

West Lanham Hills Citizen

November 2015

Next Meeting: Wed. Nov. 4, 8 p.m.

Extreme Makeover: Volunteers give us a New Look!



More than twenty West Lanham Hills' residents of all ages gathered at the Park building on Saturday, October 17th. Their objective? To "Clean Up" and "Green Up" our community.

The event was organized by Association vice president Lan

Tsubata with some heroic effort being put in by Wanda Brooks who stepped in at the last minute to implement the "Green Up" work. In the preceding weeks and days, prep work was done by a number of talented citizens. Deanna Echanique and Roberto Gato used their artistic skills to repaint the



"Welcome" sign, at the entry to the community, a great improvement. Greg McNair, the association president, picked up the plants and mulch provided by the Prince George's County Department of Public Works, transporting it to be ready for the actual day. Marsha DaBolt and Hyong Won Lee made themselves available for the pre-event tasks.

On Saturday, Mie Smith signed in the volunteers and distributed the vests, picking tools, gloves and



bags that were provided by the county. Some 15 school-age volunteers and a number of adults came out, scouring the sidewalks, streets and wooded areas for trash. They piled it into bags that were later left for pickup.

The biggest transformation happened around the sign at the top of Garrison Road and Annapolis Road. Overgrown shrubs were cut back.

Unsightly bushes were removed. Some of the strong men of our community dug out and removed several unsightly bushes, and in their place, young volunteers helped place the new plantings: Feather Reed Grass, Salvia, Sedum Autumn Joy and Variegated Liriope, Daffodils. Wanda Brooks showed the youth how to place the plants, and our strong men did much of the heavy work.

Circling the neighborhood to transport people, supplies and pick up the food, Lan Tsubata kept all the teams provided with water and necessities. At the end of the event, the volunteers were thanked with hot pizza and cold drinks, provided by the WLH Citizens' Association.

The biggest thanks goes to our outstanding neighbors, who gave of their time, their muscles, and their expertise. We are so grateful for the wonderful people who make this community brighter,

safer and more beautiful, through their hard work!





“ Great Neighbor of the Month”

Mrs. Kay Rager

Our first “Great Neighbor of the Month” was nominated by Ms. Michiko Campbell, who wrote “Mrs. Kay Rager has been a resident of West Lanham Hills for nearly a half-century. While she was working fulltime as a registered nurse, she made time for her children and school age

children in the area. She was a den mother for a local troop of Boy Scouts of America Cub Scouts and a classroom mother for West Lanham Hill Elementary School.

She is always willing to help community activities for many decades. She has been actively involved in Community Cleanups, Back to School Supply events, Membership Drives, Family Fun Days and Santa's Workshops. She supervises youths for distributing newsletters and flyers. She attends the PGPD-District 1's weekly meetings and many county government meetings. She is always ready to lend a helping hand to her neighbors and community.”

In thanks for her constant efforts helping our community, Kay will receive a \$25 gift card (donated by an anonymous giver.) Please join us in thanking Mrs. Rager for all her hard work!

(To nominate any resident for this award, send us your reasons: westlanhamnews@gmail.com, or write to the Editor, 7752 Decatur Rd, Hyattsville, MD 20784)

Honoring the Memory of Ruth Gerrie Messer

On October 2, 2015, our community lost a dear neighbor, Ruth Gerrie Messer. Ruth and her husband, Greg, had lived here continually since 1981, raising their three children, Kim, Andrew and Tony here.



Born in Blantyre, Scotland, Ruth grew up helping in her family's inn and ice cream parlor. She graduated school at 17, moving to Germany where she and a girlfriend worked as librarians on the U.S. Army base where she eventually met Greg, a serviceman.

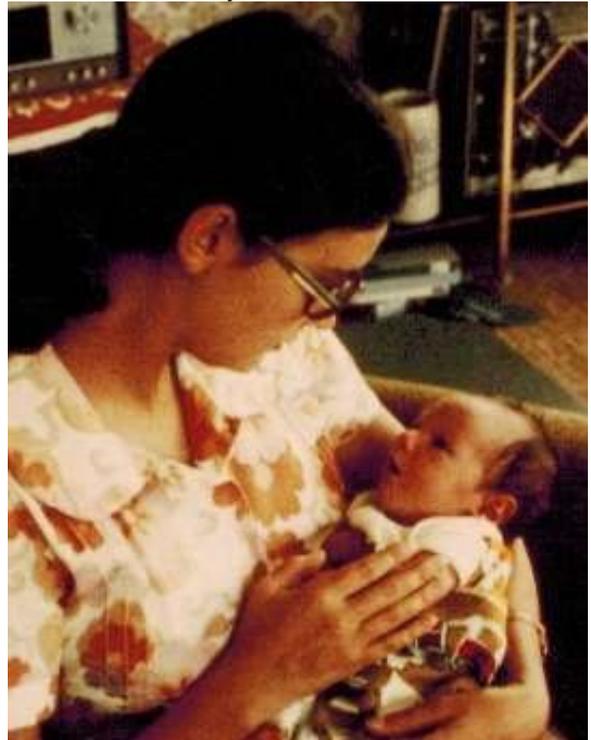
“He was the love of her life,” her daughter, Kim explains. After marrying in 1974 and

having three children in Germany, the couple relocated back to the states, ending up here in West Lanham Hills.

“My mom was a great cook, and every kid was welcome to our home, always,” Kim recalls. “Our Dad loved camping and every year, we went to the same campground in Savage Mountain, Maryland, where we learned outdoor skills—a tradition we continue to this day.”

While Greg retired from the military and then worked with Boeing, Ruth worked as a medical secretary. A warm and close-knit family, the Messers welcomed many of the “next generation” into the world, now growing to adulthood with the same legacy as Ruth and Greg began. Kim's two sons, Quinn and Liam Kroll, lived right here. Andrew has three children with wife Ingrid: Carlos, Javier and Gabriel. Tony is dad to six with wife Tennille: Jaikym, Jaedyn, James, Jaycin, William and Journey.

The family suffered the loss of Greg to cancer in 1998, of particular sorrow for Ruth. His ashes were brought to the family's favorite camping place. Ruth succumbed after prolonged illness, donating her body to science. Her final ashes will join her husband's.



Another Sad Loss: “Ike” Lanahan

Longtime neighbor, Aloysius Francis Lanahan, 74, passed away on Sept. 27, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. His wife, Patricia, had died previously, but he left behind his three children, Michael, Kathleen and Kelly, two grandchildren, Samantha and Ashley Lewis, and a brother, Paul. His sister Anne Cordway was also previously deceased. Ike served in the U.S. Marine Corps, then in the U.S. Secret Service. We wish his family every consolation, and are grateful for his presence in our community.

Neighbors Poisoned by Gas

Recently, some of our neighbors narrowly escaped death. The culprit? A leak from their own furnace!

Without knowing it, the family was inhaling a dangerous gas, Carbon Monoxide, (CO) which has no odor and is invisible. As the weather becomes cold, it's normal to turn on the furnace or the space heater. They began feeling very sleepy, heavy, and a bit sick. (Sometimes people think they might be getting a cold or flu, especially since headache and nausea is common, as well as flushed faces and muscle ache and tiredness.) Thankfully, they decided to call a neighbor, and emergency services. The medical team recognized the problem and treated them on time, preventing a terrible tragedy. They now have repaired their furnace, but we don't want any more people put into danger. Every year, some 40,000 people in our country are treated for carbon monoxide poisoning, and more than 200 die.

Did you know? Carbon monoxide was the gas used in the death camps of World War II to exterminate six million people! Yet, it can exist in our cars, our houses, and we might never know until it's too late.

Prince George's County requires every home to have a Carbon Monoxide detector. This was decided three years ago when a family in Oxon Hill all died when their furnace developed a leak in the middle of the night, poisoning them all in their sleep.

It's vital to have a carbon monoxide detector in your home, and there's no time to waste. You can buy one for between \$8 and \$30, at most home improvement stores. Here are a few good brands:

Kidde KN-COPP-B-LPM Battery-Operated Carbon Monoxide Alarm with Digital Display (about \$24)

Floureon Battery Powered Carbon Monoxide Alarm Sensor White (About \$10)

BestDealUSA Electric Carbon Monoxide Warning Detection Alarm w/ LCD Display (\$8)

Please protect your family with this simple item. It could save your lives!!

Pet Corner

The Prince George's County Animal Management Division's Low-Cost Wellness Vaccination Clinic will provide vaccinations from November 5, 2015, on the first Thursday of every month from 12 noon to 2 PM at the County's Animal Services Facility at 3750 Brown Station Road in Upper Marlboro. No appointment is necessary. Fees are:

Rabies	\$15
Feline Distemper (FVRCP)	\$20
Canine Distemper (DHLPP)	\$24

If you need canned or moist pet food, you can contact Marsha DaBolt; 301-807-9238.

Purple Line Update

By Sarah Tsubata

Several neighbors attended an informational meeting Oct. 8 regarding the Purple Line where MNCPPC officials answered questions. According to the presentation, construction on the light rail project will begin in late 2016, with estimated start of rail service in late 2021.

Planners say the tracks will be located on Ellin Road on the side further from our neighborhood, running from the Metro station, along the Pepco facility, and up to Rt. 410 extension. The existing IRS pedestrian bridge will be removed (or possibly reconstructed). The wooded area at the corner of West Lanham Drive and Decatur Road will probably become a drainage area. Construction equipment is to be stored either at the IRS or in the Glenridge area, not in our neighborhood.

Speakers said that construction noise will be limited by building from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. avoiding rush hour. It is unclear whether they will work only weekdays, or weekends as well.

West Lanham Hills Citizens Association Meeting Minutes, October 7, 2015

Board Members: Greg McNair, President; Lan Tsubata, Vice President; Sarah Tsubata, Secretary

Invocation by Officer Hammond

The Minutes were printed all to read. They stated that "A list of weekday evening dates was given to President Greg McNair, who included those in the reservations on the calendar for Year 2015-2016." Greg McNair reported that he received the dates but didn't send in the dates to the Parks and Planning. Wanda Brooks moved to amend the minutes to read, "That the evening dates were received by President Greg McNair, but Greg McNair didn't send them into Parks and Planning." Seconded by Roberto Gato Echanique. Passed by voice vote.

There was no Financial Report available, and the treasurer, Will Nathan, was not on hand, so we were unable to complete that part of the meeting's procedure.

Reports:

Officer Hammond report about recent criminal activities.

- he is working on emailing the Crime statistics
- 85th Avenue robbery is still under investigation. On Oct. 5, at 11:30 PM there was a robbery near the New Carrollton train.
- Update about the West Lanham Drive shooting; No news, other than that the shooter is not targeting our neighborhood.

State Delegate Jimmy Tarlau spoke. He advised us to report hanging wire lines from telephone poles.

State Delegate Malcolm Augustine talked. He informed us October is Domestic Violence awareness month. He offered purple light bulbs for anyone to put out to show support for ending domestic violence.

Wanda Brooks wrote a request letter to the Parks and Building department requesting repair of the front concrete and roads in front of the park building. Also, she requested new playground improvements, new cabinets in the kitchen, and improved drainage.

President Greg McNair explained that the Berman Enterprises Development Team didn't come due to miscommunication, but would like to come and report on construction projects under development.

PEPCO (electric utility for our area) will be merging with another company, and rates may increase in 2017.

There was discussion about an improved website and/or facebook page be created for the neighborhood.

New Business:

Marsha DaBolt announced that she is running a dog food bank. She has a lot of wet dog food that is available.

Marsha DaBolt mentioned a need for Halloween decorations. Michiko Campbell moved to donate the West Lanham Hills Citizens' Association's Halloween decorations (which we are not using) to her nonprofit, Outlaw Kitties: Trap, Neuter, Return & Rescue. Seconded by Roberto Gato. Passed by voice vote.

Roberto Gato asked about having a sculpture in our neighborhood. He would like research what is the process to do this.

Kay Rager made the motion to adjourn. Roberto Gato seconded. Passed by voice vote.

DON'T LOSE YOUR HOUSE!

If any neighbors are having trouble with paying for their mortgage, or eviction, or having difficulty to repair important things on your house...please don't give up. The state of Maryland and Prince George's County have programs that can help. One is "HOPE"(Home Owners Preserving Equity) which can help you negotiate with a bank or lender. Call them at HOPE Hotline 877-462-7555. Also, there are people who are tricking homeowners in trouble. Some examples:

- Beware of situations that involve someone advertising, sending an e-mail, or coming to your door offering a "way out" or "rescuing you from foreclosure." These "rescue scams" are illegal.
- There is never a fee to get assistance or information from your lender or a HUD-approved housing counselor. Beware of any person or organization asking you to pay up-front fees in exchange for providing mortgage counseling services or modification of a delinquent loan.
- Be cautious of anyone who says they can "save" your home if you sign or transfer over the deed to your house. Do not sign over the deed to your property to any organization or individual.
- Some scams tell you you can remain in the home as a renter, and buy it back later. In reality, they strip your home of its equity and stop making payments. You get evicted from the property and lose your home!
- "All cash" offers to "buy your house" are scams.

Go to the website <http://mdhope.dhcd.maryland.gov> or call 877-462-7555