



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

VOLUME 3 ~ ISSUE 9 ~ SEPTEMBER 2010



Inside This Issue:

- 2 Worship in the Park
- Antiques Appraisal Day
- 3 Westminster Fallfest
- Historic Homes Tour
- 4 Police launch tip program
- City mosquito control

Belle Grove Square Meeting: Preparing for the Holiday Home Tour

Thurs., Oct. 21st at 7:00pm

**St. Paul's UCC
Bond & Green Sts.
- Enter on Green St. -**

Join in and meet your great BGS neighbors!

Getting Ready for the Home Tour

by Mitchell Edmondson

The other day as I flipped the calendar over and welcomed the new month of September I felt like I was hit with a serious dose of reality. Near the bottom of the calendar I could see the month of December in small print. Seeing December looming so very quickly in the future put me in a remodeling panic.

As all of you know, our neighborhood was chosen to host the 2010 Holiday Home Tour.

While being quite an honor, it is also quite a task. Bruce and I have so much work to get done before December. While visiting with other neighbors on the tour I hear the same words over and over "How will we ever get everything done on time?" I too feel the urgency in their words; however, I am certain that we will all have our homes presentable for the tour. They might not be perfect - however they will have that one quality that will shine whether it has a fresh coat of paint or not. And that quality is fact that our

homes are all uniquely historic and can be found around a little park that can trace its roots back more than 135 years. Unlike the cookie cutter neighborhoods that surround parts of Westminster, our neighborhood is very distinct. One would have to look mighty hard to discover that we only have two homes that are similar in style and structure.

As a neighborhood we will get to reveal a secret that might not be known to most of our guests on the tour. The secret that we all know but many of our visitors won't know is that we are perhaps the best neighborhood in Carroll County. Where else can you glance out your window and see such a splendid park? Where else can you walk but a few short blocks and have such a unique choice in dining? On Main Street we have Thai food, Mexican food, Seafood, traditional Irish fare, and American food. We also have the library within an easy stroll, the Carroll Arts Center, and the



The Westminster Municipal Band color guard marches into Belle Grove Square for the annual concert on Sunday, August 22, 2010.

continued on page 2...

...continued from page 1

many different programs offered at McDaniel College. We are very fortunate to have a Main Street that still looks much like the way it did a hundred years ago. With the encouraging work of Mayor Kevin Utz and the city council I am very optimistic that our downtown will continue to play a vital role in the future of Westminster.

Just as city officials work to keep the downtown a vibrant place for folks to visit, we must also work to make sure that our neighborhood continues to be a great place to call home. This past week we held our third neighborhood planning meeting and are well on our way preparing for our future. It is hoped that by the spring of 2011 our neighborhood will have a complete plan to present to the City of Westminster.

The City of Westminster has been very encouraging and is working with our neighborhood association to help formulate our neighborhood plan. As we work to make our neighborhood a great place to call home, we must also think about the neighborhoods that surround us. Neighborhoods facing challenges just a block or two away can influence and affect the quality of our neighborhood. As we work with city officials to keep our neighborhood safe and appealing we can also work with our neighbors to improve their neighborhoods. We have already taken steps to work with the neighborhood association that governs the condos on Liberty Street.

After attending the Historic District Commission meeting on Thursday night and I feel very comfortable with their preparations for the home tour coming up December 11. They will be taking care of just about everything except what goes on inside our homes during the tour. In the meantime those of us on the tour still have a few months to

finish spiffing up our homes.

Since we will likely have more than a thousand visitors on the day of the tour, those of you not on the tour can also spruce up your homes' exterior for the tour. In fact, there is still matching money available for those who want to improve the visible exterior of your homes. The facade grant program will match you up to \$5000.00 for visible certain exterior improvements. Call 410-751-5505 for more information if you would like to apply.

In closing let me tell you that I am no longer so worried about having everything done just the way I would like for the home tour. Something happened at our first National Night out that put things in perspective. Our first National Night Out held August 3, 2010 was a smashing success. We served over 100 bowls of ice cream to neighbors and guests gathered around our fountain. Our neighbors, the mayor, city officials and local law enforcement all gathered in the park and enjoyed a cool bowl of ice cream. It was great the way that we all got to meet each other and to know each other better.

During one of my discussions with a well dressed man named Larry I was going on and on about all the work I had to try to get done in time for the home tour - you know us old house folks can go on and on about our houses. When I had finished complaining about all the work and the short amount of time remaining to get it all done I asked Larry if he lived around here and he looked me in the eye and explained that he lived under the bridge by Food Lion. At that moment I felt so small - needless to say I will try not to complain so much about my old house problems. Larry reminded me that there are others right here in Westminster who we may see all the time and would love to have such things to worry about.

Neighborhood Updates

Worship in the Park September 5, 2010

Sunday, September 5, 2010
Belle Grove Square's two anchor churches, St. Paul's UCC and Westminster Church of the Brethren will hold their annual joint service at 9:30am in Belle Grove Square park.

Bring a lawn chair if you have one. If there is rain, this year's annual joint church service will be held indoors at Church of the Brethren at Bond Street and Park Place.

Antiques Appraisal Day to be held September 11, 2010

Whether you have a pieced quilt that belonged to your great grandmother, an old wooden trunk in the basement, a treasured dinner service, an old toy you played with as a child, or a rocking chair that belonged to your great aunt, come to the Antiques Appraisal Day and discover the value of your family heirlooms.

The Antiques Appraisal Day event to be held September 11, 2010 from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the American Legion on Green street

in Westminster features a panel of accredited appraisers and national experts in the areas of American furniture, folk art and primitives, glassware and porcelain, silver, pewter, jewelry and clocks who will examine your item and give you a verbal estimate of its worth.

Due to insurance restrictions, Appraisal Day staff cannot handle patrons' objects. Please plan to transport your objects from your car to the appraisal event. The Historical Society is not responsible for objects left unattended. No buying or selling of objects is permitted at the event.

Proceeds from the Antiques Appraisal Day benefit the Historical Society of Carroll County which works to archive and preserve local history. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about that treasured family object and support the Historical Society's programs. Support Antiques Appraisal Day and the Historical Society by becoming a sponsor or patron or by advertising in the souvenir program.

Tickets are \$20 for the first item's estimate, \$10 for the second and \$5 for the third. For more information, please call HSCC at 410-848-6494.



A large crowd of Westminister residents gathered for last year's joint Worship in the Park service held September 6, 2009.



An appraiser discussed the value of an object brought in by a local resident at last year's Antiques Appraisal Day, Sep. 9, 2009.



Feeding 40,000 people is quite a feat, but somehow Westminster Fallfest pulls it off! Be sure to check out the really unusual carnival food, like deep fat fried Snickers bars. It turns out, they're not fattening when they're served at Westminster Fallfest.

Fallfest returns to Westminster September 23 - 26

Westminster Fallfest began as an autumn celebration in historic downtown Westminster, and has grown over time to operate throughout the year with various fundraising events all to benefit charities and services organizations within the local community.

The signature Fallfest event is coming up September 23 to 26, and every year draws over 40,000 people to historic downtown Westminster. Families enjoy the festival midway and rides, while others come from all around for great food, unique shopping and heart-stopping entertainment.

The event kicks off with a parade through downtown on Thursday September 23rd at 7:00pm, and the parade is followed by four days of non-stop fun.

This year's event benefits Access Carroll, Carroll County Youth Services Bureau, the Taneytown Lions Club and the Lions Club of Westminster.

On Saturday and Sunday over 100 craft and commercial vendors will be gathered for your shopping pleasure, and parking, admission and all entertainment is free of charge. Be sure to visit the Kids Court and stop by the big tent to make a scarecrow to take home.

Entertainment on the main stage includes Crossfire, Sept. 23rd

6:00pm to 10:00pm; JD Henley and the Stone Broke Band, Sept. 24th, 6:00pm to 10:00pm; Robert Allen Blues Band, Sept. 25th, 6:00pm to 10:00pm; and The Back Pages Band, Sept. 26th, 1:00pm to 5:00pm.

For more information, visit www.westminsterfallfest.com.

Historic Homes Tour coming to Belle Grove Square December 11

As you've probably been reading for some time, the Historic District Commission's biannual historic homes tour will be coming to Belle Grove Square on December 11th, from 3:00pm to 8:00pm. Eight neighborhood homes plus the two anchor churches will be open and featured on the tour.

Local art students have hand drawn sketches of each of the ten buildings on the tour for the tour program, and the City and HDC are seeking advertising to offset the cost of producing the program.

Westminster Municipal Band has been confirmed to perform, as well as a number of local choirs, bell ringers, and other musicians who will provide entertainment and historic ambiance in the area during the early evening hours the historic homes tour runs.

The area around Belle Grove Square will be lit by candle luminaries, and streets in the immediate area of the tour will be closed for a few hours to allow easy access for the estimated 1,000 plus visitors who come to the tour each year. Please help save half-gallon plastic milk jugs (or two liter bottles if they're clear) and remove any paper labels - we need these to make the luminaries and will provide a place to drop them off as the date draws near.

The HDC and City of Westminster will be sending representatives to the next Belle Grove Square neighborhood general meeting to be held on Thursday, October 21st at 7:00pm at St. Paul's UCC to answer your questions and help with anything you may need to help prepare for the tour, which will be a real opportunity for our neighborhood and the City of Westminster to shine. Neighbors whose homes are not on the tour will be encouraged to decorate for the season, and the group is considering holding a decorating contest with prizes to be judged before the tour begins.

If you have any questions about the holiday home tour, please call Melissa Hynes with the City of Westminster, 410-848-7967 or Bruce DeVault with the neighborhood group, 443-293-7203.



Volunteers from McDaniel college work with City of Westminster staff to repaint the park benches in Belle Grove Square in preparation for the annual holiday home tour on December 11.

Police launch anonymous text message tip program

The Westminster Police Department has recently launched “tip411”, an internet-based tool that enables the public to text message a completely anonymous tip to police, and lets the police respond back creating a two-way anonymous “chat”.

Reserved exclusively for public safety purposes, “tip411” puts a powerful new crime fighting tool into the hands of our community for all ages and demographics.

“We’re proud to be part of a national program that police

agencies in more than 27 states across the country are using” says Chief Jeff Spaulding. “This new capability will help our citizens play a more active role in keeping their neighborhoods safe, engaging our younger citizens in the process. It will also save the Police Department time and resources by closing cases in a more efficient and timely manner.”

Anyone with a cell phone can now send an anonymous tip to the Westminster Police Department by texting the word TIPWPD and the tip information to 847411 (tip411). Anonymous email tips can also be submitted to the Police Department’s website at www.westgov.com/police. Click on the “Suspicious Activity” link on the



Westminster police are hoping a new T-3 three-wheeled vehicle will increase officer’s visibility as they patrol the downtown business district and city parks. The vehicle was purchased in part with drug seizure funds. Photo credit: CC Times, Sep. 3, 2010



Tip: Tired of throwing out red bags?

If you don’t read the free papers, take just a moment to call the phone number inside the paper whenever you receive one and ask them to stop delivery to your address. Free papers laying around make the neighborhood look bad, and can invite crime by advertising when you may be away from home.



Report any suspicious activity

Do not hesitate to contact the Westminster Police about any suspicious activity you see happen - they want to hear from you!

You can make an anonymous report by calling **410-857-TIPS (8477)** or texting your tip to 847411 (tip411), or you can make an online report at http://www.westgov.com/police/police_activity.html.
To report a crime currently in progress, call 911.

Police Department website and provide the requested information.

“tip411” is 100% anonymous. Citizen Observer’s technology removes all identifying information before the Police Department receives it so there’s no way to identify the sender. According to Chief Spaulding, “this texting capability is yet another tool in our toolbox for creating safer communities. It will be particularly useful in reaching out to our younger citizens who are more tech savvy. When someone with information is afraid to come forward, or simply feels like they don’t want to get involved directly with the police, this can be a great way to pass on information to the authorities without fear of retribution”.

Note: “tip411” should not be utilized for the reporting of crimes in progress or other emergencies. Those events should be reported to the police immediately by calling 911.

Mosquito control

Last June the City of Westminster Public Works Department started monitoring mosquito activity in Westminster. The

monitoring program is scheduled to end September 7th. If you have mosquito problems, please call the City of Westminster Public Works Department at 410-848-9000 for investigation.

Reported areas will be checked first; however, if no complaints are received, surveillance or spraying may not be done this year.

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 © 2010
All rights reserved.