



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

VOLUME 3 ~ ISSUE 1 ~ JANUARY 2010



Inside:

**2010 Neighborhood Goals
Home Tour Next December**

**New Years History and
Traditions**

New Years in Ancient Times

Carroll's 1900 Observance

Early Westminster Hotels

**Belle Grove
Square
Neighborhood
Meeting**

**Thursday
Jan. 21, 2009
at 7:00pm**

**St. Paul's Church,
Bond & Green**

**Join us, meet your great
Belle Grove Square
neighbors and enjoy the
holidays!**



Welcome In, Twenty Ten!



by Mitchell Edmondson

It seems like only yesterday I was worried about mowing the yard and watering my flower beds. I feel as if I have just blinked my eyes and all of the sudden winter is here and the holidays have come and gone. Drifts of snow have replaced the flowering four o'clocks and the mower sits quietly in the garage. If you are like most folks, with

the start of the New Year you will decide to make a few changes in your life.

When folks are surveyed about what type of resolutions they are making many are focused on some type of self improvement. Popular resolutions include to exercise more, lose weight, quit smoking or drinking. Other resolutions focus more on quality of life issues such

as spending more time with family and friends, enjoying life more, learning something new, helping others, and getting organized.

As I think about what types of resolutions folks make around this time of year, it becomes apparent that there are resources in our very own neighborhood that can help you realize some of your goals. We have two great churches in our neighborhood that have activities and provide meeting space for various groups. At St. Paul's United Church of Christ, some of the local groups that meet at or use their facilities include Alcoholics Anonymous, Al Anon, American Red Cross Blood Drives, Girl Scouts, A Meal and More, and the Shepherd's Staff Dinner Theaters. On the second Sunday of each month, Don's Place provides live music and the chance to enjoy a relaxed atmosphere visiting with others folks in our community.

For those of you who would like the chance to get more

...continued on page 2



Neighbors on Park Ave. help each other dig out their sidewalks and cars from the "Blizzard of 2009" on Sunday, December 20th. Santa's sled can be seen on a porch roof in the background, not far above the snow line - perhaps he was making an early stop in Belle Grove Square to see who's been naughty or nice.

continued from page 1...

involved with your community by volunteering your time, you could decide to help out with our butterfly garden in the park, work with our neighborhood association and help plan neighborhood events/activities. When our neighborhood hosts the 2010 holiday home tour, we will need lots of volunteers to help make the home tour a success. We are also looking for volunteers to help plan our next picnic in the park. Along the way you might just make some great new friends right here on the square.

I personally plan on spending more time with friends and neighbors. I consider myself lucky to live in a neighborhood filled with such kind and thoughtful people. It is great to live in a place where you know your neighbors and can spend time chatting on front porches and backyards with folks who are not only great neighbors but also great friends. Our recent snow storm further convinced me that I live in the best neighborhood in Westminster. My neighbors not only worked together to help clear the sidewalks and dig out cars, but also found the time to spread holiday cheer and deliver homemade sweet treats to my doorstep. I don't think I could ask for anything more.

I am very grateful to all those who took the time to help make our neighborhood a better place to live in 2009. 2010 promises to be a great year for our neighborhood. I hope that all of you have a very Happy New Year and that you will have a year filled with great health and fond memories.

Neighborhood Goals and projects for 2010

Neighborhood Goals for 2010 include getting our street signs installed this year. It would be great to have them installed before the proposed home tour in December 2010. At this time the cost is not yet established but we are working on getting estimates.

Sometime in late summer we will have our second annual Picnic in the Park. Our first one was

a great success. It has also been suggested that we possibly organize a neighborhood garage sale. If you have any ideas on things we can do to have more fun and show off our fantastic neighborhood give us a call or come to our board meeting.

For those of you who may not know, our neighborhood has its own website. At www.bellegrovesquare.org you can read all past editions of our newsletter and be kept up to date with the latest neighborhood news. During 2010 we hope to make more improvements to our neighborhood website.

Home Tour Dec. 2010

During our next board meeting Westminster city planning staff member Tim Rogers will be available to answer any questions you have about the upcoming Holiday Home Tour scheduled for December 2010. Tim will also need to have firm commitments from everyone who would like to have their home in the tour. Please come to the January 21 board meeting or call at Tim Rogers at 410-848-4628 to add your name. We would love to have about a dozen homes on the tour. In order to reach that goal, we still need a few more neighbors' homes to add to the list.

Remember, as a neighborhood, we will all work together to help each other prepare for the tour.



Calm after the storm – sledding down Manchester's Main Street after a fierce blizzard blanketed the area in March 1914. Collection of the Historical Society of Carroll County.

Many New Year's Throug

The New Year has not always begun on January 1, and it doesn't begin on that date everywhere even today - it only does for cultures that use a 365-day solar calendar.

January 1 became the beginning of the New Year in 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar developed a more accurate calendar. The Romans named the first month of the year after Janus, the god of beginnings and the guardian of doors and entrances. He was always depicted with two faces, one on the front of his head and facing back - thus he could always see forwards and behind at the same time. At midnight on December 31, the Romans imagined Janus looking back at the old year and forward to the new one. Romans began a tradition of exchanging gifts on New Year's Eve by giving one another branches from sacred trees for good fortune. Later, nuts or coins imprinted with the god Janus became more common New Year's gifts.

In the Middle Ages, Christians changed New Year's Day to December 25, the birth of Jesus. Then they changed it to March 25, a holiday called the Annunciation. In the sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XIII revised the Julian calendar, and

the celebration of the New Year was returned to January 1.

The Julian and Gregorian calendars are solar calendars. Some cultures have lunar calendars, however. A lunar year is less than 365 days because the months are based on the phases of the moon. The Chinese use a lunar calendar - their new year begins at the time of the first full moon after the sun enters Aquarius.

Although the date for New Year's Day is not the same in every culture, it is always a time for celebration and for customs to ensure good luck in the coming year.

Ancient New Years

The celebration of the New Year is the oldest of all holidays. It was first observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. In the years around 2000 BC, Babylonians celebrated the beginning of a new year on what is now March 23, although they themselves had no written calendar.

Late March actually is a logical choice for the beginning of a new year. It is the time of year that spring begins and new crops are planted. January 1, on the other hand, has no astronomical nor agricultural significance. It is purely arbitrary.

The Babylonian New Year celebration lasted for eleven days. Each day had its own particular mode of celebration, but it is safe to say that modern New Year's Eve festivities pale in comparison.

The Romans continued to observe the New Year on March 25, but their calendar was continually tampered with by various emperors so that the calendar soon became out of synchronization with the sun. In order to set the calendar right, the Roman senate, in 153 BC, declared January 1 to be the beginning of the New Year. But tampering

h The Years

continued until Julius Caesar, in 46 BC, established what has come to be known as the Julian Calendar. It again established January 1 as the New Year. But in order to synchronize the calendar with the sun, Caesar had to let the previous year drag on for 445 days.

Carroll's Observance of 1900

by Jay A. Graybeal

One decade into the new century, it's a good time to look back to when the country faced an even bigger transition. Before 2000, the last time local calendars rolled over to a new century was in 1900. There was no Y2K type scare only the novelty at the arrival of a new century. The local press reported on how local people welcomed in the Twentieth Century. The January 6, 1900 issue of the American Sentinel contained several New Year's Day stories:

New year's Day was observed in a very quiet manner in this city. Business was generally suspended and the only public demonstration was a parade of the drum corps. There was little or no firing of guns or explosives.

At midnight on Sunday night, as the old year expired and the new year began, High Mass was celebrated at St. John's Catholic church, this city. This was the first instance in which the period was so observed at that church.

New Year' Day was also a time for parties as reported in the American Sentinel:

A very enjoyable birthday surprise party was given Mr. Denton Yingling, son of Mr. Jonas Yingling, near Pleasant Valley, on Monday evening, by his friends from Pleasant Valley, Silver Run and vicinity. The guests arrived about

8 o'clock, rushed into the house and congratulated Mr. Yingling on having reached his 17th birthday. After he had recovered from the surprise he joined the merry party in social games and conversation which was continued until 11:30, when all were invited to the dining room, where a table was set and loaded with all the delicacies of the season. About 12:00 the crowd departed well pleased with the evening's enjoyment. The straw riders from Silver Run and vicinity were very happy until they struck a steep grade when the horses came to a stand-still. The laughing suddenly turned into screaming and a general mix-up took place. Fortunately no one was hurt.

Carroll County Times article for January 2, 2000.

Early Hotels in Westminster

In the early days, Westminster, situated on the main turnpike from Baltimore to the West, gave the town many advantages as long trains of wagons were constantly passing back and forth and Westminster was selected as a favorite stopping place for rest and refreshments. At one time there were seven busy hotels all on Main Street. The earliest one was located on the site of the present Hoffman House under the proprietorship of Demmick and called Demmick's Hotel. Others were the Eastern Hotel, near Washington Road, often called Stansbury's Hotel; Old City Hotel, later called Main Court Inn; Marsh's Hotel, later called the Central, located on the present site of the Mathias Memorial; the original Central Hotel, run by Lingenfelter on Main and Longwell Streets; The National Hotel on Main and Manchester Avenue, and later torn down and the Albion Hotel built on the site; The Montour House on West Main Street, and the Eagle Hotel, located on Main Street at Pennsylvania Avenue. Sadly, all of these hotels of other days are gone.



Above: At 117 East Main Street stands the Charles Carroll Hotel. Build in 1898 by George W. Albaugh, the hotel stands out from other buildings in the city for both its massive size and its distinctive architecture. Though the hotel closed, the building remains in use as a bank. Below: The Charles Carroll Hotel was famous for its amenities. This photo depicts the hotel dining room, located at the rear of the building, decorated for Christmas in 1903. Both images from *Images of America: Westminster*, available from the Historical Society of Carroll County.



New Year's Traditions

by Joe Getty

Happy New Year to all!

“January, bleak and drear,
First arrival of the year,
Month of all months most contrary
Sweet and bitter January.”

Community correspondents from throughout the county sent their New Year's greetings and recorded local celebrations in turn-of-the-century newspapers. Traditional New Year's celebrations in Carroll County included church services, weddings, family reunions, theme parties and dances. The excerpts below present a sampling of past Carroll County celebrations:

Local (Westminster) Items: The New Year, 1898, was greeted in Westminster by the firing of guns and pistols, the ringing of bells and the screaming of steam whistles. The usual “watch meeting” was held at the Methodist churches. New Year's Day was cold and blustery, few people were on the streets and business was nearly suspended. . . . Watch-Night Service: The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor of the Methodist Protestant Church held a very impressive watch-night service on New Year's Eve, which was largely attended. The service was in charge of the “Lookout Committee” and the program included appropriate hymns, the reading of a Psalm in concert, prayer by the pastor, Rev. W. R. Graham, D.D., and by the president of the society, Mr. George Mather. A very earnest talk was given by the pastor, which was followed by a solemn consecration service, beginning with the recital of the pledge by the society and closing with silent prayer. The consecration hymn of the society was sung just as the bells were ringing in the new year. This service has been followed during the week by an observance

of the world's week of prayer, the society holding a short prayer service preceding the regular church service and beginning promptly at 7:15 p.m. The society has begun the new year with a determination to live up to their motto and do earnest work “for Christ and the Church,” and gladly welcome all young people to their services every Sunday evening at 6:30 o'clock. American Sentinel, January 8, 1898.

Wedding Bells: As the many friends of Mr. Clinton Thomas, of Cranberry Valley, and Miss Ida May Everhart, of Bachman's Valley, wished them a Happy new Year on last Lord's Day, it was with a double application, nuptial, as well as general. New Year's Day, 1899, to them marked the beginning of their married life, as well as the beginning of a new year. The ceremony was performed at 1 P.M. by Rev. C. M. Eyster, of Manchester, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Everhart. Mr. Herbert M. Sterner and Miss Cora E. Leese acted as groomsmen and bridesmaid. The bride was beautifully gowned in a dress of straw-colored Henrietta cloth, with lace and satin trimming, while the groom wore the conventional black. A sumptuous wedding dinner was served after the ceremony. A large circle of friends wishes this promising young couple many years of wedded bliss and prosperity. The bride is the organist of the Bachman Valley Lutheran congregation and the groom a prominent bass singer, so that the general hope of the community is that life's years may be to them one long song of harmony and success. Among the presents, generosity and good judgment placed lamps, table and bed linen, china, glass and silverware, table cutlery, etc. American Sentinel, January 7, 1899.

Family Reunion: The home of Mr. and Mrs. Nelson A. Brown, in silver Run Valley, was the scene of a happy family reunion on New Year's Day. Games, conversation, vocal and instrumental music were enjoyed during the day. Democratic Advocate, January 5, 1912.

Miss Elderdice Entertains: Miss Dorothy Elderdice gave a very enjoyable New Year's party at her home on College Hill, last Monday evening. The young people discussed the chief follies of which they had been guilty during the past year, and wrote out resolutions for each other to follow for 1912. During the evening delicious refreshments were served. Democratic Advocate, January 5, 1912.

Euchre Party: Miss Kitty Roberts gave a very pleasant and progressive euchre party, at the residence of her father, Hon. Charles B. Roberts, on Wednesday night, in honor of her guest and friend, Miss Belle Brady, of Harrisburg. The party sat until 10:30 when refreshments were served, after which the evening was spent in dancing. Those present were Misses Belle Brady, of Harrisburg, Pa.; Misses Kitty and Nannie Roberts, Mary Thayer, Joe Mathias, Mamie and Lizzie Irwin, Eva Blanchard, Julia McKellip, of Westminster; Bettie and Gussie Shriver, of Avondale; Messrs. W. R. C. Neale, C. V. Dugan, Arthur Smith, J. E. Lynch, F. Neal Parke, J. H. Dugan, Wm. H. Thomas, Smith Reifsnider, Brook Irwin, J. H. Cunningham, J. Brundige, C. T. Reifsnider, Jr., Geo. J. Parke. The first prizes were won by Miss Belle Brady and W. R. C. Neale; the booby prizes by Miss Nannie Roberts and Charles T. Reifsnider, Jr. American Sentinel, January 5, 1889.

New Year's Cotillon: The New Year's Meeting of the Assembly and Cotillon club which was held at the main-Court Inn last Saturday night was a

brilliant affair. The ball room was beautifully decorated with Christmas greens, holly and poinsettias, and “1912 Welcome,” in large gilt letters, met each eye upon entering the room. Many handsome gowns were also in evidence. Dancing began promptly at 9 and ended at 12, and during that period supper was served. The next dance of the Assembly will be held on the evening of January 27, and will be a leap-year dance. Democratic Advocate, January 5, 1912.

Settlement Day: With the mercantile world January 1st is settlement day. The printer buys and makes bills which must be paid. January, therefore, is a special time to call and pay the printer. “Don't you forget it.” Please give us a call. If the subscriber wishes the printer or editor a happy new year, to show it you can do it best by giving him his money. Go and pay for your paper a year in advance, and pay up all back-standing bills. The ready cash makes the printer happy. American Sentinel, January 8, 1881.

Editor's note: Carroll County Times article for January 2, 1994.

How to reach us:

Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood

443.293.7203

1 Park Avenue
Westminster, MD
21157

email: newsletter@bellegrovesquare.org

www.bellegrovesquare.org

Letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters submitted may be edited for space or clarity.

Entire contents copyright © 2009
All rights reserved.