

July 21, 2015

Community Relations Committee Activities January 2015 through August 2015

Events/Community Service:

- **Holiday Gift Drive** – This year the drive collected \$1,950 in gift cards and other donations to help victims of domestic violence and their children through the Montgomery County Abused Persons Program.
- **Winter Outerwear Clothing Drive** – This annual community event, which began in November, was extended through January 31. Thanks to the generosity of many Town residents, the Committee sent more than 375 coats and other clean, gently-used winter items to Bethesda Cares and Interfaith Works.
- **Movie Nights for Families** – Following the popular showings of *Free Bird* and *Frozen* in October and November, the three featured movies for children and their parents during this time frame were *Despicable Me* on Friday, January 9; *Wreck-It Ralph* on Friday, February 13; and *Planes* on Friday, March 13. The Move Nights for Families have proven to be a huge success, averaging between 45–60 residents each evening. Pizza is served before every movie.
- **Movie Nights for Grown-Ups** – Following the showings of *Harvard Beats Yale* in November and *Exit Through the Gift Shop* in December, this timeframe featured the film *Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room* on Friday, March 6. Wine and cheese was served at each of the movies this year, which attracted between 15–30 appreciative residents.
- **Dinner Out** – About 10 residents enjoyed dinner and conversation at lively *Vino Volo* in Bethesda on Tuesday, January 20.
- **Annual Chili Dinner** – The dinner, complete with the very popular Ice Cream Sundae Bar, scheduled for Sunday, February 22, at Chevy Chase Elementary School, unfortunately, had to be canceled because of bad weather. The Town had planned to collect cash/check donations for the Manna Food Center. Magician Michael Chamberlain (later featured in an event of his own) was to provide entertainment for children.
- **Town Concerts** – The Kelleher Ensemble featured a fusion of classical and jazz music on Sunday, February 8. Then, on Sunday, March 8, Simple Gifts provided a two-part presentation for all ages: a Learn to Play the Ukulele workshop followed by their Traditional Folk Tunes concert. The *Gazette* showcased the ukulele workshop on the front page of its Bethesda-Chevy Chase edition. Increasing the money available for such performances this year has allowed the Committee to attract a broader range of quality musicians. This year's concerts attracted 40–50 residents of all ages.
- **Lawns Alive! How to Grow a Beautiful, Safe Lawn Without Pesticides** – At the request of the Climate and Environment Committee, the Committee co-sponsored a

presentation on Saturday, March 14, on how to grow a beautiful, safe yard without the use of pesticides. About 22 residents attended.

- **Six O’Clock Scramble** – On Sunday, March 22, Aviva Goldfarb presented a lively demonstration to approximately 44 residents of all ages on how to use blenders to prepare easy, healthy, no-cook meals for busy families. Tasting samples provided by Committee members were offered. In addition to handouts, Aviva offered interested residents a free trial of her online service, and her books were available for purchase.
- **New Playground Equipment at the Lawton Center** – In cooperation with the Land Use Committee, Town staff, and the County, the Committee helped facilitate the expansion of the Leland Park playground for younger children and the planning, design, and installation of new playground equipment. The Town Council approved \$25,000 for the equipment. The new playground debuted to delighted children and their parents in March.
- **Impossible Made Possible (Magician Show)** – Rescheduled from the canceled Chili Dinner in February, the ever-popular Michael Chamberlain entertained more than 60 families on Friday, April 17. Pizza was served.
- **It Must Be Magic: Simple Solutions to Common Dog Problems** – A representative from Your Dog’s Friend, which offers free dog training workshops, was scheduled for Saturday, April 18. Residents, sans their dogs, were invited to learn how to manage their pets. Unfortunately, because of the presenter’s illness, the event had to be canceled, but the Committee hopes that it will be rescheduled at a future date.
- **Round House Theatre Event** – On Thursday, April 30, 18 residents enjoyed *Uncle Vanya*, followed by a post-show discussion. This was the second theater outing of the year. Tickets for both shows were offered at a reduced price. The Committee agreed that the Round House events should continue next year.
- **Art Show** –The opening reception, on Friday, June 5, to this very successful show was attended by about 100 residents, including a number of the 21 artists who were showing/selling their works. Attendees not only enjoyed the art work, but also talking with other residents. On Saturday and Sunday, June 6 and 7, the show was open so that residents could view the works. Special thanks go to Town residents Katie Vita with assistance from Georgia Guhin for curating the show.
- **July 4 Parade and Picnic** – Key organizer Aki Peritz, Committee members, and many other volunteers pulled off a grand celebration despite a morning of rain that cleared in time for the event to be held on the Lawton Center grounds, with backup tables and chairs in the Lawton Center Social Hall and the Town Hall. Complete with a reading of the Declaration of Independence, strolling minstrels, a fire truck, recycling efforts, and, as always, great food, the event was a huge success. About 550 residents and their guests RSVPed for the event.
- **Summer Concert and Good Eats** – On Sunday, July 19, on the Lawton Center grounds, in spite of the heat, about 200 residents enjoyed great music played by the 60-member Rockville Concert Band and feasted on food from four popular food trucks. Two Town residents are members of this widely acclaimed band. Tables and chairs allowed residents to eat and enjoy the music in the shade.

- **Play Dates in the Park** – A play date for young children and their parents was held on Saturday, July 11, at the Leland Park playground. Bagels, coffee, and juice boxes were served. Despite rain at the start of the event, which then stopped, about 30 parents and children participated. A special play date for rising kindergarteners and their parents will be held on Saturday, August 22. Spearheaded by Town residents Amy Carpenter and Suzanne Parmet, on behalf of the Committee, the play date will allow parents of younger children to ask questions and get answers from parents who have gone through the transition to kindergarten with their children. Bagels, donuts, coffee, and juice boxes will be provided.

Communications/Special Projects:

- **Town Crier Policy Revision** – The Committee unanimously passed a proposed revision of the Town Crier Policy that would put into words what has been existing standard operating procedure by the Town in announcing Town meetings of all types. The only addition was the proposed inclusion of the meetings of the five Standing Committees in the Weekly Town Updates. The proposal was sent to the Town Council for its consideration.
- **Communications Goal for Incoming Committee** – Mayor Al Lang briefed the Committee on a new, major communications goal for the Committee for the coming year: to devise vehicles of communication to keep residents informed in a timely manner about major issues in the Town. The Committee discussed various possibilities. This work would be in addition to the Committee’s continuing efforts to plan and run events for residents of all ages.
- **Lee Dennison Bequest** – Following discussion about the \$100,000 bequest given to the Town by former Town resident Lee Dennison to be used for Town beautification projects, the Committee decided that the best way to honor this bequest would be to use the funds in conjunction with the Town’s upcoming centennial.
- **Neighborhood Watch Program** – The Town now has 43 Block Captains, covering a significant portion of the Town.

Future Planned Events:

- **Discussion & Desserts** – On Tuesday, September 29, Town resident Melanie Choukas-Bradley will speak on both her journey from being a journalist to a naturalist and on the local area parks. Her most recent book is *A Year in Rock Creek Park*.
- **Arbor Walk** – In response to the Committee’s request, Town arborist Tolbert Feather will conduct a tree walk in October (date TBD). Bagels and coffee would be served in the Town Hall prior to the walk.