

Neighbourhood News & Views

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AINSLIE WOOD / WESTDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
Autumn 2008
OF RESIDENT HOMEOWNERS INC.



Part Two

Highlights from the Years 2004-8

COMPILED BY LAVINIA WELSH

This is Part 2 of the highlights of the AWWCA's 10-year history to mark a decade of service to our community. Part 1, from 1998 to 2003, was published in the spring issue of Neighbourhood News & Views. This issue summarizes issues and successes of the AWWCA gleaned from our newsletters published between 2004 and 2008.

A public celebration of the AWWCA's 10th anniversary took place June 28 at Westdale's Kidsfest (formerly WestFest) in Westdale Village. Our anniversary was also recognized at our 10th annual general meeting on Sept. 23.

Bring on 2004

New Ward 1 **Councillor Brian McHattie** reports on his work with the university administration to prepare a student-housing plan using a participatory model. The AWWCA has three board members on the McMaster President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations.

Mr. McHattie arranges a meeting with new **Mayor Larry DiIanni**, AWWCA board members, and representatives of local **MPP Judy Marsales**. We identify student housing as a primary issue for residents of Ward 1. The mayor expresses interest in our suggestion of a downtown campus.

AWWCA member **Jurek Kolasa** reports on the work of a lobby group of residents who live adjacent to the soon-to-be-completed McMaster Learning and Discovery Centre. Their intervention produces a more attractive building.

In May, the third annual AWWCA-sponsored spring cleanup and the first annual rail-trail cleanup take place.

The spring 2004 issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views* reports the findings of Environment Hamilton's Trees Count

audit done in the summer of 2003. Community volunteers, most of them AWWCA members, gathered information on 1,391 trees in Westdale. Ten community members form a committee of the AWWCA to review the Trees Count report and make recommendations about appropriate actions to protect and enhance Westdale's urban forest.

The AWWCA keeps in contact with Waterloo and Kingston, and Waterloo hosts a Town and Gown Symposium.

Kenneth Sherman, the AWWCA's representative on the Transportation Master Plan, recommends traffic calming and bike lanes for Westdale, and they are included in the plan and later installed.

The AWWCA suggests that the McMaster Students Union and McMaster University administration could improve the safety of off-campus student housing by encouraging student renters who feel they are living in unsafe conditions to let city inspectors inside, emulating a model at the University of New Brunswick, where the student union visits each prospective off-campus student house to approve it before it can be included in



10th-anniversary cake at celebration in Westdale Village. Photo: Janet Woodward

the university's listings.

After five hearings, over six years, before the Ontario Municipal Board, McMaster's decision to sever and sell greenspace along Main Street West between Dalewood and Forsyth Avenues is overturned. This is due to the intervention and leadership of AWWCA president emerita **Phyllis Tresidder**.

The City of Hamilton names AWWCA police liaison **Betty Bechtel** Woman of the Year for community service. AWWCA president **Liz Millar** is presented with certificates from the City of Hamilton and the AWWCA for her community service. **MPP David Christopherson** presents the AWWCA with a framed certificate congratulating the association on its fifth anniversary. The AWWCA recognizes the contributions of **Linda** and **Rick Grigg** as they move out of the community.

At its Pinnacle Awards ceremony, the Canadian Public Relations Society presents **Bob** and **Michelle Edmonds** with an award of merit for *Neighbourhood News & Views* and certificates of recognition to **Malcolm Horsnell**, **Carolyn Kinsley**, and **Janet Woodward** for their work on the newsletter.

The AWWCA and Mr. McHattie meet with representatives from CP Rail. The company agrees to move their stockpile of smelly railway ties to an area away from nearby homes, allowing residents a more pleasant summer experience in their backyards.

Halfway Through the Decade, 2005



CTA banner in Westdale

BIA to form the Campus Town Association (see banner), a not-for-profit organization focusing

on improving the quality of life for all residents. The strategy is to find ways to combine McMaster's international reputation for innovation with the many skills of people living in the community. The vision is to develop our neighbourhood as the model for campus towns in Canada.



In February, again through Rob's leadership, Guelph, Kingston, Ottawa, and Windsor come together with Hamilton to form the Town and Gown Association of Ontario. The AWWCA is the first official member. A symposium in Guelph has Hamilton well represented with attendees from McMaster, the Hamilton Police Service, the Mohawk College neighbourhood, and **Councillors Brian McHattie** and **Terry Whitehead**.

AWWCA member **Penny Palmer** organizes a volunteer group to initiate a splash pad in Churchill Park. They hold a community meeting, gather signatures on a petition, and fundraise.

In the spring, the AWWCA launches a contest to select the area's most popular asset, accompanied by stories from three members on why they chose to live in this area. Winning entries are published and prizes announced in the autumn issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views* and posted at awwca.ca.

The Ainslie Wood Westdale plans (including the Official Plan Amendment to adopt the secondary plan, the community strategy, and zoning-by-law amendments) are approved by Hamilton's planning and economic development committee on July 5 and approved by council on July 13. One of the key aspects of the community plan calls for intensification along major arteries such as Main Street West to allow three- or four-storey development with commercial use on the ground floor and housing above. The intent is to provide student housing in appropriate areas and reduce student housing in

single-family homes. For three years AWWCA members and board members have been volunteering hundreds of hours representing the AWWCA on ASPECT (Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan Executive Committee and Team).

A community forum is jointly hosted by the McMaster President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations, the MSU, the City of Hamilton, the AWWCA, the Westdale BIA, and the Hamilton Police Service. Representatives sign a 2005 policing plan with four goals in mind: reducing graffiti, reducing property crimes, improving road safety, and identifying and addressing disorderly persons. In addition, bicycle officers are deployed on Friday and Saturday nights from late September to the end of October to spot liquor violations and to identify large parties likely to violate the noise bylaw.

AWWCA board member **Dmitri Malakhov**, the **Westdale BIA**, and **Staff Sgt. Scott Rastin** organize a graffiti-removal day.



Churchill Park splash pad

McMaster starts building a 390-bed residence on campus.

Mr. McHattie is instrumental in reviving the City of Hamilton's tree-planting program. Three hundred native trees are planted in Churchill Park, in addition to 467 trees planted in the neighbourhood. This follows several years of co-operation between AWWCA members and other area residents, various environmental groups, and the city. In 2002 a 300-year-old oak on Barclay Street had to be cut down; a replacement oak is planted in June of 2005, as a result of the efforts of the Westdale Tree Committee, a

committee of the AWWCA formed in 2004. AWWCA members campaign to encourage homeowners to accept free city trees. The AWWCA promotes Tonnes for Trees, a program to reduce greenhouse gases, and the goal is exceeded. A program to help residents garden without pesticides, Green Yards—Healthy Neighbourhoods, is launched with **Joyce Killin** as the AWWCA's liaison.

Board member **Carolyn Kinsley** writes to the co-chairs of the Royal Botanical Gardens' review committee expressing our concerns about the future of Churchill Park.

The AWWCA introduces a new format for the annual general meeting so that members can meet one on one with city, police, and McMaster representatives before the formal meeting.

2006—Another Huge Year

The Hamilton Police Service (HPS) adds the new position of West Town crime manager and launches Operation Hush to deal with noisy pedestrian traffic. Warning signs are posted in the community so that offenders can be issued a fine on the spot.

The AWWCA recognizes **Staff Sgt. Scott Rastin** for his work developing and implementing many new initiatives for our neighbourhood. These include the community-enhancement report, where community members can submit concerns or identify positive situations worthy of recognition, and forging a partnership between the university, the MSU, and the HPS to provide additional patrols on weekends around the university. Responding to a sudden spike in break-and-enters in Ainslie Wood and Westdale, Sgt. Rastin sets up a special squad that succeeds in decreasing these crimes compared to the previous year. He collaborates annually with community partners to develop a police business plan. He is recognized for his work with AWWCA board member **Dmitri Malakhov** to establish the Adopt-A-Box Program for graffiti reduction, launched in 2005.



Dmitri Malakhov

Photo: Beth Snider

Sgt. Rastin initiates an off-campus student restorative-justice program, called the Community Accountability Program. The MSU and McMaster administration provide funding for two years. Volunteers from the AWWCA help form a panel to develop ways for students to make amends.

The spring community cleanup celebrates five years of community residents helping to tidy up their neighbourhood.

The **Edmonds**, who designed and laid out *Neighbourhood News & Views* on a voluntary basis from 2001 to 2006, move out of the community, and the newsletter is contracted out once again.

The AWWCA launches its own website at awwca.ca, and the Town and Gown Association of Ontario launches its website at tgao.ca. These are two great resources for information about our neighbourhood and similar neighbourhoods.

AWWCA launches its website

Residents' concerns with the Welcome Week pajama parade prompt the AWWCA to write to the MSU. This results in a meeting with the MSU president and promises of changes for the 2006 fall parade. The AWWCA is represented on the parade committee by

board member **Janet Woodward**.

Councillor Brian McHattie fast-tracks Churchill Park's splash pad, and the city completes it in September.

Thanks to AWWCA board members **Loreen Jerome** and **Carolyn Kinsley**, the AWWCA influences the new city sign bylaw in four areas: posters will be allowed only at designated information kiosks or on approved poster sleeves; new rooftop signs will be banned; flashing or animated signs will be banned, except as specifically permitted under the bylaw; all mobile-sign operators must be licensed.

AWWCA influences new city sign bylaw

Details of the new purpose-built student complex being erected on the site of the old CNIB building are unveiled. The project is expected to be the first multi-use residential building in Canada to have LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) platinum status—a rigorous environmental designation. Another proposed project on Ewen Road, to house 560 students, raises concerns including height and inadequate parking. The AWWCA writes to Mr. McHattie about residents' concerns.

The pajama parade is a much better experience than in past years. Among other things, extra police patrol the parade route, a bylaw officer ensures property standards are adhered to, and student crews clean up the parade streets. The Student Community Support Network provides handouts for students on community relations. Community response is still mixed, so the MSU and residents continue to collaborate on improving the experience for everyone.

The Adopt-A-Box program, in its second year, is promoted by AWWCA board member Dmitri Malakhov. It has been so successful that most of this year's cleanup involved garbage pickup rather than graffiti removal.

New AWWCA board member **Ira Rosen** forms a committee of

the AWWCA to work with the city, McMaster University, and community members to help improve enforcement of, and response times to, property-standards bylaws.

The AWWCA partners with the City of Hamilton, the HPS, the MSU, McMaster University, and the Westdale BIA to recognize students who make a positive contribution to the community.

A record of 502 paid-up members of the AWWCA is set in March.

Issues Come to a Head in 2007

The building of a new stadium on campus highlights a long-time neighbourhood concern: the university's lack of an internal traffic plan and its illegal use of neighbourhood streets for heavy trucks. Led by AWWCA president **Rob Payne**, community meetings highlight the university's awareness, as far back as 2000, that the Sterling Street entrance did not meet the city's truck-route bylaws and was therefore off limits for heavy trucks. Despite this, up to 200 trucks per day travel on Forsyth Avenue to reach the Sterling Street entrance. The AWWCA asks the university to collaborate with nearby residents and the city in designing a transportation plan that works for all groups. The issue comes to a head in the fall. City council rules that the university must monitor the time and number of trucks using the Sterling Street entrance, pending completion of several capital projects, and that all truck traffic must stop by Jan. 31, 2008.

*AWWCA pushes
for a solution to
illegal truck traffic on
neighbourhood streets*

The city hires two bylaw officers for proactive enforcement of the new sign bylaw.

Investors continue to buy family homes despite a surplus of 152 vacant

rental houses.

The AWWCA has a display booth at Westfest for the second year and at Westitalia for the third year, both in Westdale Village. These initiatives are led by AWWCA board member **Loreen Jerome**, with support from **Earl Jerome**.

McMaster's new David Braley Athletic Centre invites community memberships through AWWCA e-mail notices and *Neighbourhood News & Views*.

Inspired by the AWWCA's community-assets inventory in 2006, in which walkability topped the list of residents' explanations of "what makes Westdale great," a motion by **Councillor Brian McHattie** requesting a citywide pedestrian committee be established, the Ainslie Wood/Westdale walkability committee is formed. Led by AWWCA vice-president **Alice Sabourin**, with great support from Mr. McHattie, the committee becomes a pilot program with the city to promote walkability.

*Ainslie Wood/Westdale
walkability committee
is formed, led by
AWWCA vice-president
Alice Sabourin*

Based on residents' concerns, the pajama-parade route is diverted from streets with many student rental houses; other ideas are implemented, and the AWWCA sponsors a booth where the AWWCA's Because We Care buttons are distributed.

Over 200 residents attend the AWWCA's annual general meeting in September, where **Mayor Fred Eisenberger** speaks about achieving town and gown balance in our community. Outgoing president Rob Payne is thanked for four years of excellent work, and **John Wigle** is voted in as the new president.

In late 2006, *The Hamilton Spectator* reports that the Ministry of Education has designated Westdale's Dalewood

Middle School and Ainslie Wood's Prince Philip School "prohibitive to repair." AWWCA president Rob Payne sends a letter of concern to Hamilton School Board trustee **Judith Bishop** and Mr. McHattie. A committee is struck with parent-council and AWWCA representatives to develop a preferred school plan for the West Hamilton area in advance of the next board review. Mr. McHattie notes that it is critical for the community to have full input in any board decision.

Milestone—10 Years in 2008

As of Jan. 31, heavy truck traffic has ceased on our residential streets, and the university has agreed not to pursue an extension of the temporary agreement. As a result of the AWWCA's involvement, a new focus on collaborative solutions to traffic issues has been established.



In January, the AWWCA is selected as a best-practice community by TownGownWorld, a website dedicated to exploring planning issues that affect near-campus communities.

In April, 80 residents attend a meeting initiated by **Councillor Brian McHattie** to discuss the future of Churchill Park; every city park goes through a master-plan review every 20 years.

AWWCA member **Mary Louise Piggott** emphasizes that the meeting is to find out what those who use the park would like it to look like in the future. Additional trees planted in late 2007 bring the total to over 600 new trees in Churchill Park in the past three years.

Most plantings were done by AWWCA members, who received notices of upcoming plantings via e-mail.

*Meeting is to find out
what those who use the
park would like it to look
like in the future*

Stroud Road Park reconstruction is complete. It concludes efforts started by **Kenneth Sherman** in 2001 to improve sewage-overflow systems emptying into Cootes Paradise. (A community advisory committee working with the city had recommended a 15,000-cubic-metre underground storage tank be constructed in the park.) The reconstruction of the park means that excess rainwater and sewage are no longer discharged into Chedoke Creek and eventually Cootes Paradise. Additional park amenities are added as part of the reconstruction, including 38 new trees.

Earth Day cleanups, now organized by board member **Janet Woodward**, continue for the seventh year; the number of stations is increased to four, supervised by AWWCA board members. AWWCA members and others also participate in the annual West Hamilton rail-trail cleanup, organized by Ken Sherman.



Because We Care stickers are produced in the spring to replace our buttons; among other uses, they are given out at the AWWCA's booth at the Sept. 3 pajama parade, which has been

rerouted once again.

A new brochure encouraging readers to "make yourself at home in the west end" is published by the Campus Town Association (a partnership between McMaster University, the Westdale BIA, and the AWWCA) to promote the benefits of West Hamilton living. The brochure is used by McMaster representatives when they meet with leaders and employees of the federal government's materials-technology laboratory, CANMET-MTL, relocating to Hamilton's McMaster Innovation Park. Former AWWCA board member **Alice Sabourin** was instrumental in the creation of the brochure.

*Brochure promotes
the benefits of
West Hamilton living*

Streamlined procedures for bylaw enforcement are introduced by city staff and communicated to AWWCA members in April. The pilot procedure reduces compliance time for litter, waste, and property maintenance from 24 days to 11 days.

A program to recognize outstanding McMaster students who live in the community continues for the third year; it was launched in 2005 by the AWWCA, the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Police Service, the MSU, McMaster University, and the Westdale BIA. At a gathering April 30, 13 students receive letters of appreciation for their contributions to Ainslie Wood and Westdale.

*Students' contributions
to the community
are recognized*

In May, AWWCA president **John Wigle** writes to Mr. McHattie summarizing our preferences regarding public elementary schools in the area.

The AWWCA supports keeping both Dalewood and Prince Philip Schools open, despite their prohibitive-to-repair rating. The AWWCA thinks that having academically excellent, walkable schools in the community attracts families and helps to keep Ainslie Wood and Westdale stable, balanced communities.

Hamilton Health Sciences announces that it proposes to close the emergency department at McMaster University Medical Center to adults. In response to an online poll on the AWWCA's website, the AWWCA establishes the Access to the Best Care committee, headed by AWWCA member **Dr. Ken Ockenden**. The ABC committee publishes its report in June (see *awwca.ca*). Commitments are made to follow HHS plans closely and report to members.

*AWWCA establishes
Access to the
Best Care committee*

In June, the AWWCA supports light-rail transit through the west end to reduce single-vehicle use, concentrate economic development along the Main West corridor and downtown, and make other neighbourhoods more accessible for students to live in and commute to the campus.

The AWWCA's 10th-anniversary celebrations take place on June 28 on the main stage at Kidsfest (formerly Westfest) in Westdale Village. The City of Hamilton and the AWWCA each present Janet Woodward with an award in recognition of her service. A board member in charge of membership from the earliest days of the association, since 2000 Janet has also co-ordinated publication of *Neighbourhood News & Views*.

A record 570 paid-up members is reached on Aug. 31.

We thank AWWCA board member Lavinia Welsh for assembling this history.

Celebrating the AWWCA's 10th Anniversary

LOREEN JEROME



Councillor Brian McHattie presenting Janet Woodward with certificate from the City of Hamilton. L to R in background: MPP Ted McMeekin, treasurer Loreen Jerome, board member Barb Mansfield, president emerita Phyllis Tresidder, past president Liz Millar, and president John Wigle. Photo: Jay Parlar

During a summer of record rainfall, it was questionable whether planned outdoor celebrations would take place. But on Saturday, June 28, when thunderstorms continued until 10 a.m. and resumed around 2 p.m., there was a brief window when the skies cleared and the sun shone for the AWWCA's 10th anniversary celebrations at 1 p.m. on the main stage at Kidsfest (formerly Westfest).

Past presidents **Liz Millar** and **Phyllis Tresidder** were on stage, along with **MPP Ted McMeekin**, who brought greetings, and Ward 1 **Councillor Brian McHattie**. AWWCA president **John Wigle** spoke of the history of the association and its accomplishments over the past 10 years. During this historical celebration, the association took the opportunity to honour **Janet Woodward**, who from the earliest days of the association has served tirelessly as a board member in charge of membership and various other duties. Since 2000 she has co-ordinated publication of *Neighbourhood News & Views*, the newsletter of the AWWCA.

Mr. McHattie congratulated the association on its anniversary and presented Janet with a framed certificate from the City of Hamilton signed by him and **Mayor Fred Eisenberger** for "tremendous service to our community and the AWWCA area; your dedication, spirit, and genuine commitment have made Hamilton a great place to work, live and play and you are to be commended."

I presented Janet with a plaque on behalf

of the AWWCA and lauded her endless enthusiasm, commitment, and tenaciousness as driving forces behind the association's success for the past 10 years.

On behalf of the membership, president emerita Phyllis Tresidder presented Janet with a ceramic piece created by local artist **Catherine Weir**, a long-time AWWCA member and block representative. Catherine fired the clay using the Japanese method of raku.

Janet spoke of the satisfaction in volunteering, especially when positive change happens, and encouraged others to volunteer. In her thanks to

the board, Janet said: "It is a pleasure to work with all present and past board members for the betterment of our community; together we have accomplished so much. In giving to the community, my life has been enriched in so many ways."

Two large cakes were cut by John Wigle and Mr. McHattie and served by board members to all in attendance, along with bottled water donated by The Barn in Westdale.



Accolades for the AWWCA's 10th Anniversary

We asked our politicians and senior university representatives to comment on how they perceive the AWWCA's work over the past 10 years. Here are excerpts from their remarks:

MP David Sweet: Bringing neighbours together to handle challenging circumstances and to make communities a better place to live is a most honourable pursuit. The AWWCA has not only done this but so much more over the last 10 years.

MPP Ted McMeekin: Dialogue kept the City of Hamilton and McMaster aware of the many issues that faced this neighbourhood. But the AWWCA took the approach of collaboration and not confrontation, realizing that all manner of individuals call this area home. The approach has led to great successes and a vibrant community. Beyond words, actions spoke louder as volunteers laboured against graffiti and cleaned up the community.

Mayor Fred Eisenberger: Thanks to the talent and enthusiasm of your members, the AWWCA has become the largest dues-paying neighbourhood in Hamilton, engaging with several local organizations, including the Hamilton Fire and Police Services, Westdale BIA, and McMaster University. Your sense of community is to be commended as you work so diligently to find solutions to change, while maintaining the livability of Ainslie Wood and Westdale. You have come a long way in 10 years!

Councillor Brian McHattie: The list of accomplishments is significant . . . I can't tell you how important it is to me as the Ward Councillor to have an organization such as the AWWCA to discuss ideas and issues with, and to find lasting solutions that sustain community. While much has been accomplished over the past decade, much remains to be done. I look forward to working even closer with the AWWCA in the months and years ahead as we all work to make Ainslie Wood Westdale the best campus town in North America.

Peter George, president and vice-chancellor, McMaster University: Initiatives such as the President's Advisory Committee on Community Relations, which is jointly chaired by McMaster and the AWWCA, and our ongoing joint support of the Campus Town Association, are indicative of the kinds of productive partnerships that produce real results and lay the foundation for future success. We look forward to continuing to work

closely with the AWWCA as we build a better community.

Roger Trull, vice-president, university advancement, McMaster University: McMaster University has been pleased to have the chance to work with the AWWCA on many projects and initiatives and this spirit of co-operation reinforces our common goal—to have a strong and vibrant university neighbourhood. The AWWCA has benefited from effective leadership and a dedicated group of volunteers. The association's standing in the City of Hamilton and across the province through the Town and Gown Association of Ontario speaks to your organization's professionalism and success.



MPP Ted McMeekin is served cake by Honourary board member Jim Bechtel and board member Lavinia Welsh.
Photo: Janet Woodward



At the AWWCA's booth at Westitalia, L to R back row: Vinnie Welsh, Angela Tirone, Phyllis Tresidder, Jim Bechtel, Earl Jerome, Janet Woodward; L to R front row: Loreen Jerome, Betty Bechtel, Jay Parlar.
Photo: Roman March

VARSITY NEWS

KICK-OFF CLEANUP

JOHN POPHAM

The Ainslie Wood and Westdale community is a little greener thanks to the first annual Kick-off Cleanup held Sept. 13. The event, organized by the Campus Town Association, a partnership between the AWWCA, McMaster University, and the Westdale Business Improvement Area, involved teams of university alumni, students, staff, and area residents. They worked together to help reduce litter and make our neighbourhood cleaner.

"This is a great opportunity for all members of our community: alumni, students, staff and homeowners, to work together to make a difference," says **Roger Trull**, McMaster's vice-president of university advancement. "The Campus Town Association's sole purpose is to build relationships like these to benefit the entire community."

Despite a rainy, overcast day, two teams of 15 volunteers assembled at Alumni Field on the north side of campus. From there, they fanned

out through Westdale and Ainslie Wood to pick up litter, covering the Sterling/King Street area, and the Sanders/Thorndale area. The teams returned to campus with 30 bags of garbage and enjoyed a well-deserved barbecue, followed by the football

game that evening, as the event coincided with the official opening of the Ron Joyce Stadium.

John Popham is alumni officer, special projects, alumni advancement, McMaster University.



One of the cleanup teams with some of the garbage collected. AWWCA member Ken Sherman (back row, 2nd from right), helped recruit community volunteers. Photo: John Popham

STUDENT HOUSING IS VERY GREEN

In past issues of *Neighbourhood News & Views* (autumn 2006, spring and autumn 2007, and spring 2008) we carried information about West Village Student Condos, now renamed West Village Suites, and the developers' intention to seek the highest possible environmental designation (platinum) for their building from LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). On Sept. 5 we received a note from **Rob Manherz**, president of Dundurn Capital Partners,

the company that financed the project, saying that their goal has been achieved. The AWWCA congratulates them: West Village Suites is the only residential building in Canada that has qualified for the rigorous platinum certification. Hamilton should be proud! And so should Ward 1 **Councillor Brian McHattie**, who encouraged and worked with the developers to go for LEED® Platinum. For more information, visit westvillagesuites.ca.



West Village Suites.

Photo: Janet Woodward

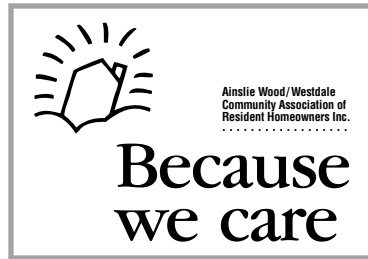
FIRE AT MCMASTER'S BRANDON HALL

SHELLI EISENBERG

The fire at Brandon Hall at McMaster University on Saturday, Oct. 18, left hundreds of students homeless. As the AWWCA's student liaison, I made contact with key people at McMaster on Monday morning, Oct. 20, offering the AWWCA's help. That day, the AWWCA asked members on e-mail if they could house a student until Brandon Hall is liveable again. The following day, Jennifer Kleven, manager of the Off-Campus Resource Centre, expressed her thanks to AWWCA members for their quick and generous responses to the students' needs, saying: "We have been absolutely swamped with offers . . . we already have close to 300 beds logged into our database since yesterday, and we have close to 200 more e-mails and phone calls waiting to be returned." McMaster Students Union president Azim Kasmani thanked the AWWCA for their support and said: "It meant a lot to the students at Brandon Hall."

On Oct. 20 I attended the parent and student meeting on campus regarding the fire and learned that 45 per cent of students at Brandon Hall live locally, leaving almost 300 beyond commuting distance who need accommodation. Some students will be able to move back into Brandon Hall in January, but some may not be able to return until as late as September 2009.

Our hearts go out to the students affected by the fire, and we thank everyone who responded to the need. The AWWCA made a donation to the account set up by Alumni Advancement of McMaster to assist Brandon Hall students with items not covered by insurance.



SWAP-O-RAMA 2009

The City of Hamilton's waste-reduction division, McMaster University, the McMaster Students Union, and MACgreen co-ordinate an annual Swap-O-Rama, with the goal of encouraging people to help themselves to still-useful items left at curbside, saving them from the landfill. The next Swap-O-Rama is tentatively scheduled for Friday, April 17, to Sunday, April 19, 2009. Please note these dates now, as this is the AWWCA's last newsletter before the swap. This event is timed to coincide with students' moving out. Resident homeowners may also put out their own reusable items, but this is not the focus of Swap-O-Rama, as the city has bulk-goods pickup days at other times of the year (see your city Waste Collection Calendar).

For more information and to confirm the dates of Swap-O-Rama (they will be finalized in January), e-mail events co-ordinator **Lisa Azuma** at envior@msu.mcmaster.ca.

FROM SEED TO SCRAP

JANET WOODWARD

On a lovely, sunny autumn Sunday (Oct. 5), Hamiltonians of all ages and walks of life filled two full-sized school buses and headed out on a day trip. It was advertised to AWWCA members Sept. 11, and at least four AWWCA households were represented. This popular event was sold out, with people still trying to get tickets the night before.

The Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) at McMaster University has a new working group called PEAS (Promoting Eating Alternately and Sustainably). Its co-ordinator, **Zsuzsi Fodor**, said: "This group is intent on bridging the perceived disconnect between our meals and the fields where our food comes from. The group's broad mandate is to educate on, promote, and garner support for, a just and sustainable food system . . . one that is conscious not only of food miles but growing practices and accessibility."

PEAS' inaugural event, From Field to Scrap, took participants to Heart's Content Organic Farmstead in Brantford, the Dundurn Castle kitchen garden, and West Avenue Growers in downtown Hamilton. A meal and reception following the tour allowed participants, growers, and cooks to meet one another.

This PEAS food tour was made possible with the support of its partners: the Makers' Market, Hamilton Farmer's Market,



Some tour participants at West Avenue Growers.

Photo: Janet Woodward

Global Village Market in Westdale, Mixed Media, and the Eva Rothwell Centre.

At the reception Ms. Fodor spoke about another day trip in the spring, and we hope to give our members information about that in the new year. You can also contact Ms. Fodor at 289-441-0258 or from.seed.to.scrap@gmail.com.

LIVING IN OUR COMMUNITY

New Benches from the Old Oak

JANET WOODWARD

This is the story of a very special old oak in our community that lived for close to 200 years. Though it had to be removed last year due to its unsafe condition, the tree lives on in a new and useful way, thanks to **Councillor Brian McHattie**, who worked with the community and forestry staff to bring his vision to fruition. Throughout the conception, approval, construction, and installation process, everyone embraced the idea of using wood from the oak to make benches for the park, a first for this kind of project in Hamilton.

Students from Westdale Secondary School installed six new benches in Churchill Park June 9 and 11—three near the aviary and three near the playground, each with an engraved plaque. The students had made the benches under the supervision of their shop teacher, **David Kipp**. I watched them arrive just after 8 a.m. on June 11 and was impressed with how they tackled the job of digging deep holes in very hard earth, with simple shovels. I heard no complaints as they worked away, helping one another to get the job done.

When I met Joshua (Indiana) Cowman-Powell, he volunteered to write about his experience with the project. Joshua graduated from Westdale Secondary School in June and is now working abroad. He writes:

Our shop class was given a mysterious set of rough-hewn logs late in the first semester. Not long after receiving the large pieces of wood, a few students protested the cutting down of the old oak tree in the park. Many students remembered spending a lazy afternoon just



Churchill Park Oak Tree Sept. 21, 2006.

Photo: Janet Woodward

chilling by the tree. Aside from its association with skipping class and other illicit activity, the tree was a benchmark of the park (pun intended). It was not long afterward that the mystery surrounding the logs was revealed to us—they were part of the tree that had been cut down. Many of us felt a certain attachment to the work we were going to do.

Due to having to complete required projects (including a large garage built for a local client), it was not until much later in the second semester that we started to work on the bench project. Befittingly, much of the work was done with hand tools. Planes, chisels, and sanding blocks were pulled out of the cupboards and put to the surface of the lumber. Each piece we sheared off was a piece of history, a little blip in over a century and a half of growth. My classmates put a lot of effort into the work, feeling the cuts they made and adjusting their angle to continue rounding the edges. I grabbed a plane and began working down a fairly stubborn knot, breaking a sweat and running my hand over the area each time I cut the wood. We all did our part, finding an edge to smooth out, a face to sand. Slowly the logs' edges became smooth and bearable, and then even comfortable, to sit on. Pride was evident on my classmates' faces, especially those who had known the tree well; their satisfaction would not stop there.

Then it came time to install the benches. Meeting a pair of city workers, we began, but on the first pull of the starter, their augur broke. Grabbing shovels, we began digging the holes, 3 ½ feet deep and one foot wide. Two strong limbs from the tree that the city had stored away with this project in mind supported our benches. Digging under the sun was somehow relaxing. The lack of unnatural buzzes and rings from



Bench plaque made by the students.

Photo: Janet Woodward

mechanical machinery made the work not only more rewarding but more enjoyable. Removing the dirt from the deep, narrow hole was the hardest part—Jordan (Smiley) dug the dirt out with his hands and then others muscled the former oak limbs into the earth, Shane wrestled a log back out and flipped it back in, and the city workers cut the protruding ends off with a chainsaw, making the pairs of branches as level as possible.

Assembling the benches on the first day required a lot of physical effort, as we only had a hand drill. There I sat in the noon sun, drilling a hole by hand with the help of Cassy. Thankfully, on the second day we had an appropriate drill and bit and quickly assembled the benches.

Throughout the two days we had our share of laughs. Those of us who were there early saw Mr. Kipp leaping onto the playground, going down the slide; later we witnessed Thomas (T-blaze) eating an inchworm and Pryce (Dado) tossing the frisbee and later cycling around delivering us water. Young children ran up, curious to see what we were doing; one child even gave a hand to Gage (Snitch) by inserting a bolt.

All in all, we had a great time, in spite of the incessant squawking of a parrot at the aviary. Passersby complimented us and, reading the plaques we had made, were ecstatic to learn the benches were part of the old oak. At the end of the day—sweaty, and smiling—we all felt a great sense of accomplishment.

We are grateful to Mr. McHattie for co-ordinating the project with the school, community, and city staff. Said David Kipp, "A special thank you to **Rick Simmons, Jamie Madden, and Andrew Lougheed**. These men from the city worked alongside the students; they were a great asset to this project getting completed in such a timely manner." Mr. McHattie thanks the following people who helped make the project happen: **Westdale Secondary School students** who constructed the benches; David Kipp, Westdale Secondary School teacher who supervised the students; **John Taylor**, Hamilton's superintendent of horticulture and forestry operations; **Lorne McArthur**, Hamilton's supervisor of urban forestry; **Sue Gilpin**,



The bench crew. Students: Ben D'Agostino, Nick Gaudet, Shayne Glover, Daniel Hines, Blair Holden, Jordan Howe, Steve Kertesz, Gage Latendresse, Robert Mackay, Mark Miller, Thomas Monaghan, Justin Munday, Pryce Nicholson, Blake Perry, Josh Cowman-Powell (front centre), Scott West, Fileshe Wiltse. City workers: Rick Simmons, Andrew Lougheed. Absent from photo: Jamie Madden (city worker), Jamie Hill, Ryan Plumber (students). Shop teacher: David Kipp (front left).

Photo: Cassandra Settle



Two days after installation, these McMaster students enjoy one of the new benches at the aviary. Photo: Janet Woodward

senior program co-ordinator, parks maintenance; **Jim Koudys** of Kootur Lumber and Sawmill, who milled the wood at no charge; the AWWCA (particularly **Mary Louise Pigott** and **Janet Woodward**); and the community, for their interest. *The Hamilton Spectator* (June 20), *The Dundas Star* (June 27),

and the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's *The Virtual Blackboard* (July) carried stories and pictures about the old oak benches.

Janet Woodward is the AWWCA's newsletter co-ordinator.

NEW FEATURES ON RBG TRAILS

JANET WOODWARD



L to R: Lindsay Burtenshaw, Doris Southwell, Ben Porchuk.
Photo: Janet Woodward

The future of Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary was the topic at an open house on Oct. 23 at Westdale Secondary School Cafeteria. AWWCA members were notified about it via e-mail, and the Royal Botanical Gardens advertised it in the community.

Displays showed new features that are being integrated into the existing trail system that will affect trail use, as well as ongoing projects and planning along the south shore of Cootes Paradise. Staff from the RBG's Department of Conservation were on hand to highlight several projects, including their efforts to recover a number of endangered species, such as the Blanding's turtle, few-flowered club-rush, and the milksnake. RBG's expert in aquatic restoration, **Tys Theysmeyer**, accompanied an informative display on the wetland restoration of Cootes Paradise.

Doris Southwell, a volunteer with Trail Watchers, directed me to **Ben Porchuk**, head of conservation, who explained that there are 30 kilometres of trails, of which about one-third are currently closed for restoration. He said: "The focus is on the open trails, where we plan to place nice viewing platforms and install boardwalks to prevent erosion. A number of the trails that people currently use are not safe,

and thus we are putting an emphasis on closing them while focusing our efforts on making the remaining trails some of the world's best places to view spectacular natural features, such as giant trees, wetlands, and escarpment vistas."

Mr. Porchuk spoke of long-

term plans that are dependent on fundraising, such as a suspended canopy walk above the trees, marsh boardwalks, and elevated lookouts. If you would like information about how to donate, please contact **Lisa Dodd**, director of development, at 905-527-1158, ext. 230.

I also spoke with **Lindsay Burtenshaw**, terrestrial ecologist, who organizes trail maintenance and closures, restoration, and prescribed burns. She spoke of her work in recovering natural ecosystems and trails: "We are now working with the State of the Forest Study team, established this year to take a long-term view in assessing the integrity of the forest ecosystems, and determining the best measures to be taken in the interim to restore them to their former glory." Ms. Burtenshaw will be arranging additional public open houses to examine the trail systems in the Hendrie Valley and the Rock Chapel reserve.

For more information on future projects and the trail system, visit www.rbq.ca.

*"Building community
block by block"*

Westdale Co-op Preschool

LESA VAN LOON

The Westdale Co-op Preschool, located at 99 North Oval in Westdale United Church, will celebrate its 35th anniversary next year. Our early-childhood-education teacher, **Tricia Cassells**, is an imaginative, nurturing, warm, and caring person who provides the children with an exciting, interesting program that helps them immensely in their transition to kindergarten the following year.

In the co-operative spirit, we rely completely on our members to govern and carry out the functions of the school. One parent per child is required to participate at meetings and to fundraise. Parents or caregivers also assist with setup and daily activities. This requirement is usually only two or three days per month for each family and varies depending on enrolment.

What a great way for parents to socialize in their community and actively participate in their children's education.

Information: 905-381-2667 or
westdalecooppreschool.ca.

Lesa van Loon is an AWWCA member.



Johannes with Westdale Co-op sign.
Photo: Lesa van Loon



Ainslie Wood Westdale Walkability Committee

ALICE SABOURIN



In October, the Ainslie Wood/Westdale walkability committee celebrated the completion of our final report, posted at awwca.ca/articles/2008/10/28/ainslie-wood-westdale-walkability-assessment-report/. The group, made up of neighbourhood volunteers, met to discuss the dissemination of the report and to plan next steps with each of the key audiences identified in the recommendations.

The mandate of the AWW walkability committee is to investigate, celebrate, and improve walkability in the community. We completed a pilot of two areas within the larger neighbourhood: Westdale South and Ainslie Wood East. We reviewed the principles of

walkability, studied the neighbourhood characteristics, and developed a community-engagement approach that both promotes walkability and provides multiple venues in which walkability needs can be voiced.

The findings reveal that, while already a walkable community with respect to design (proximity, scale, and compatibility of uses), AWW could do still more to enhance walkability by improving safety, aesthetics, and connectivity.

The committee developed more than 60 recommendations around seven major themes:

1. Improve connectivity.
2. Improve real and perceived pedestrian safety.
3. Invest in the public spaces in AWW, which are known pedestrian magnets.
4. Develop, promote, and maintain a neighbourhood beautification program.
5. Invest in traffic-calming initiatives.
6. Provide ongoing support of neighbourhood walkability assessments and audits.
7. Promote and support neighbourhood schools.

The recommendations are targeted at various stakeholders, including the Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association of Resident Homeowners Inc., the Westdale Business

Improvement Area, the City of Hamilton, and the public and Roman Catholic school boards.

Next steps include prioritizing areas of focus, developing an action plan with target dates, developing a communication plan, and conducting three-month reviews and status updates for the first year. The committee has a second meeting scheduled with Ward 1 **Councillor Brian McHattie** to review the recommendations that apply to the city.

In addition, the committee has developed resources to help others undertake similar work. If you are interested in being involved in auditing other areas of Westdale and Ainslie Wood, please contact me at 905-523-0337 or sabourin@cogeco.ca.

AWWCA member Alice Sabourin is chair of the Ainslie Wood/Westdale walkability committee, a committee of the AWWCA.



Ainslie Wood/Westdale
Community Association of
Resident Homeowners Inc.

**Because
we care**

CHILDREN'S SAFETY IS PRIORITY NUMBER 1

JUDITH ARMOUR AND CAROLINE STINSON



School bus unloads children on the sidewalk installed late August on Glen Road.

The George R. Allan Traffic Committee was set up over five years ago with the primary purpose of improving safety and traffic issues in and around our school community.

In partnership with Temple Anshe Sholom, TD Canada Trust, the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, and nearby residents, we have been instrumental in making significant changes.

Collectively we have worked on improvements to parking regulations; installation of bike racks; encouragement of walking, biking, and car pooling (including the provision of maps with suggested routes); French-immersion busing; a traffic-calming median on King Street West; crossing guards on Glen Road at Bond Street and Longwood Road; anti-idling awareness; a reduction in the speed limit on streets

adjacent to the school; additional sidewalks on Cline Avenue North and Glen Road; the addition of a ramp for increased accessibility to the playground and, most recently a three-way stop at the intersection of Kipling Road and Glen Road, adjacent to George R Allan School.

Every new school year brings new challenges, and we look forward to pursuing further improvements in safety and traffic for the George R. Allan community.



One of the 40-kilometre-speed-limit signs installed Sept. 9.

Nominate a Garden

The Trillium Awards Program is funded by private donations or corporate sponsors and is managed by a volunteer committee with assistance from the operations and maintenance division of Hamilton's public-works department. This program is made possible with the support of over 300 volunteers who judge all properties in the City of Hamilton, often revisiting their assigned zones several times before making a final decision on the issuance of awards. If you would like to volunteer as a judge, see the contact information below.

The program, established in 1956, is one of the oldest and largest beautification programs in North America. It promotes and encourages community pride through the recognition of excellence in landscape design, maintenance, and curb appeal. Beautiful gardens improve the quality of life in our neighbourhood—one of the goals of the AWWCA. Over the years, many AWWCA members have won Trillium Awards; their names are printed in the spring issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views*.

You may nominate any garden in the City of Hamilton, as long as it is visible from a public street and belongs to a private residence. You may also nominate landscapes of businesses, churches, schools, and other institutions for the Awards of Excellence. One is chosen from each ward in the city. The deadline for submissions is June 1, 2009. Information: 905-540-5066 or trilliumawards@hamilton.ca or myhamilton.ca and search "trillium awards."

The safety of the children continues to be the number one priority of the traffic Committee. We will continue to advocate to this end. You can contact the committee at grallan_traffic@hotmail.com.

Judith Armour and Caroline Stinson are co-chairs of the George R. Allan Traffic Committee; Caroline is an AWWCA member.

Access to the Best Care Committee Report

DR. KEN OCKENDEN

In September 2007, Hamilton Health Sciences outlined plans for an expanded, shared adult/pediatric emergency department at McMaster University Medical Centre. These plans were suddenly changed with the announcement in January 2008 of the Access to the Best Care plan, which would convert the ED and hospital to a pediatric facility only.

Following the announcement, HHS presented a series of sessions to explain the changes to the public. Since this was the first opportunity for consultation, the board of directors of the AWWCA formed the Access to the Best Care committee, under my chairmanship, charged with determining the rationale for the sudden change in direction of health care and whether the reasons merited support for the plan.

Throughout the following months members of the committee attended several of the information sessions, as well as numerous smaller meetings with administrators of HHS and St. Joseph's Hospital, city councillors, the chairman of the board of the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), and others. A description of the largest information session, initiated by **Councillor Brian McHattie**, is in the spring issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views*.



Dr. Ken Ockenden addressing the rally at HHS Sept. 25.
Photo: Janet Woodward

Our aim was to try to understand the plan and to present the concerns of AWWCA members to the appropriate parties. For a full description of the committee's activities and conclusions, visit awwca.ca/access-to-best-care.

Although there were attempts to dismiss the process of asking questions as anti-children and anxiety about change, the committee concluded early in its deliberations that we wholeheartedly supported initiatives that would improve health care for children.

However, there were many concerns expressed to and by the committee, including:

1. Lack of prior consultation with both caregivers and the broader patient community.
2. The impact on the McMaster University community.
3. Difficulties in accessing other hospitals when traffic conditions are adverse.
4. The effect of increased patient loads on wait times at city EDs.
5. The location and staffing of a proposed urgent-care center to "replace" the current adult ED.

6. No mention of enhancement of family practice or family health teams.
7. The impact on and cost of the ambulance and paramedic services in the region.

The report of the ABC committee was circulated widely to try to stimulate discussion and resolution of the concerns. I presented the concerns to the Board of Health, and city councillors were almost unanimous in supporting the need for consultation about changes in the health care of the citizens of West Hamilton and the region.

On Sept. 25 a rally was held at which MPs, MPPs, councillors, members of various unions, paramedics, and doctors voiced their support for the people of West Hamilton in our quest for consultation about such far-reaching changes in our access to health care. HHS did not respond.

The proposal was next sent to the LHIN, which was to make the final decision whether the parts of the ABC plan under its jurisdiction could proceed.

Continued on page 25



Councillor Brian McHattie addressing the rally at HHS Sept. 25.

Photo: Janet Woodward

Churchill Park Planning Meeting

JANET WOODWARD



Councillor Brian McHattie speaks to the group before entering the clubhouse.

Photo: Janet Woodward

Thanks to **Mary Louise Pigott** for helping to organize the second Churchill Park planning meeting, held on Nov. 1, a Saturday morning. We met at 10 a.m. at the Churchill Park Lawn Bowling Club to see the facility, designed by Stanley Roscoe. The lawn-bowling club gave up their space in the spring.

Following the walk through the clubhouse, we gathered in the meeting room of Westdale Library. Considering it was the morning after Halloween, the turnout of about 50 people was encouraging. It was a family-friendly meeting, with activities for children. Mary Louise worked with the children

to capture their vision of what they would like to see in the park.

Councillor Brian McHattie opened the meeting, explaining there are no tight deadlines for the plan and that he expects there will be four more meetings in 2009. He introduced **Jim Steep**, who has been flooding the rink in the park for 18 years, which prompted a round of applause. Mr. McHattie explained there are two things that are important and will be included: Timbits Soccer and, depending on feasibility, an ice rink.

At the library, **Charmaine Sherlock** of the Compass Group facilitated an Open Space Technology meeting. She solicited topics for discussion from the group and asked individuals to lead breakout groups. This resulted in dozens of ideas being put to paper and reported on by a leader from each group. Ms. Sherlock said, "This is the first time such a deeply democratic process has been used to



Supervisors of kids' vision L to R displaying the kids' vision of



Inside the clubhouse.

Photo: Janet Woodward



Charmaine Sherlock facilitating the meeting. Photo: Janet Woodward

Benches and Books

LOREEN JEROME

The question at the AWWCA's community-trivia contest for children, sponsored once again by **Bryan Prince Bookseller**, was to guess the number of benches that Westdale Secondary School students made from the old oak tree in Churchill Park and then installed in the park. The contest drew the second highest number of responses ever, thanks largely to the efforts of **Shelli Eisenberg**, who took to the streets to round up dozens of children, encouraging them to enter. As a result, we used almost all the entry forms available, for a total of 63 entries. There was a wide range of guesses—from two to 10,000 benches! The contest helped raise awareness of the new benches, but apparently it proved a little challenging; of the 63 entrants, only seven guessed the correct number of benches. We then made a random draw from the correct entries.

And the winner is . . .

Peter Capretta, age 12, of Haddon Avenue North in Westdale. He won a \$25 gift certificate donated by



Peter Capretta with his gift certificate. Peter enjoys basketball but says that soccer, which he plays all year round, is his favourite sport.
Photo: Janet Woodward

Bryan Prince Bookseller in Westdale. Congratulations, Peter.

We thank the AWWCA's Westitalia volunteers: **Jeanne Bernard, Lisa Dodds, Shelli Eisenberg, Earl and Loreen Jerome, Carolyn Kinsley, Cathy Mansfield, Ira Rosen, Lavinia Welsh, and Janet Woodward.**



Photo: Julia DeBruyn-Smith, Nicole Sulewski, Ben Kukucska, the park.
Photo: Janet Woodward

plan a public space in Hamilton."

Meeting notes will be posted at brianmchattie.ca. Mary Louise set up discussion boards where you can make comments. Go to hammerboard.ca/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=327 and forum.skyscraperpage.com/showthread.php?p=3876874#post3876874. You need to register to post on Skyscraper, but you can post as a guest on Hammerboard. Pictures of the event have been posted on Hammerboard.



Participating in the meeting as group reports are given.



Sarah Dennison and her children, Rachel, Isabella, Luke, and Joseph, visit the AWWCA's booth, attended by volunteer Shelli Eisenberg.
Photo: Janet Woodward

LIVING IN OUR CAMPUS TOWN

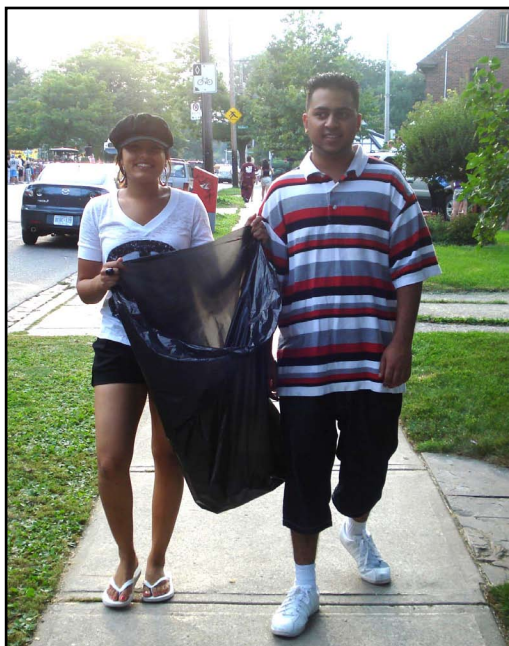
STUDENTS DO CARE

SASHA RANA

Whoever said students do not care has not heard of the Student Community Support Network (SCSN). This service for off-campus students, and for residents in the surrounding community, strives to reach one main goal: to foster positive relations between McMaster students and the community. Efforts are made through several avenues, including delivering community volunteer programs to students, printing an informative newsletter, and educating students about municipal bylaws through the Peer-to-Peer Program.

I attended the AWWCA's 10th annual general meeting Sept. 23, where I sat on a panel with the president of the McMaster Students Union, McMaster University employees, and city officials. We listened to the concerns of residents and answered questions about our efforts toward bettering the community. I briefly discussed the Peer-to-Peer Community Outreach Program, which involves students in a proactive as well as reactive approach to cleaning up the community.

Three key players are involved in the communication network of the Peer-to-Peer Program: the SCSN, the AWWCA, and the City of Hamilton. Three student community-standards assistants (CSAs) have received basic training in property standards from the city. Complaints and basic property-standards violations are sent to the SCSN from the AWWCA and other residents in the community. The CSAs are assigned to visit the homes and educate the students about bylaw infractions. Two to four days later, the CSAs do followup visits to document compliance or noncompliance. If the latter occurs, the complaint is forwarded to the city's municipal law-enforcement department. The Peer-to-Peer Program demonstrates both the students' and the university's commitment to the near-campus community.



Serena and Kunal clean up during the pajama parade Sept. 3.

Photo: Sasha Rana

The SCSN employs 10 students who contribute to the service's objective of strengthening student-community relations. In addition to the CSAs,

community-resource assistants (CRAs) are responsible for six different areas in surrounding neighbourhoods, assisting students with any questions or concerns about housing, bylaws, or any aspect of off-campus life. The newsletter and promotions co-ordinator and SCSN writers research relevant issues in the community and write articles for students and residents in the *Community Connection* newsletter, which is released three times during the school year.

SCSN also helps with many events throughout the year, including the pajama parade, the pumpkin hike, and homecoming festivities. We want to make sure our students are happy with their community and our community is happy with the students.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for the SCSN, please contact me at scsn@msu.mcmaster.ca.

Sasha Rana is director of the Student Community Support Network

Kids Fundraise for Sick Kids

Congratulations to all those involved in the fundraiser for the McMaster Children's Hospital. Community volunteers set up a lemonade stand at Oakwood Place parkette, which attracted many thirsty students moving into residence and participating in the pajama parade.

Nine young girls took turns looking after the stand, raising \$320.61 at the parade on Sept. 3 and \$47.77 on residence move-in day Aug. 30. In a letter of thanks to the volunteers on Sept. 29, **Alida Bowman**, program manager of inpatient pediatrics at McMaster Children's Hospital, said: "It is difficult for children to be hospitalized and we strive to normalize their lives while they are here through play, education, and peer interaction. It is through involvement such as

yours that all of this is made possible."

The young volunteers were **Hannah, Juliette and Maddie deJonge; Maddie and Sophie McDonagh; Heather, Kate, and Amy Stinson; and Milla Tarnopolsky**. The event was organized by **Sue deJonge**.



Fundraising at the lemonade stand. L to R back: Maddie McDonagh, Sophie McDonagh, Kate Stinson; front: Maddie deJonge.
Photo: Sue deJonge

The AWWCA's Student Liaison

*At the AWWCA's September board meeting, **Shelli Eisenberg** was appointed student liaison. This is a newly created position on the board. Shelli succeeds **Janet Woodward** on McMaster's pajama-parade committee. In addition, Shelli will help promote the good-student awards and will liaise with student committees. One of the first things Shelli did was to make signs welcoming new students at the parade on Sept. 3. We asked her to tell us about herself and her philosophy toward living as a resident homeowner in our campus town and her goals for this new position.*

My husband, Mark, and I moved to Hamilton from Toronto in 1982, when I was eight months pregnant with the first of our two children. We knew Mark's parents, who lived in Dundas, would be wonderful grandparents, and Westdale was our destination. We love old neighbourhoods, and by living near an excellent university, we found a thoughtful, intelligent community filled with caring, educated people. We knew that the Westdale neighbourhood, with its first-class schools, would be a perfect place to raise our children. At that time there were no thoughts of or concerns about university students filling single-family homes. As young adults spilled into our community in the early 90s, however, we cringed each time a house went up for sale; if it became a student rental with an absentee landlord, we dreaded the results. There are now numerous houses on our block that are owned by absentee landlords.

I soon realized it is easy to develop the attitude of "us versus them." These young adults were what my young children were going to be when they grew up (they are now university graduates). It made sense to treat my student neighbours in the manner in which I wanted my children to be treated when they became old enough to go to university. It would be good to know that their neighbours would welcome them. I have found that by treating students with respect and appreciation, they treat me in the same manner.

Each year, when students move into the house across the street from us, which is owned by an absentee landlord who never mows the grass, I am friendly and welcoming. I decided a dozen years ago to mow their front lawn and planted a tree. I introduce myself to the new students and explain how I take care of their front lawn and that I am doing it for myself. They see the lawn care as improving their space. All it takes is 10 minutes, and this way I feel no angst or anger, and every group that has lived there thinks I'm "the best."

When I introduce myself, I let them know, in a friendly way, what their responsibilities are as members of the community. I explain expectations for garbage day, parties, noise levels, and snow shoveling. I explain our zero-tolerance noise laws. I also let them know that I will try to help if they have problems or need anything and that they're welcome to borrow things like snow shovels (which the landlord has never given them) or the neighbourly cup of sugar.

I believe it is hard to be "bad" when you are treated with respect. Even the occasional party is usually kept inside. If the party does spill outside, I immediately go over and talk to them, saying: "Hey guys, the volume is getting a bit too loud; let's take it inside, and while you're at it, please close all the windows." I never scold them or talk down to them, as this would just alienate them and set up a power struggle. In a power struggle, you lose control of the situation. I use a gentle, yet firm, approach, reminding them that their neighbours have sleeping children or might be sleeping themselves and have to get up early for work. "You surely don't want someone calling the police and have you put on their list of problem houses." It is much easier to get a positive response when they see you as



Shelli displays one of the signs she made for the parade.
Photo: Janet Woodward

their equal, not their foe. This way, I have developed some wonderful relationships over the years. These appreciative students have delivered homemade cookies to me, as well as Christmas gifts, thank-you notes, and invitations to come into their houses. They sometimes share their problems with me. I have even received visits from a few of them after they graduate.

As the AWWCA's new student liaison, I hope to make this philosophy part of an effective approach to dealing with the issues we face in learning to live peacefully and productively with our student neighbours. Most students are good young adults who come from good homes; we need to help bring out the best in them. Having fun is part of the university experience. However, living in our community brings with it obligations and responsibilities. I hope to encourage more positive interaction between permanent residents and our ever-changing student neighbours. I welcome feedback from the community and will attempt to help those interested in building bridges. You can contact me at eisenberg@sympatico.ca.

PJ PARADE 2008

JANET WOODWARD AND SHELLI EISENBERG



Patrick (in foreground) and Cara place AWWCA stickers on paraders.
Photo: Janet Woodward

The weather couldn't have been nicer for McMaster's pajama parade on Sept. 3. As reported in the spring issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views*, the parade was rerouted for the second year. This year it travelled north on Dalewood Crescent, east on Paisley Avenue North, and south on Dromore Crescent to Sterling Street.

Since the 2007 parade, the pajama-parade committee met five times prior to the 2008 parade. After the parade the committee met on Sept. 18 to review the responses from residents and students and to consider ideas about how to eliminate a few problems that occurred on Sterling Street. The committee will work on those ideas throughout the year, in an effort to make the parade a positive experience for all.

One notable difference this year was the improved interaction between students and residents when we waved signs reading: Welcome Mac Students. Thanks to all who made welcome signs. **Mary Anne Duncan**, an AWWCA block representative and a PJ-parade committee member, represented the AWWCA at a station on her front lawn on Sterling Street. She and helpers **Cara**, **Megan**, **Patrick**, and **Scott** placed 500 AWWCA stickers on paraders.

Following the parade the AWWCA solicited responses from members and received 17. Of these, 13 were generally positive and four were negative. Following

are excerpts from some of the respondents.

"I can only speak for the part of the parade that came around Paisley and then down Dalewood, but our whole family really enjoyed the festivities. Many of our Oak Knoll/Dalewood neighbours gathered on our lawn and cheered as the parade went by. We hope that Dalewood will continue to be part of the parade route in the future. Next year we will make sure we have Welcome Mac signs." **Shirley Rodrigues (Ofosu)**

"It was a really mad scene along Sterling. The police were gentle with students who were carrying beer and were giving warnings which were respected." **Ken Sherman**

"I thought the parade was wonderful. It seemed really well organized, and it was lovely to see the students interact so positively with all the kids in the neighborhood. I think it sends out the right respect-thy-neighbour message to the community as well as to the students. It seemed really successful to me. Our street (Dalewood) loved it." **Sigal Balshine**

"The parade seemed better organized than last year and faced fewer delays by students along the route (at least on Sterling)." **Glenn Fletcher**

"We live on Dromore, and the parade passed by our house. We were pleasantly surprised at how well the parade went. Our kids went out to watch, and my husband and I did as well for a bit. My kids loved the police motorcycle and car!" **Mary Ellen Opie**

Three members reported inappropriate behaviour by parade observers on Sterling Street at Dromore. Complaints included observers openly drinking beer on residents' lawns and the sidewalk, walking down Dromore Crescent with drinks in hand, walking all over a resident's lawn and flower beds, dumping beer all over a resident's lawn, and littering it with bottles and garbage.

"This year's parade was wonderful, well organized, nicely spaced and students behaved very well. We offered them cool drinks and candy, which they reluctantly accepted, but what



L to R: Mary Clements, Blue Box Man Phil Hilton, Neha Gandhi.

Photo: Janet Woodward

struck me is that, when they had passed by, we discovered the garbage can we had set out for them was empty! They had picked up every cup and wrapper from our garbage can and taken the garbage with them. How impressive! Our grandchildren were thrilled with the pencils they received from the students. What a great experience for the kids in our community, which is fast becoming a young people's place!"

Soraya Erian Dokainish

"The route was a big improvement. There seems to have been much less negative impact on the community. My impression was that there was less after-parade partying than previous years, perhaps as a result of aggressive policing." **Kevin Russell**

"I was very pleased to see so many neighbours and little kids out for the parade and to see the interaction between the paraders and the spectators. The long stretches of Dalewood and Dromore are much more suitable than the short blocks used last year when the parade went south from Sterling. I strongly support using this route again next year." **Kenneth Moyle**

"We enjoyed the parade this year and found it much tamer than last year. It was very well organized, and the students/parade participants were very well behaved and well mannered." **Helen Prosser**

All responses received have been forwarded to McMaster. Most of our members who responded thought the parade was much improved and the problems on Sterling Street are being addressed by the pajama-parade committee.

Janet Woodward is the AWWCA board's outgoing parade committee member. Shelli Eisenberg is the board's incoming committee member.



Natasha (in foreground) and her sister, Nicola, welcome new students.
Photo: Janet Woodward



Signs made by Soraya's grandsons, 9-year-old Callum (top sign) and 5-year-old Faris (bottom sign), with a few images contributed by 3-year-old granddaughter, Jenna.

Photo: Janet Woodward



Dressed in their pajamas, Sylvia and Maddie welcome students. Sylvia is holding the sign she made.

Photo: Janet Woodward

PUMPKIN HIKE

JANET WOODWARD

The annual pumpkin hike took place Oct. 30, beginning at the entrance to the Royal Botanical Gardens trail off Marion Avenue North. It is a joint effort by the McMaster Students Union and George R. Allan parent council.

Two MSU groups oversee the community-outreach event: Maroons and FIT (Fundraising Initiative Team); **Jennifer Ford**, fundraising co-ordinator for Maroons and FIT, was the main organizer for the MSU. George R. Allan organizers were Home and School Association chair **Kim Davis** and School Council chair **Brian Shanlin**; the hike was co-ordinated by **Kim Newcombe**.

The Maroons and FIT provided treat bags and judged and awarded prizes for the colouring contest. An MSU club, SOS (Smiling Over Sickness), organized the games, Dymont's Farm donated 40 pumpkins, and George R. Allan Home and School provided glow sticks, cider, and pumpkins. At George R. Allan, Maroons, parent volunteers, and six Westdale Secondary School volunteers assisted in carving and judging 70 pumpkins (in 45 minutes!), arranged and lit the pumpkins on the trail, and picked them up afterward. Volunteers from the Maroons helped keep people safe on the trail.

Funds raised at the entrance to the hike were split between Home and School, the RBG, and a local charity. United Way



Two of the 138 carved pumpkins on the 1,200-metre trail.



donation boxes were placed on the table where cider was being served at the end of the hike; funds raised went to the MSU United Way campaign.

I spoke with FIT leader **Alayna Kolodziechuk**, who said: "From the perspective of the students, it's a really fun event that we enjoy, and it's one of our favourite events. We get to dress up, and we connect with the community, something we don't have many opportunities to do. I was at the hike last year, when it poured rain, and it was difficult to set up the pumpkins and pick them up afterward. This year the weather was perfect. But whatever the weather, the pumpkin hike is always a popular event with families. It starts at 6:30 p.m. and ends at 8 p.m., but people were still coming at 8:10 when we were closing up."

Mr. Shanlin gave a brief history of the hike: "About 15 years ago, Ms. Quigley [then principal of G. R. Allan] asked the children, 'What is your greatest fear?' They replied: 'The dark.' So she organized a hike in the dark, and it evolved from there."

Said Ms. Ford: "Everyone appreciates the work all the volunteers put in. It is always a great community event!" Mr. Shanlin said: "The G.R. Allan parent council appreciates and enjoys working with the Mac students."



Checking in for the hike, children pick up glow sticks and adults contribute money.

NEWS FROM THE BLUES

GPS Team Removes 140 Tags in Westdale

TONI RUBINO

This year's Graffiti Prevention Strategy team consisted of **Toni Rubino** (team supervisor), **Joshua Bertollo**, **Rebecca Howerton**, and **Natalie Raso**. The team worked from May through August. Our focus this year was education and community sustainability, as the team felt that these are the keys to prevention. We made presentations to many kids aged six to 12 throughout the summer and facilitated programs such as Adopt-A-Block to generate community involvement. Also, the team removed graffiti in public areas such as parks and underpasses.

GPS is funded by a grant from the National Crime Prevention Council and operated through a partnership with the Hamilton Police Service, the City of Hamilton, Hamilton Safe Communities Coalition, and McMaster University. The program ran throughout the summer and has now completed its third and final year.

This summer the team removed approximately 500 tags from the Gibson, Beasley, Stinson, and Westdale neighbourhoods, which were the assigned areas in the grant. For July and August, the GPS team had two high school students helping the team with education and removal. Within the Westdale area alone, the GPS team removed approximately 140 tags, including from mailboxes, underpasses, and parks. We worked closely with city officials with the hope of combining everyone's efforts into one, to combat graffiti in Hamilton. In total during the summer, the GPS team removed over 1,000 tags and reached over 1,000 community members within the City of Hamilton.

Report from West Town Crime Manager

SERGEANT JO-ANN SAVOIE



I have survived my first Welcome Week, pajama parade, homecoming, and the AWWCA's annual general meeting. As I wrap up my first 10 months as your crime manager, I want to reflect on some of the issues I have been working on.

Shortly after I came to the position in January, I left for four weeks to attend residency at Royal Roads University. On my return, I was responsible for putting together operational plans for the PRIDE Parade, Churchill Park, Project Silver Steal, and Welcome Week.

The PRIDE parade went off without a hitch. The persons responsible for the stabbing at Churchill Park have been arrested. Project Silver Steal reduced thefts from autos significantly and identified several key graffiti taggers, resulting in 17 arrests and over 70 criminal charges. Welcome Week was challenging, but nothing like what Queen's University or Western faced. The majority of fines were for noise, being intoxicated in public, or carrying an open container of alcohol in public.

Trying to improve on quality of service, I have been working with **Kelly Barnett**, City of Hamilton bylaw co-ordinator, on perfecting our current

communication practices. Bylaw officers now have mobile terminals in all their vehicles, and we hope to have this program available for sharing with police by the end of the year. Noise complaints are no longer stacked to be answered one by one, but rather sent out as a group, reducing response time.

Prior to university commencing, I personally attended a dozen homes that had been flagged as problems in the past, in an attempt to give them a fair warning that we will be watching them. Each night that Mac special-duty officers are dispatched they are briefed on the most up-to-date list of problem addresses. If you wish to submit an address, contact me at 905-540-5093 or jsavoie@hamiltonpolice.on.ca.

While monitoring Facebook in October, I noticed a 2,780-member group organized by McMaster students that was planning a costume party for Ward Avenue. Once contacted, they quickly saw the error of their ways, and the number of members dropped from 2,780 to 2,000 to 1,800, to 1,000. I am happy to report there are only two members left in this group—the original organizers.

We are making a dent with graffiti. Please continue to send the city and me the "hot spots" to have them added to the list to be cleaned. Graffiti vandal KEENUR pleaded guilty on Oct. 30. His 60-day pretrial custody is the equivalent of a six-month custodial sentence, which is a significant incarceration for a young offender. We will be monitoring his behaviour closely while he is on probation for the next two years.

For those of you who have forwarded your thanks, I greatly appreciate it.

We ask all community members to report graffiti on both public and private property to the city's hotline number: 546-CITY. The city is dedicated to removing graffiti on public property in a timely matter once reported, and bylaw will enforce graffiti removal on private property.

The very helpful website graffitiburts.org, which is affiliated with the City of Hamilton, contains a vast amount of information about graffiti prevention and removal.



GPS team members, L to R: Rebecca Howerton, Natalie Raso, Toni Rubino, and Josh Bertollo.

CITY HALL NEWS

AWWCA Endorses LRT

The board of directors of the AWWCA voted to endorse light-rail transit in Hamilton and on July 18 sent a letter to the mayor and city councillors (with copies to the city's light-rail steering committee and the general manager and manager of strategic planning of public works) expressing our support for light rail as the preferred rapid-transit choice for Hamilton. In the letter we outlined some reasons for our support, including LRT's potential to do the following:

1. Attract new economic development and increase the tax-assessment base.
2. Attract new riders to public transit, helping Hamilton to achieve its goal of doubling per capita transit use.
3. Decrease pollution.
4. Decrease congestion.
5. Improve the image of Hamilton locally and internationally as a progressive city.

LRT would benefit Ainslie Wood and Westdale specifically by connecting our neighbourhoods to the rest of the city (and the greater Toronto region via GO) in the most comfortable, fast, and efficient way possible. This would also mean that McMaster University students would have a wider choice of places to live, within easy reach of the campus, which would relieve pressure for additional student housing in our neighbourhoods.



Rapid Transit
MOVING HAMILTON FORWARD

Ward 1 Chedoke-Cootes: Councillor's Report

BRIAN MCHATTIE



It has been a beautiful fall in Ainslie Wood and Westdale, with many warm days and cool nights. Now that frost is upon us and the new year approaches, I would like to update you on my work and discuss issues that I am pursuing on your behalf into 2009.

As many of you know, the new Municipal Act allows Hamilton to license rental housing. We have set up a Community Liaison Committee to investigate and author such a bylaw for Ainslie Wood and Westdale and the area around Mohawk College. The CLC membership includes three AWWCA representatives, as well as students, landlords, and citizens at large. My goal is to have a clear direction to present to city council by summer 2009.

A key aspect to achieving more balanced neighbourhoods is to promote purpose-built student housing (for example, the 450-student development at the former CNIB property). A proposed development at 17 Ewen Road for 550 students will likely be coming to the city planning committee for consideration this winter. A 20-student lodging home is under construction near Victoria Park.

One of my primary interests is to encourage folks to leave the car at home and embrace other modes of

transportation, such as cycling, walking, and transit. I am currently working with the AWWCA to implement your walkability analysis of two neighbourhoods. This year we installed new sidewalks on Glen Road behind George R. Allan School and from the pedestrian-signal crossing on Cootes Drive to Main Street West. In 2009, we will conduct a formal review of the 2003 Ainslie Wood Westdale Master Transportation Strategy, offering opportunity for more traffic calming, sidewalks, and other actions. Additional cycling infrastructure linking the Kirkendall neighbourhood to Ainslie Wood and Westdale will be constructed in 2009 (extending the rail trail and adding bike lanes on Longwood to King).

Proactive bylaw enforcement this fall was successful in making our area a better place to live, with changes in enforcement processes significantly speeding up property-standards responses to long grass and weeds. Improvements are still needed, however, and I will be meeting with the Hamilton Police Service shortly to encourage stronger enforcement of the noise bylaw and better communication between city bylaw staff and police so our fee-for-service costs can be applied when we make more than one visit to the same problem address.

As a community, we are beginning to discuss a new vision for Churchill Park. Watch for additional meetings on this throughout 2008 and 2009. As many of you know, the Churchill Fields Lawn Bowling Club closed in September 2007, and new uses for that property could include an outdoor ice rink, children's soccer on the former bowling greens, and community use of the building. A fresh coat of paint on the wrought-iron fence is just the first effort in refurbishing the grounds.

Below are some quick updates on my citywide efforts:

1. I led the council decision to implement an enhanced property-

Continued on page 25

Our Thanks to Staff

Our community receives a lot of help in many ways from dozens of people at City Hall.

The main reason our community needs more help than average is the lack of a rental bylaw that would regulate noise, maintenance, and parking. For instance, our councillor's office advised us that on Aug. 25, courtesy letters were sent to approximately 134 property owners and tenants residing in Ward 1. This number represents three-quarters of all the letters sent out citywide!

We want to recognize the hardworking people who often go beyond the call of duty to keep our community liveable. You may not be familiar with most of their names since they work behind the scenes.

Property standards: **Marty Hazel, Bill Young, Stephen Bailey, Carmela Vidic, Vince Ormond, and Kelly Barnett;** bylaw clerks and municipal law-enforcement officers for Ward 1. Building and licensing: **John Lane, Barb Lavadinho,** and all **building inspectors** for Ward 1. Waste-management division: **Colin Vidler, Sherry Moon, Carol Elleker,** and all **crews.** Parking: **Pam Carver and Sebastian Stula.** Graffiti: **Sgt. Jo-Ann Savoie and facilities staff.** Parks (splash pad and graffiti): **Robert Norman, Al Dore, Sue Gilpin, Steve Ames, John Taylor, Mike McNamara,** and their **crews.** Parks and roads graffiti: **Mike Radigan, John Turner, Pat Celebre,** and their **crews.** Last but not least, our councillor's office: **Brian McHattie, Dale Brown, and Nikola Patti.**

The board of directors of the AWWCA would like to thank you, one and all, for helping to keep our community safe and liveable.

'Councillor's Report' continued from page 24

standards bylaw providing additional powers to ensure protection of designated heritage buildings.

2. The new City Housing Hamilton property known as the Gore Building at John and King Streets downtown is open, and as CHH president I can tell you that we are looking at additional opportunities to spur redevelopment in the downtown.

3. Construction at the McMaster Innovation Park on the federal metallurgical lab, CANMET, will start this winter for a spring 2010 opening. As you know, the lands to the east, proposed for big-box stores by Trinity Development, are part of an Ontario Municipal Board case, and there will be a community update early in the new year.

Please visit my website at brianmchattie.ca for more details on my City Hall committee work and projects listed above. I invite you to communicate with me at City Hall at (905) 546-2416, or via e-mail at bmchattie@hamilton.ca. Have a great winter!

*"Building community
block by block"*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Carey McManus wrote on Sept. 23: "I call Parking Enforcement about cars parked on the wrong side of the road, parked the wrong way on the streets, and overhanging the sidewalks. The police are hard to get because these problems aren't emergency in nature. Until an emergency like fighting or property damage is occurring, we won't call them, as they need to deal with more important issues. Parking Enforcement are so supportive. I have never felt like it was an imposition for them. They support us 100 per cent and always come and ticket the offenders. They have instructed us to call as often as needed. They are wonderful. Special thanks to the ladies who have taken my calls at Parking Enforcement; they are always pleasant and helpful."

Jim and Jane Evans wrote on July 30: "This neighbourhood's policing has much improved since we moved here in 2004. Also, we want to say what an interesting 2008 spring newsletter; we had no idea that the community effort evolved long before we arrived."

'Access to Best Care' continued from page 15

An LHIN staffer made a presentation to the board of the LHIN, and after minimal discussion the board approved the plan on Sept. 29.

Following that decision, a member of the LHIN board resigned, stating that the public had not been given a voice and also citing a lack of evidence-based research used in HHS's planning. For those who attended the meeting, it appeared that little attention had been paid to the public submissions and even less to critical analysis of the proposal. Indeed, one of the board members said that his main reason for voting as he did was the opinion of his golfing buddies!

In summary, the administration of HHS devised a plan that fits their perceived needs for the patients of the area without consulting the patients themselves. The *appointed* board of directors of HHS ratified the plan. Despite concerns expressed by many people within both the community and the health-care system, the proposal was forwarded to the LHIN. Despite concerns and lack of evidence for the proposal, the *appointed* LHIN board approved the plan.

The Minister of Health, citing legislation, claims there is no recourse from the decision.

Hamilton City Council is reviewing the plan, because augmented Emergency Medical Services may cost Hamilton taxpayers more than \$1,500,000 annually for the ABC plan.

We hope that, in the long term, Hamiltonians will have access to the best health care they need and want.

Dr. Ken Ockenden worked as a Hamilton emergency physician for 30 years, 14 years of which he was chief of emergency at the Henderson and Hamilton General Hospitals. He is an AWWCA member.

MEMBERS' NEWS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

JOHN WIGLE



I would like to report on the work of the AWWCA for the past six months. We are regularly faced with new challenges, and the AWWCA continues to work on key issues that directly affect our members.

Achievements and Ongoing Work

1. The AWWCA's Access to the Best Care committee investigated Hamilton Health Sciences' proposal to eliminate adult emergency services from McMaster University Medical Centre and to transfer over 120 adult beds elsewhere. Under the leadership of AWWCA member **Dr. Ken Ockenden** and the association's past president, **Rob Payne**, the committee prepared an interim report that



Participants at the march and rally Sept. 25.

Photo: Janet Woodward

we sent to HHS, the Local Health Integration Network, and municipal and provincial politicians, among others; the ABC committee made a presentation to the Hamilton Board of Public Health and spoke against lack of public consultation in the decision making. Many members attended the march and rally on Sept. 25 to help publicize the problem. Information on the issue is assembled at awwca.ca/access-to-best-care.

2. Our members sit on the West Hamilton School Planning Committee to monitor the public school board's intentions with respect to our elementary and middle schools.

3. **Lisa Dodds**, our first vice-president, works as liaison with the Hamilton Police Service's Ward 1 crime manager and attends meetings

of the police superintendent's advisory committee.

4. **Ira Rosen**, our second vice-president, is bylaw liaison for property standards. Ira holds several meetings a year, to which he invites representatives of the HPS, bylaw department, fire department, McMaster Students Union, and other community partners. Also, Ira was instrumental in arranging for the two dynamic guest speakers at our annual general meeting.

5. Board member **Lavinia Welsh** took on the new position of liaison for land use and rental housing. She attended one prehearing of the Ontario Municipal Board relating to the Trinity Property Developments project adjacent to McMaster's Innovation Park and a meeting with Auburn Developments



Ken Sherman addresses rental licensing rally Sept. 20.

Photo: Janet Woodward

regarding the proposed Ewen Road project.

6. In September we welcomed a new board member, **Shelli Eisenberg**, who has agreed to assume the new position of student liaison. She and **Betty Bechtel**, an honorary board member of the AWWCA, met representatives of the university regarding the pajama parade, and Shelli was in contact with the university regarding the Brandon Hall fire Oct. 18.

7. Other board changes include **Loreen Jerome** taking on membership duties and **Barb Mansfield** assuming treasurer duties.

8. The AWWCA, in particular, member **Ken Sherman**, publicized the rental-housing bylaw passed by the City of Oshawa in late 2006 to deal with the explosive growth of two postsecondary institutions in that city. Representatives of Oshawa were guest speakers at our annual general meeting. The association's and Ken's efforts attracted over 140 people to a rally held in Westdale Village on Sept. 20. Ken's petition delivered 147 signatures, and an AWWCA online poll delivered 68 more votes in support of the licensing of rental properties, with only 23 against.

9. The association celebrated its 10th birthday at Kidsfest held June 28

in Westdale Village. I made a short speech highlighting memorable aspects of our association's history, and **Janet Woodward** was honoured for her 10 years of volunteering for the association. Many AWWCA supporters were there, including **MPP Ted McMeekin**, **Councillor Brian McHattie**, and past presidents **Phyllis Tresidder** and **Liz Millar**.

I want to recognize the dedication and work of our board of directors and AWWCA committees. The decision of our board is to pursue dialogue and collaboration rather than confrontation with community partners; however, the board acknowledges that the association has had, and will continue to have, real disputes with some of our community partners. The board is acutely aware that a number of you are dissatisfied with aspects of bylaw enforcement. This is a priority for the association in the coming year.

After more than a year as your president, it is evident to me that this association is the only community organization that consistently and effectively monitors, advises, and gives meaningful input regarding decisions affecting our daily lives in the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods.

Much has been done by the



MPP Ted McMeekin speaks at Kidsfest June 28.
Photo: Janet Woodward

AWWCA in our 10-year history. We recognize that much more still has to be done. Thank you for your support, and please accept our sincere invitation to become more involved in a worthy organization that now has the ear of local and provincial government, among other stakeholders. Please contact me at 905-639-1052, ext. 232, or wiglej@simpsonwagle.com to volunteer.

AWWCA Board Develops New Portfolio

AWWCA board member **Vinnie Welsh** has taken on a new portfolio to deal with land use and development and the proposed rental-licensing bylaw. Vinnie will represent AWWCA members by:

1. Reviewing land-development proposals for their appropriateness to the Ainslie Wood Westdale Secondary Plan, attending any meetings on these proposals, and updating the board for any response that may be required.
2. Representing the AWWCA at Ontario Municipal Board Hearings regarding land use.
3. Reviewing applications submitted to the Committee of Adjustment and working with homeowners who may wish to comment on these applications.

4. Representing the AWWCA on the new Community Liaison Committee for the formation of a City of Hamilton bylaw to regulate rental housing.

Said Vinnie: "This work interests me because I believe planning can make or break a community." Vinnie can be reached at vwelsh@cogeco.ca.



In Memoriam

Fritz Wigle

The AWWCA expressed its condolences to John Wigle and his family on the death of his father, Francis (Fritz), on Oct. 2 and made a donation to the Hamilton Public Library in his memory. Fritz was an AWWCA member, along with his wife, Mary.

Fritz's father-in-law, John Christilaw, started the Simpson Wigle law firm in 1919. Fritz joined him in 1949, helped guide the firm through several expansions, and was still active in it until 20 months before he died at age 91. Continuing the tradition, John joined Simpson Wigle in 1982, became a partner in 1988, and continues his law practice there today.

10TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

JANET WOODWARD

Attendance at our 10th annual general meeting Sept. 23 at Dalewood Middle School was likely the highest ever, with about 240 in the audience. At the informal session in the lobby preceding the business meeting, **Ward 1 Councillor Brian McHattie**; **Sergeant Jo-Ann Savoie**, Hamilton Police Service; **Roger Trull**, vice-president, university advancement; **Jim Winn**, Hamilton Emergency Services chief fire-prevention officer; **Stephen Bailey**, municipal law-enforcement co-ordinator, City of Hamilton; **Jennifer Kleven**, Off-Campus Resource Centre manager; **Azim Kasmani**, McMaster Students Union president; and **Sasha Rana**, Student Community Support Network director, were available to talk to residents individually. They then gathered in the auditorium to answer questions from a lively audience.

President **John Wigle** opened the formal part of the meeting and gave his report. He listed some of the accomplishments and the ongoing work of the association; these are outlined elsewhere in the president's report in this newsletter. He noted the gracious letters of congratulations received from our politicians and university representatives. Excerpts of their letters are also included in this newsletter.



Recording secretary Angela Tirone asks for a show of voting cards to adopt the 2007 AGM minutes.

Our guest speakers were Oshawa's **Jerry Conlin**, director of municipal law-enforcement and licensing services, and **David Potts**, city solicitor. They spoke about Oshawa's new rental-licensing bylaw, emphasizing that they would explain what happened in Oshawa, rather than advocate any position. The audience applauded when the presenters said that under the new bylaw the onus is on the landlord to approach the city, rather than the city approaching landlords to get things done.

The Oshawa bylaw has been in place since May. Of 500 rental properties, 40 voluntarily started the licensing process. An enforcement team went door to door to inform those not in compliance that they are subject to penalties. Councillors work with the university and planning staff, and the program has greatly enhanced the safety of occupants. The City of Oshawa thinks that it is making progress in that there has been a shift in focus away from enforcement. The system is proactive instead of being reactive and ensures that there will be an adequate supply of appropriate housing.

Audience members applauded as they heard about the many benefits of licensing rentals. A question period followed, when our guests provided answers to the many questions.

In his Ward 1 councillor's report, Mr. McHattie reported that city staff are investigating the possibility of a bylaw similar to Oshawa's for the areas surrounding McMaster University and Mohawk College. [A 24-page report was presented to Hamilton's committee of the whole Oct. 14 and is available online at myhamilton.ca/NR/rdonlyres/3F2A6287-8569-4E0C-949D-555FC72A6CD6/0/Oct14PED07296a.pdf.] The



L to R: Jerry Conlin and David Potts make their presentation.
Photo: Janet Woodward

report recommends the establishment of a community liaison committee comprised of stakeholders (McMaster Students Union, Off-campus Resource Centre, Student Community Support Network, landlords, local residents, the AWWCA, and representatives from Mohawk College and area). The city hopes Hamilton's bylaw will be in place by the second quarter of 2009. For a fuller report of the annual general meeting, go to <http://awwca.ca/articles/2008/11/04/minutes-tenth-annual-general-meeting-awwca>.

The day after the meeting, past president **Rob Payne** said: "For the record, I must say that the AGM last night was the best I have attended. A good crowd, who were very attentive late into the evening, listening to a very relevant presentation." Outgoing treasurer and incoming membership secretary **Loreen Jerome** wrote: "It somehow seems fitting as we start our 11th year as an association that our AGM was the most successful in terms of attendance, audience interest, and new memberships. It was rewarding to hear our guest speakers compliment us on our professionalism."

Thanks to Fortino's at Rifle Range Road for donating bottled water for our annual general meeting in September



Photo: Janet Woodward

LOOKING BACK: 10 YEARS AS MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

JANET WOODWARD



After volunteering for 10 years as membership secretary, I felt it was time to pass on the work and am pleased that Loreen Jerome offered to take over. It was at the first steering-committee meeting of the association, July 27, 1998, that I volunteered for the position of membership secretary. I have always

enjoyed the work and the opportunity to meet so many residents of our community while filling this role.

On August 31 (the end of the association's fiscal year), we reached a new record with 570 paid-up members, including 22 Friends of the AWWCA. At that time, we had the lowest number of overdue memberships ever—just 7. These numbers are the result of a continued effort on the part of our area representatives. Assisting me in membership collection were **Betty Bechtel**, **Earl** and **Loreen Jerome**, and **Barb Mansfield**.

At our 2008 annual general meeting I gave some 10-year statistics, which I will repeat here for your interest and for history's sake. Over the past 10 years, 940 individuals have joined the AWWCA. Of those, 58 have declined renewal, 40 have been removed due to lack of response to requests for renewal, and over 200 have moved out of the area. Sadly, 34 have died. Of our current members, 112 have belonged since 1998. We thank those who have continued their membership from the earliest days of our fledgling organization. It is notable that not once did we raise our membership fees in 10 years. We are able to keep our fees modest thanks to our many volunteers.

Between newsletters, we communicate with 82 per cent of our members by e-mail. This is a huge increase from November 1998, when just 30 per cent of our members had e-mail.

One of the tasks of the membership secretary is to log the concerns of our members and solutions they suggest. Over the past 10 years, I logged 636 complaints, most accompanied by suggestions for improvement. The top two concerns, property-standards violations and noise, have never varied.

I have enjoyed serving you as membership secretary over the past 10 years. I know of no one better qualified than Loreen to handle membership and have every confidence she will serve you well.

I am also happy that board member **Lavinia Welsh** has volunteered to co-ordinate the Earth Day cleanup that I took over when **Dmitri Malakhov** left two years ago and that the AWWCA's student liaison, **Shelli Eisenberg**, has replaced me on the pajama-parade committee. However, I will keep busy co-ordinating the AWWCA's newsletter, as I have done for the past eight years.

Join Us

The AWWCA board of directors holds its monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the first Monday of each month. Members and guests are welcome to attend by prior arrangement. Contact John Wigle at 905-523-8775 or wiglej@simpsonwigle.com for the meeting location and information.



AWWCA board members as of September 2008. Back row, L to R: Ira Rosen, John Wigle, Lisa Dodds. Front row, L to R: Angela Tirone, Carolyn Kinsley, Janet Woodward, Loreen Jerome, Barb Mansfield. Absent: Shelli Eisenberg, Jay Parlar, Rob Payne, Lavinia Welsh. Photo: Staff Sergeant Mark Cox

Useful Numbers

Abandoned shopping carts:

The Barn: 905-523-5044

Fortino's (Rifle Range store): 905-308-9045, press 0

Animals injured or in distress: 905-574-3433, press 2

Assessments: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, Hamilton, 1-866-296-6722

Barking dogs: 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Building permits: If in doubt about a building permit for a renovation site, contact Councillor Brian McHattie, 905-546-2416, or bmchattie@hamilton.ca; if there is no permit, file a complaint with him and copy his assistant, Nikola Patti, npatti@hamilton.ca

City Hall: 905-546-CITY (2489)*; if you know the extension, call 905-546-2424

Councillor Brian McHattie: 905-546-2416 or bmchattie@hamilton.ca

Crime Stoppers (to report a crime anonymously): 1-800-222-8477*

Fire, Hamilton Emergency Services (Fire and Fire Prevention Division): 905-546-2424, ext. 1380

Garbage, waste management: 905-546-CITY (2489)*

Graffiti:

In progress: 911*

On city property (including street signs) or private property: 905-546-CITY (2489) or info@hamilton.ca

Also notify West Town Crime Manager Sgt. Jo-Ann Savoie: 905-540-5093 or jsavoie@hamiltonpolice.on.ca

McMaster University, Office of Public Relations, Community Help Line: 905-525-9140, ext. 27305

Noise infractions: For noise in progress call police at 905-546-4925* or the city's municipal law-enforcement department at 905-546-2782, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; after hours, 905-546-CITY (2489)

Parking infractions: 905-540-6000* (you need to call while the vehicle is in violation for the vehicle to be ticketed)

Park permits: 905-546-2424, ext. 4270

Police:

Non-emergency: 905-546-4925*; a person will answer after the taped message (press 0 to skip the message)

West Town Crime Manager Sgt. Jo-Ann Savoie: 905-540-5093 or jsavoie@hamiltonpolice.on.ca

If you need further assistance: police reception desk, 905-546-4771*

Special duty police: mac91-92@awwca.ca

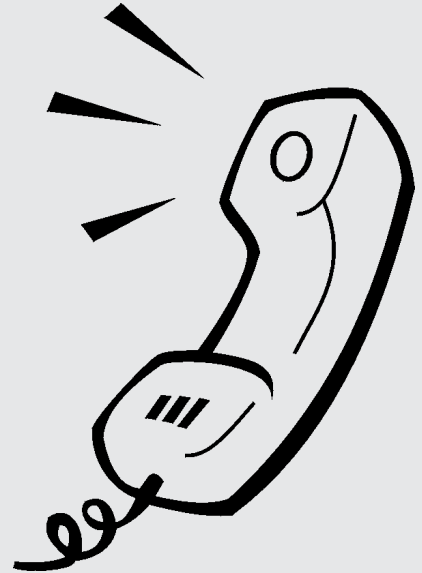
Property-standards infractions (dwellings, structures, and yards): Councillor Brian McHattie, 905-546-2416, or bmchattie@hamilton.ca and copy his assistant, Nikola Patti, npatti@hamilton.ca

Signs:

Illegal signs: 905-546-2424, ext. 2782

Street signs missing or damaged, traffic lights not working: 905-546-4376*

Snow-clearing infractions: 905-546-CITY (2489)*



*Hours are 24/7

Useful Websites

Architecture Hamilton: architecturehamilton.com

AWWCA: awwca.ca

AWWCA bylaw complaints: awwca.ca/initiatives/initiative/municipal-bylaws

City of Hamilton: hamilton.ca

Councillor Brian McHattie: brianmchattie.ca

Federation of Citizens' Associations: fca-fac.ca

Federation of Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario:
urbanneighbourhoods.ca

Fire, Hamilton Emergency Service: hamilton.ca/fire

H Magazine: hmag.ca

Hamilton's Event Calendar: hcal.ca

HammerBoard: hammerboard.ca

Hamilton Police Services: hamiltonpolice.on.ca/hps

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

Raise the Hammer: raisethehammer.org/index.asp

Town and Gown Association of Ontario: tgao.ca

TownGown World: towngownworld.com

Urban League of London: ul.london.on.ca

Westdale Business Improvement Area:
westdalevillage.ca

Westdale Slide Show: <http://forum.skyscraperpage.com:80/showthread.php?t=135327>



Thank You, Chris Harvey

It has been an honour and pleasure to be able to contribute, through this newsletter, to our community. My family has been living in Westdale for about three years; I can honestly say that after having lived in many different cities and

countries, nowhere have I felt more welcome and at home than right here. Westdale is a unique place, one worth cherishing, maintaining, and celebrating. I look forward to helping with future newsletters.

We thank AWWCA member Chris Harvey for generously donating his time and talent to the design and layout of this issue. He is the founder of Languagegeek.com and the chief researcher at the Indigenous Language Institute – ilinative.org – both of which are working toward the continued vitality of indigenous languages throughout the world.

In Memoriam

Warren Tresidder (1935–2008)



Warren Tresidder and Phyllis Tresidder, AWWCA president emerita

The AWWCA expressed sympathy to Phyllis Tresidder and her family on the death of her husband, Warren Tresidder, on Aug. 26 and made a donation to the Carnegie Gallery in Dundas in his memory. In an e-mail to members Aug. 27, AWWCA president John Wigle

said: "Warren was a member of the association from the beginning and was one of our most caring, committed, and diligent members. Warren was a great support to Phyllis during her tenure as president and in her subsequent role as president emerita of the AWWCA."

The AWWCA is a volunteer, nonprofit association with the mission 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 twice a year and supplemented by news sent by e-mail.

Opinions expressed in 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 to:
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WEBSITE awwca.ca
GENERAL INQUIRIES
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Autumn 2008

THE WAY WE WERE

100th Anniversary of the Village of West Hamilton's First Church

LOREEN JEROME

St. Margaret's Church, an Anglican mission on Emerson Street, was the first church established in the Village of West Hamilton. A meeting to discuss financing was held Sept. 1, 1909, and three months later the church was completed at a cost of approximately \$500.

Jack Knight and **A. H. Collins** were carpenters who guided the building of the church, along with the other founding members: **William Aldridge, George Austin, Alfred Dummer, Frank Jardine, Harry Read, George Tindale,** and **Alfred Weeks.** The church was opened Sunday, Dec. 6, 1909, by his lordship, **Bishop Du Moulin**, who was said to have preached a powerful sermon. The collection was \$11.34.

The first baptisms took place in 1909 and the first confirmation in 1910. Sunday school for children began in 1911, and the first marriage also took place in 1911. The first funeral was in 1914. Church organizations included the Women's Auxiliary, Boy Scouts, Bible class, tennis club, hockey team, Flower Fund, church choir, and Ladies Guild. The church became the centre of Christian teaching and social activities in the Village of West Hamilton.

The original church was one room with a screen at the front, behind which the minister changed his robes. There was no basement, and the building was heated by a wood and coal stove. A side door from Royal Avenue led to the second floor, where Sunday school classes were held. Evening services were held by candlelight until electricity was installed in 1913. The first organ was pumped by hand while the organist played. There were no pews in the church; instead, parishioners contributed straight-backed wooden chairs. In addition to calling the faithful to church, the church bell was also used to summon residents to take up their buckets and help during fires or other emergencies.

Of the 188 West Hamilton men who served in World War I, 14 were killed in action. Visit the cenotaph erected in the church's memorial garden on Emerson Street in 1925 in their honour, or see page 19 of the autumn 2005 issue of *Neighbourhood News & Views*.

Discussion about building a new church began in 1917, but not until 1920 was it decided instead to improve the existing building at a cost of \$5,000. Renovations were completed in March 1921. A spacious frame home surrounded by large trees, at the corner of Sussex Avenue and Emerson Street, was St. Margaret's Rectory. It was a perfect setting for church garden parties in the 1920s.

In November 1968, \$45,000 was spent on extensive renovations. The north-side windows were removed, a new entrance to the sanctuary was built, and a church hall with kitchen facilities was added. A modern organ complemented the addition.



St. Margaret's Church entrance as it appeared in 1920. Undated photo taken before 1968 renovation.

On June 13, 2004, St. Margaret's Anglican Church was closed and disestablished. All but the most recent church records are on microfilm in Mills Memorial Library at McMaster University.

For the past four years, **Rev. John Smith** has led the congregation of St. George's Reformed Episcopal Church in the same building. The same bell still rings on Sunday mornings from the little steeple in the village church. The congregation is happy in its new home and paid off the mortgage in June. They look forward to celebrating the building's 100th anniversary next year.

Sources: David Jardine, *West Hamilton, a Village and a Church* (1990); Rev. John Smith; Evelyn Rolland, lifelong church member.

Mailing Label