



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

VOLUME 4 ~ ISSUE 1 ~ JANUARY 2011



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Historic Belle Grove Square Neighborhood Association Meeting

**Thurs, Jan. 20th
7:00pm**

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

*Come out and meet
your great neighbors!*

Is It Almost Gardening Time Yet?

by Mitchell Edmondson

This morning when I woke up, I noticed that we got our first snowfall of the year. The light dusting of snow reminded me of the fact that we are in the throes of winter. After all the excitement of the home tour and the holidays, January seems kind of dreary. The trees are bare, the temperatures cold, and the holiday decorations are being put away for another year.

Yet, yesterday I received something in the mail that lifted my spirits. I received my first Spring gardening catalog. As someone who likes to garden, nothing quite lifts my spirits like a catalog with pictures of mouthwatering fruits and vegetables. Pictures of bright and colorful flowers help me to imagine that Spring is truly around the corner.

Also around the corner is a year that promises lots of activities in



our neighborhood. We will elect board members this year, have our first progressive dinner in March, host our second annual garage sale in May, and our third annual picnic during the summer. We will also get together for ice

cream in the park as we hold our second annual National Night out, and in the fall will have our first neighborhood Halloween Costume Party. If the spirit of the season falls upon us, we might even schedule a holiday party in December.

This year will also see some needed street repairs on Bond street. St. Paul's Church will also make changes to their building so that their Sunday school classes and other community meetings can be held in a safe and handicap accessible space.

As you can see, this coming year holds lots of promise for good times to be spent with good neighbors. Just thinking of all the good food, smiles, and conversations with my neighbors make me forget about the cold chill outside.

Best wishes for a very Happy New Year!

Neighborhood News



A progressive dinner!

The other night as I was reading a story by Pastor Glenn McCrickard on Westminster Church of the Brethren's Facebook page, I came across the lyrics to a song that reminded me of something new we are going to try in our own neighborhood. The song lyrics are:

*The more we get together,
Together, together,
the more we get together,
the happier we'll be.*

Recently, several neighbors in our neighborhood proposed that we have an annual Spring Progressive Dinner. The dinner would be held on St. Patrick's Day (March 17, 2011) and would be an excellent way for us to get together and get to know each other better.

The way the dinner would work is that three households would agree to host the dinner. The first house might have appetizers and drinks, the second a main course, and the last house would have desserts and coffee. Neighbors not hosting who wanted to help out could team up with one of the three houses on the progressive dinner tour and help bring food.

In keeping with the spirit of St. Patrick's Day, we might have an Irish theme. If you would like to volunteer to be one of the three houses hosting the dinner or work with one of the home owners to arrange food, please let us know by the end of this month by calling 443 293 7203. In February we will

announce the three houses hosting the dinner and will be looking for others to help the homeowners plan this event.

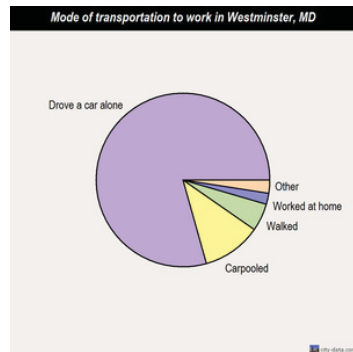
I think we will have lots of fun, and as Pastor Glenn pointed out "The more we get together, the happier we'll be!"

Road work coming to neighborhood in April

Westminster city officials are expecting street repairs and renovations to begin in April after budget cuts and the economic downturn forced the council to postpone road work last fall.

The projects are being funded by a 14-cent property tax hike enacted July 1. Taxes were increased to support capital improvement program projects.

A \$2.038 million bid from C.J. Miller LLC, a Hampstead-based company, was approved by the Westminster Common Council Dec. 13. Despite the approved bid figure, the city will only be spending \$1.39 million on road repairs, said Jeff Glass, city director of public works. The streets in the worst condition will take priority, Glass said.



More than three-quarters of Westminster residents drive daily to work, making road conditions critical to quality of life. Source: city-data.com



The cornerstone for the Historic Courthouse was laid by Andrew Shriver on June 13, 1838. He was assisted by Col. Joshua Gist, brother to Gen. Mordecai Gist of Revolutionary War fame. James Shellman, the first mayor of Westminster, was the architect, and Swope and Durbin, the two men who built the jail, also laid the stone for the new courthouse. The building was built for \$18,000.

The roadwork will begin on the streets between Old New Windsor Road, Green Street and Bond Street, Glass said. Then, work will be focused on streets in the Middlebrooke area, which include portions of Center Street and Bishop Street, he said. Street renovations will begin on the streets in the worst condition, Glass said.

Neighborhood meeting & elections Jan 20th

At the next neighborhood meeting on Thursday, January 20, 2011, we will elect members/officers to our board. Nominations for board members were made in December. Several names were submitted and a vote will be held during our January meeting, along with discussion and planning for 2011.

Neighborhood plan

Work continues on the formation of our neighborhood plan. In the fall of 2010 our neighborhood held meetings in which the future of our neighborhood was discussed. A list of future projects and concerns were developed. These

ideas will be included into a plan that will be presented to the city of Westminster for consideration. It is hoped that a rough version of this plan will be available in March and will be presented and discussed at the next neighborhood association meeting.

Happy birthday, Carroll County

Carroll County, Maryland was created by an Act of the General Assembly passed at the session



Raising the first American flag, S 1776. Photo courtesy of Harper's



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.

of 1835-86, and again at the succeeding session of 1836-37, and it was organized early in 1837.

The county was named in affectionate honor of the Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last survivor of the Signers of the Declaration of American Independence, and was formed from the eastern portion of Frederick and the western portion of Baltimore Counties.

Please join the Historical Society of Carroll County for its annual celebration of the founding of Carroll County on Wednesday, January 19th at 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. in Holy Cross Hall, Church of the Ascension in Westminster. Parking available in the lot on Ralph Street. Admission is free, and refreshments will be served.



Somerville, Mass. January 1, Weekly.

American flag's history begins this month, January 1776

As noted in an earlier newsletter, the flags have been returned to our park with help from the city Parks Department and the American Legion. While doing a little research of our nation's flag, I learned more about its history. One of our earliest officially adopted flags was the Grand Union flag.

Also known as the Continental flag, it is the first true U.S. Flag. It combined the British King's Colors and the thirteen stripes signifying Colonial unity. George Washington liked this design so well that he chose it to be flown to celebrate the formation of the Continental Army on New Year's Day, 1776. On that day the Grand Union Flag was proudly raised on Prospect Hill in Somerville, near his headquarters at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: "Resolved, That the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

Neighborhood Watch

Last fall, neighbors got together for a presentation by Sgt. Keith Benfer with the Westminster Police Department to discuss ways we can make our neighborhood safer and prevent crime. Officer Benfer mentioned that we might think about forming a neighborhood watch. We have recently been contacted by the city and have been asked if we have given any more thought to forming a neighborhood watch.



Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program that stresses education and common sense. It teaches citizens how to help themselves by identifying and reporting suspicious activity in their neighborhoods. In addition, it provides citizens with the opportunity to make their neighborhoods safer and improve the quality of life. Neighborhood Watch groups typically focus on observation and awareness as a means of preventing crime and employ strategies that range from simply promoting social interaction and "watching out for each other"

Neighborhood watch programs often utilize signs which come in a variety of styles to discourage crime in addition to volunteer patrols.

to active patrols by groups of citizens.

The city of Westminster is encouraging neighborhoods to get together and form neighborhood watch groups. Sometime in the coming months the City of Westminster will meet with us again to discuss crime and the neighborhood watch idea.



A work fence is shown erected around the Royer Building at right, Bond & Green streets, which is scheduled to be rebuilt from the ground up this Spring as part of major renovations to provide St. Paul's church with a more accessible, functional space.

Westminster Parks & Rec.

Be sure to visit the Parks & Recreation Dept. online at www.westgov.com/recreation/rec_main.html to see their full calendar of events! You'll be amazed at how much the city has going!



The Mighty Wye Oak

Our state tree and its link to Belle Grove Square

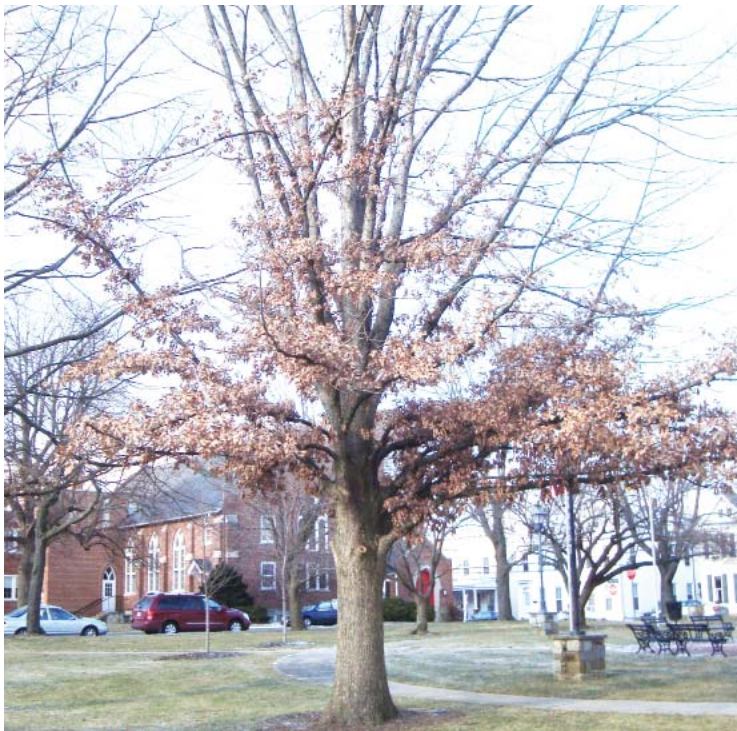
Standing tall in our park is a tree that has an important link to the tree which helped make the Wye Oak Maryland's state tree.

Located in the village of Wye in Talbot County, the State tree is the White Oak or the Wye Oak. While King Henry VIII ruled England (1509-1547) a white oak acorn sprouted in the earth of the Atlantic seaboard on the newly discovered continent of North America. The little seedling took root on a peninsula called "Chesopieoc" by the Indians. By the time Lord Baltimore's English settlers came and proclaimed the colony Maryland (1634) our oak was a magnificent, mature tree.

Plantations sprang up along the Wye River site in the 1660's and a mill was established at the site. By the time the United States had successfully survived the Revolution and Maryland had ratified the U.S. Constitution (1788) the Wye Oak still lived and continued to live and survive the second war with England and leaf out every spring through the Civil War. Today, what remains of the oak is a part of the Wye Oak State Park. State foresters and the Maryland Arborists' Association cared for the Wye Oak which, prior to June, 2002 was still in a state of remarkably good health. Its height was ninety-five feet, with a horizontal spread of one hundred sixty-five feet. The



A seedling from this great tree was planted in Belle Grove Square park, with a plaque identifying it as a legacy to the original.



Belle Grove Square park's own Wye Oak is one of many trees to grace the city square which anchors the historic neighborhood.

trunk was more than twenty-one feet in circumference, and its age was estimated to be more than four hundred sixty years old. This beloved tree was purchased by the State of Maryland in 1939, and because of its inspiring tenacity and impressive size the State of Maryland designated the Wye Oak the official tree of Maryland in 1941. When the State of Maryland purchased the tree, it was the first time in America that a governmental agency purchased a single tree.

This wonderful symbol, the Wye Oak, Maryland's State Tree and the largest White Oak in the United States, and older than the State itself, sadly toppled June 6, 2002 during a thunderstorm. What remains today is its massive stump, encased in honorary wrought iron.

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

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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.