless hours working out the logistics of Adopt-A-Box. Superintendent **Brad Waldes** of Canada Post is responsible for making his organization part of this community initiative. To date, **Canada Post** has contributed more than \$300 to the program and is committed to continue funding the program. Our volunteers received a pair of goggles, generously donated by **TT Liquid Handling Equipment Ltd.** The program was kick-started by the AWWCA with a \$100 donation and a commitment from all board members to adopt a box. Most importantly, thank you to all our pioneer volunteers!

On April 25 I attended a national conference on urban graffiti in Toronto



Dmitri Malakhov (with graffiti remover) and Sgt. Scott Rastin (with 2006 police business plan), at the community forum March 30. Photo: Loreen Jerome

with **P.C. Scott Moreton**. As we continue to address graffiti crime, I look forward to applying in our community what I learned. I thank the AWWCA for sponsoring my registration fee of \$75.

Help us achieve our goal by being an Adopt-A-Box volunteer! Please call me at 905-521-6869 or email me at malakhdd@mcmaster.ca.

Dmitri Malakhov is an AWWCA board member.



First group of graffiti volunteers being briefed Feb. 6.

Photo: Rev. John Smith

Westdale Beat

The call signs for the new Westdale Beat are 1161 and 1162.

The Westdale Beat boundaries are the same as the former Beat 691, encompassing both Ainslie Wood and

Westdale—everything west of Highway 403 to Dundas, to where Main Street West turns into Wilson Street.

The beat is now referred to as Westdale.

*"Building community
block by block"*

West Hamilton Community Safety Forum

JANET WOODWARD

Westdale Secondary School's cafeteria was the venue for a community-safety forum on Nov. 29. This was an opportunity for residents to discuss the strengths of the police in our community and to suggest ways to improve their effectiveness. **Councillor Brian McHattie** was co-chair, and the panel included **Police Chief Brian Mullan**.

Topics included graffiti, robberies, the need for more police visibility in the community, and the police Call Management Branch (suggestions were made for improving the handling of calls).

Community members expressed the need for continued off-campus patrols by the special-duty officers provided by the university, the McMaster Students Union, and the city.

Many attendees had high praise for the police work in our community and for **Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin** in particular. One long-time resident said, "Hamilton has the best cops." AWWCA president **Rob Payne** stated: "Hamilton's police force is one of the most innovative forces in Ontario, especially in the Ainslie Wood/Westdale community." He called on the police to continue to do joint planning with McMaster and the near-campus community and to bring to the near campus the security features that are on campus.

The 2006-2009 police business plan is using the public input received at this forum and 17 others held throughout the city (see hamiltonpolice.on.ca/HPS/AboutHPS/).



Police Patrols and Updates Appreciated

AWWCA member **Helen Otrrosina** writes: "I appreciate receiving the police reports and am very happy that the officers on duty are taking direct and positive action. A big 'thank you' to the police who patrol the Westdale area. King and Paradise seems to have been a very busy spot for drunkenness and an accident. That is an area where a lot of Westdale folks walk, either going to the theatre or restaurants, or just walking around the village; in the past we felt quite safe doing so and we would like to see it remain a safe place."

AWWCA member **Jane Walker** writes: "I really appreciate the police updates that the AWWCA regularly sends out. I'm sure that increasing our awareness of such incidents helps tremendously in decreasing our incident rate while increasing the already phenomenal sense of community that we all share. I also appreciate the swiftness with which the police deal with our concerns."



Police Community Safety Forum Nov. 29-05.

Photo: Janet Woodward

members' NEWS

President's Report

ROB PAYNE

It is good to review where we have been in 2005 and, more importantly, where we are heading this year.



Rob Payne

Photo: Loreen Jerome

2005 Summary

The AWWCA had a very productive 2005. The year saw your organization involved in many activities that led to our mandate of "improving the quality of life for all residents." Specifically, the following major developments took place:

1. The Hamilton Police Service, McMaster Students Union, and McMaster University initiated



Photo: Staff Sergeant Scott Rastin

increased policing levels, with resources specifically dedicated to our community during peak times. This program was the first of its kind in Canada and is a model for other communities.

2. The AWWCA Tree Committee, headed by members **Linda Bryant, Karen Callaghan, Ron Lancaster, Karen Poyner, and Susan Whiteside**, held fundraisers over the year and succeeded in replacing the "Barclay Oak." This was the first time the AWWCA had an active subcommittee, with great results.
3. The AWWCA was active in forming the **Town and Gown Association of Ontario**, was the first neighbourhood association to join it, and I am co-chairing it. One of TGAO's goals is to be a resource for best practices for



near-campus issues. See tgao.ca.

4. **McMaster is currently building a 390-bed residence** on campus. This, combined with other off-campus housing geared specifically to students, will free up approximately 100 houses for families in our community during 2006. The AWWCA was asked by the university to help support them at City Hall with the on-campus residence—certainly a first for our organization.
5. **Campus Town Association** got off on the right foot with a Trillium grant in 2005. See Campus Town Association Update in this issue.
6. Work has started on the **McMaster Innovation Park**. Over 100 researchers are expected to be working there by 2008. They and their families could be a windfall for neighbourhoods, and we will do our best to lure them to our community through development of a marketing program with our community partners.
7. **McMaster's Burlington campus** will

provide an area for McMaster to grow, relieving some pressure on our community.

8. AWWCA vice president **Alice Sabourin** completed an **asset-mapping review** for our community. This 28-page document includes all the assets that make our area a wonderful place to live and will be invaluable during the CTA review.
9. **New board members were welcomed** in 2004/2005: **Tracey Lindsey, Dmitri Malakhov, Alice Sabourin, and Karen Ward**. Dmitri was the first board member of the AWWCA who is also a McMaster student.
Retiring from the board were **Betty Bechtel, Michael Bordin, and Tom Bryner**. All of these members served more than one term on the board, and we thank them for their unstinting volunteer contributions to the community.
10. The **Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan** was officially incorporated into the City of Hamilton's Official Plan on July 13, 2005. AWWCA board members attended numerous meetings over many years as part of the citizen advisory committee. The heritage section of this plan was recently successfully invoked to stop conversion of a modest house into a larger student rental. The plan sets out appropriate areas for intensification of housing, which will be important for maintaining the character of residential areas.

What to Expect for 2006

1. **McMaster's enrolment targets**. Over 150 of you attended a meeting on June 1, 2004, to voice your concern about a university that could grow beyond the carrying capacity of the campus and community. The enrolment target is a key figure for us, as it has a major impact on planning how to maintain a balance in our community. We were pleased to learn on Dec. 14, 2005, that McMaster will hold undergraduate enrolment at current levels through at least 2010. This allows us to work with our community partners on "balance" within the community, given our concerns regarding too high a percentage of transient housing in our community.



Board members, April 2006. Back row, L to R: Dmitri Malakhov, Rob Payne, John Wigle, and Betty Bechtel (Honourary); Front row, L to R: Loreen Jerome, Tracey Lindsay, Carolyn Kinsley, Michael Tan, and Janet Woodward. Absent: Liz Millar and Karen Ward.

2. **Off-campus student-housing safety** is another area of prime concern to your organization. See **Inadequate Fire-Safety Standards Addressed** on page 15.
3. The AWWCA is concerned about the **assessment increases** in our area. See **AWWCA Opposes Assessment Increases** on page 10.
4. **Collaboration with our partners in the Campus Town Association** will continue in 2006. There are a number of innovative ideas that we hope to implement during the year. Stay tuned.
5. **We will be opening a new collaborative window with the McMaster Students Union** through their off-campus Student Community Support Network. We will be trying a number of pilot projects to increase positive interactions between students and permanent residents.
6. **Garbage and graffiti** will continue to be a focus. See **Adopt-A-Box Up and Running** on page 18.
7. Residents' concerns about the **Welcome Week Pajama Parade** prompted the AWWCA board to send a strongly worded letter to the McMaster Students Union during the late fall. As a result, the MSU president came to our board meeting in February, and the MSU is proposing some radical changes to this event in September 2006. A committee will be struck to examine this new approach, and the AWWCA has been asked to have a board member sit on that committee. We hope that this collaborative focus will result in a much better experience for the community next fall.
8. We have worked with McMaster's **Off-Campus Resource Centre (housing office)** over the past three years to develop a program to differentiate between inspected and non-inspected houses on their website. See **Making Student Housing Safer** in this issue.
9. AWWCA board member Loreen Jerome has led our effort to address **signage issues in our community**. The city has been seeking public input for a harmonized sign bylaw for the amalgamated city. The letter is printed in this newsletter; see **Signs, Signs, Everywhere . . .** on page 9.
10. Your board will continue to work for **community balance**. The neighbourhood is at the point where it cannot support any more rental housing. We will continue to press for development of safe, well-managed housing dedicated to students both on and off campus in appropriate areas delineated in the Secondary Plan.

I would like thank our many members who give up their free time for our community, especially your board of directors, without whom many of these activities would not be possible.

*"Building community
block by block"*

AWWCA on the Web

The AWWCA is listed on the links page of the **Westdale Village Business Improvement Area** website at westdalevillage.ca/links.htm. This link takes you to **Councillor Brian McHattie's** website brianmchattie.ca/awwca/intro.htm (or you can go to it directly—click on Neighbourhood Associations), where you can access the AWWCA's mission statement, contact information, membership forms, past newsletters and other items.

Useful websites

AWWCA *Neighbourhood News & Views* back issues:
brianmchattie.ca

Federation of Citizens' Associations: fca-fac.ca

Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario:
urbanneighbourhoods.ca

Hamiltonians for Progressive Development:
progressivedevelopment.ca

Helping local communities achieve more autonomy:
localgovernment.ca

McMaster's Off Campus Resource Centre: macocho.com

Ontario Greenbelt Alliance:
greenbelt.ca

Ontario Professional Planners Institute: ontarioplanners.on.ca

Ontario Smart Growth Network:
greenontario.org/osgn

The San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association:
spur.org

Town and Gown Association of Ontario: tgao.ca

Urban League of London (association of community groups):
ul.london.on.ca



John and Dixie Morris

Photo: Candi Clairmont

Thank You, Dixie and John

BETTY BECHTEL

In the startup days of the AWWCA, Dixie and John Morris donated their time and efforts to the association by printing our newsletters at their printing business. This was a big undertaking for two busy people. In addition, Dixie was a willing and diligent block representative.

John and Dixie recently moved to Dundas, and we are sorry to see them go. The AWWCA thanks them for their dedication and community spirit and wishes them well in their new home.

Welcome Michael Tan

The AWWCA is pleased to welcome Michael Tan to the AWWCA's board of directors.

Michael has lived in Ainslie Wood since the summer of 2005. After living in downtown Hamilton and then in Ancaster, he and his wife, Amy, decided to settle down in West Hamilton because of its proximity to McMaster University (where Amy is enrolled part-time) and its family-friendly community in consideration of their three young children.

With an undergraduate degree in business and an MBA as well, Michael's professional experience includes strategy development, change implementation, financial management, and business development. He worked for a ship management company in Southeast Asia, consulted in South America, worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, and now works for UPS Supply Chain Solutions. On the side, Michael provides *pro bono* business-plan con-



Michael Tan

Photo: Janet Woodward

sulting for young entrepreneurs. "I've always been interested in giving back to the community through my business acumen. The AWWCA has done a phenomenal job with all of its initiatives over the last several years, and I hope to be a major contributor to its continued success in the community for years to come. I'd like to thank the board for this opportunity."

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 and welcomes all those interested in attending.

In Memoriam

Alec Duncombe, a long-time resident of Haddon Ave. South, was the AWWCA's very first member. He joined on Aug. 27, 1998, at the age of 76 and volunteered to be a block representative. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the AWWCA and recruited friends and neighbours as members. We are sad to report that he died Jan. 16.

Useful Numbers

Abandoned shopping carts:

- Barn: 905-523-5044
- Fortino's (Rifle Range store): 905-308-9045 and press 0

Barking dogs:

- 905-546-CITY (2489); after hours call Animal Control 905-574-3433

Building permits:

- If no building permit is posted on a renovation site, call Jorge Caetano at 905-546-2720 to see if a permit is on file. If not, file a complaint with him by phone or e-mail JCaetano@hamilton.ca

City Hall:

- 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Crime Stoppers

(to report a crime anonymously):

- 1-800-222-8477*

Garbage, waste management:

- 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Graffiti:

- Hot line: 905-546-4723*
- Graffiti on Canada Post boxes: 1-800-267-1177 and press 0
- Graffiti on street signs: 905-546-4376*
- Graffiti on public property: 905-546-CITY (2489)*
- Graffiti on private property: 905-546-4925*

McMaster University, Office of Public Relations, Community Help Line:

- 905-525-9140, ext. 27305

Noise infractions:

- 905-546-2782; after hours 905-546-4925 or 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Parking infractions:

- 905-540-6000*

Police (non-emergency):

- 905-546-4925; a person will answer after the taped message.
- West Town Crime Manager, Acting Sergeant Jeff Copp 905-540-5093 or jcopp@hamiltonpolice.on.ca
- To report keg deliveries (ask to have the Westdale Beat officer call you): 905-546-4771*
- If you need further assistance: police reception desk 905-546-4771*
- Westdale Community Policing Centre 905-546-8951 or 905-546-8952
- Westdale Beat officers' e-mail: westdale@hamiltonpolice.on.ca

Property-standards infractions:

- 905-546-2782 or Randy Charlton, co-ordinator, standards and licensing 905-546-2424, ext. 1314 (8 a.m.-5 p.m.), or rcharlto@hamilton.ca

Snow-clearing infractions:

- 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Street signs missing or damaged, traffic lights not working:

- 905-546-4376*

* Hours are 24/7



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 distributed to members. The opinions expressed within the newsletter are those of the writers unless otherwise specified and do not necessarily represent the views of the AWWCA.

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

AWWCA

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

GENERAL INQUIRIES

905-525-7338

905-526-9101

NEWSLETTER CO-ORDINATOR

Janet Woodward

COPY EDITOR

Carolyn Kinsley

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Michelle Edmonds, Bob Edmonds

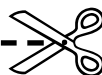
EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

Malcolm Horsnell

Spring 2006



*"Building community
block by block"*



The Way We Were Westdale Memories

Westdale Secondary School

LOREEN
JEROME

In 1929 the Hamilton firm J. M. Pigott Construction Co. was awarded the contract to build Westdale Secondary School. Local architects Prack and Prack were chosen to design the "school Gothic" architectural style with arched doorways and fake buttresses. The official opening took place Jan. 23, 1931. It was viewed as one of the finest and largest composite schools in the British Empire. Green and gold are the school's colours, and the crest contains the school's motto.

The buff-coloured bricks used for construction were fashioned from the clay soil on site. The limestone for the building was quarried from Georgetown, Ontario. The high wainscoting in the entrance lobby is Canadian marble from Quebec. Three Gothic towers, each with its own entrance, guard the south side of the building. Carved above the doorways are the words Technical in the east, Collegiate in the west, and Commerce in the centre. The middle tower bears Hamilton's coat of arms. The original building was referred to as Westdale Tripartite School or Westdale Composite School, reflecting its collegiate, technical, and commercial elements, but it also has always been known as Westdale Secondary School.

During the 1940s a war-emergency training facility for the air force, army, and navy operated from the school after regular hours, teaching radar, wireless, and sonar. The radio program trained 2,300 people, most of whom joined the Royal Canadian Air Force. The cenotaph at the front of the school



The gleaming new school dominates a sparsely developed Westdale in 1931.

Photo: Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library

bears the names of 150 students (800 served) who gave their lives for Canada and its allies in World War II.

Well-known graduates of Westdale Secondary School include Peter Gordon, past president, Stelco; Paul Hanover, former radio host (known as the "mayor of the morning") at 900

CHML; Margaret Houghton, Special Collections archivist, Hamilton Public Library; Eugene Levy, actor; Joy MacPhail (served as NDP deputy premier and House Leader, British Columbia); John Munroe, former federal cabinet minister; Frank Sherman, past president, Dofasco; and Martin Short, comedian. Athletics played a major role in the school's history with names like Ron Howell and Russ Jackson.

Renovations totalling \$3-million were done in 1974-75, and it was at this time that the tennis courts were added by Hamilton's Recreation Department. The 65-foot (20-metre) yellow-brick chimney was taken down in 1985. New doors, lockers, and windows have been recently installed. Many of the original architectural niceties are still evident. The school's 75th anniversary celebrations are May 19-21, 2006.

Sources: Special Collections, Hamilton Public Library; Westdale Secondary School Scrapbook, Vol. 1: 1929-1988.

Mailing Label

