

Midtown Brandywine

A quarterly publication of the Midtown
Brandywine Neighbors Association

Matters

midtownbrandywine@gmail.com

www.neighborhoodlink.com/wilmington.de/mbna

Fall 2008

Mark Your Calendar

Fall Clean Up TBA Midtown Brandywine
Holiday Social 12/3/08 (6:30-8:30) Washington St. Ale House Banquet Room

Fall Clean Up: Watch for a flyer with the date or check our website in November.

Holiday Social: For more information watch for a flyer and check our website in November. This is always a great time to catch up with your neighbors. The hors d'oeuvres are the BEST, and there will be a cash bar.

Movies in the Park

Our first season of "Movies in the Park" proved to be a very popular event for the neighborhood, with a showing of *Little Miss Sunshine* in July and *North by Northwest* in August. For those of you who missed these events, we hope to see you there next summer.

Block Party

The block party was a great success with many wonderful raffle items and, as always, great food and drink. This event is possible each year due to the time and thoughtfulness of so many of the neighbors. Our apologies to those we have forgotten.

Raffle Donors:

Brew Ha Ha
Deep Blue
Domaine Hudson
Delaware Theater Co.
Theatre N
Ale House
YMCA
Exchange
House of Watches
Living Letters
Delaware Center for
Horticulture
Grand Opera House
Card Craft
Bill Montgomery
Donovan Trinkerteur
Ale House
Plexus
B's Shuttle Service
OOOLALA Salon

Food/Beverage:

Ale House
B's Shuttle Service

Volunteers:

Doug McLaughlin
Travis Crumley
Rob Butts
Lauren Collins
Nancy Cooper
Pati Nash
Dan Walsh
Nomi Steen
Ken Tattersall
Karen Austria
Liz Freeman
Jessica Reed
Roland Roth
John Kirk
Sandy Woolworth



Spotlight On The Neighbors!

Hi Neighbors! The block party was a blast. I saw some neighbors I already knew and met some I did not know. I'd like to take this opportunity to acquaint you with someone I think is special. Her name is Joyce Thomas.

Joyce came to Wilmington from Colorado in 2005 during a business move. She is a Human Resources manager. The company folded and Joyce found herself jobless. Joyce went back to school to finish her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She currently works part time in retail. But the truly remarkable thing about Joyce is that she took this lemon and made lemonade.

Back in Colorado where she owns her own home, she often went shopping in search of garden décor that expressed her sense of self and her great artistic taste. Season after season she searched with no success. She had a thought that perhaps she would have to create the art work herself and the idea for the "Ebony Outdoor Living Décor" was born. Ebony Outdoor Living creates garden accessories that feature culturally specific designs. Her idea had to go on the back burner for her career move to Wilmington, thus opportunity, desire and ability came together and "JOICE" emerged.

In her words, "I was fortunate to meet women here with like situations and shared business ideas." A support group was formed. Spirit Builders is a dynamic group of women, who share their ideas and support each other. Through this group Joyce found the strength and courage to start her business of creating and marketing garden stepping stones. Joyce is a self-taught artist. She took a tile making class at Tesserae Studios in Germantown, PA where she learned the fundamentals of tile making from an instructor who has mosaic murals all over the Philadelphia area. Some of the tiles for her stepping stones are those she made herself. She uses the Adinkra symbols, a symbolic language, from the Akan tribe of Ghana West Africa, which are beautiful and makes each of her creations unique and meaningful.

The stepping stones Joyce creates are made from commercial grade cement. She experimented with different formulas until she found a formula that give her the flexibility and durability she was looking for. She has 3 methods of making her stepping stones.

The direct pour method which she calls the "Standard Mosaic Method" where she pours the concrete in a mold and pushes in the artistic embellishments after an elapsed amount of time. Then she seals the stepping stone with a concrete sealer to protect and preserve the stepping stone.

The direct pour with a pattern method where she pours the concrete in a mold and lays the pattern on top of the cement. After an elapsed amount of time to set and dry, she seals it. The indirect pour method is the most interesting I thought. She lays the pattern in first, in reverse of the way she is look-

ing at it, pours in the cement and allows it to flood over the pattern. She doesn't know how this will turn out until it dries and she turns it over to seal it.

Also Joyce has learned over time to use as her base, tiles that meet commercial tile standards. This allows her stepping stones to be incorporated into the design and layout of commercially constructed patios with her stepping stones as accent pieces which conform to industry standards in height, width and depth. Joyce wishes to acknowledge the neighbors who have supported her with the use of their yard for creating and storing her designs, as well as purchasing the stepping stones. She enjoys living in this artistic community and feels fortunate to be around such people of talent and diversity.



Kudos to the neighbors!

Well dear neighbors, that's my story and I'm sticking to it! I wish you all a warm and beautiful autumn.

DeAnna Cardenas

Sites Statewide Accepting Used Bulbs

The Delaware Energy Office announce a statewide initiative to encourage Delawareans to recycle used, unbroken compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs by taking them to a drop-off location for disposal. Mercury is an essential part of CFLs; it allows the bulb to be an efficient light source. A CFL bulb contains an average of 4 milligrams of mercury – about the amount that would cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. By contrast, an old thermometer contains about 500 milligrams of mercury – the amount equal to the mercury in 125 CFL bulbs. No mercury is released by the bulbs, when handled properly and are unbroken. However, if broken and discarded in a landfill, CFL bulbs can release mercury into the environment.

Citizens are encouraged to place used, unbroken CFLs in a plastic sandwich bag and bring them to a drop off location. The bulbs will be packaged and transported to a licensed recycling center where the mercury will be reclaimed and the glass and metal will be recycled.

Fluorescent bulbs use 66 percent less energy than a standard incandescent bulb. If every home in America replaced just one incandescent light bulb with a CFL bulb, enough energy would be saved to light more than three million homes and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of more than 800,000 cars annually. Replacing a 60 watt standard bulb with a 13 watt fluorescent bulb will save at least \$24 in energy costs over the life of the bulb and last up to ten times longer.

New Castle County will accept CFL bulbs at: City of New Castle Municipal Services Commission, 216 Chestnut Street, New Castle, DE 19720 Hours: 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Monday through Friday

For more information contact Kevin Yingling, Delaware Energy Office, 302-735-3480, or Melanie Rapp, Public Affairs, 302-739-9902



Committee Members News & Views

If you would like to volunteer on a committee, or if you have suggestions and comments, please contact the chair of the committee, or email us at midtownbrandywine@gmail.com

Committee Chairs:

Communications: Rita Berry 388-7420

Spring/Fall Clean Ups: Travis Crumley 222-3984

Crime Prevention: Dan Walsh 516-909-1987

Land Use & Vacant Housing: Alex Karlsen 893-7057

Streetscape: Jessica Reed 426-9129

Nominating Committee: Faith McNamara 545-8207

Block Party: Doug McLaughlin 654-1741

Crime Prevention Committee

As the weather has turned cooler, Midtown Brandywine is in the midst of its seasonal crime spike.

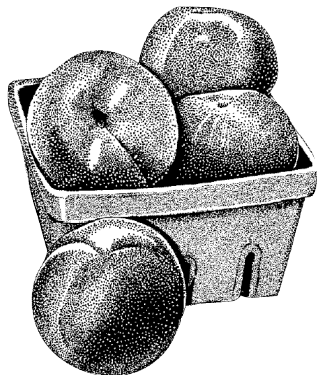
The most common type of crime continues to be car break ins and vandalism. There have been tires slashed, windows broken, cd/radio and GPS units stolen. These incidents are happening at all times of the day.

I have reached out to Lieutenant Willie Smith, head of security at Christiana Care. I asked that his security patrols take a more indirect route to patrol the cemetery/river exposure of the hospital. The proposed route would send the patrols down to Orange St, then down to 14th, up Tatnall and finally down West St. I am hoping, considering the amount of construction traffic/trash/noise that our community will be burdened with during the Christiana Care expansion, the assistance will be extended as a notion of goodwill. If you know anyone of influence at Christiana Care, please drop them a note and try to build support behind the idea.

I have also contacted Capt. Nancy Dietz, the Wilmington Police Dept. liaison to Midtown Brandywine, to bring her up to date on the crime surge. She has only seen a handful of police reports, so please be sure if you have something happen, that you report it immediately so that she can support greater attention to our area. In addition, I emailed the WPD officers who are responsible for our community, making them aware of what we are seeing.

As I suggested in my email early this month, be sure you are removing all items from your car that a thief may be interested in, that includes the connection wires! If you have an iPod and remove it each day, but leave the FM Transmitter, the thief will break in, thinking your iPod is in there as well. Now that it is becoming darker earlier and daylight savings is right around the corner, please be sure your outdoor timers for your lights are adjusted to illuminate during the appropriate times.

Please call me at 516-909-1987
with any questions or
concerns you may have.
Dan Walsh



Vacant Properties & Land Use Committee

Neighbors can view vacant properties on www.ci.wilmington.de.us/vacantproperties/properties.htm
If you think a property is vacant or looks derelict contact the city. A \$50 ticket can be issued. Contacts for the program are:
Cynthia Ferguson at 302-576-3030
cferguson@ci.wilmington.de.us or
Greg Solomon at 302-576-3043
gsoloman@ci.wilmington.de.us
Please make sure you receive a tracker # for your inquiry and call.

Remember this! The city does not know about many of the vacant or derelict properties. The people residing in the neighborhood need to tell them.

Streetscape Committee

The Streetscape Committee was formed over six years ago to improve the safety and aesthetics in our neighborhood. The committee's first project included upgrades in sidewalks, curbs, lighting, and trees on 14th Streets and on Orange Street. With the increase in lighting along 14th Street, many folks in the neighborhood tell us that is their preferred route after dark. Our project won't be finished until we bring these streetscape improvements to every block in Midtown. We are fortunate that our neighborhood has received funding support from our elected representatives in Dover and help implementing our project from the City of Wilmington. This winter the City will ask for bids from contractors for the next phase of our project: the 1200 and 1400 blocks of West Street. Look for work on the sidewalks to begin next Spring.

The Streetscape committee has been informed that Brandywine Gateway Neighbors, a not for profit developer who works in our neighborhood, will contribute \$50,000 towards our streetscape. We are extremely pleased to work with BGN on this project and thank Board President John Stafford and the entire BGN Board for their support. Thanks also to Pati Nash and Robert Blanchard, two Midtown residents who put together and presented the proposal on behalf of our neighborhood. Meanwhile, our committee continues to look for funding help to plan for future work.

Jessica Reed, Chair of the Streetscape Committee

Communications Committee

Our newsletter publishes events in the neighborhood and downtown area which are happening in the current quarter. Our Web site lists events going on throughout the year. We also post past newsletters and "Businesses We Like & Recommend" as well as link Web sites that are relevant to our community. **Your suggestions are always welcome.** If you know of an upcoming event that you would like to share with your neighbors please let us know about it so that we can pass it on.

In our neighborhood

William McKinley, 25th President of the United States. When McKinley became President in 1897, the depression of 1893 had almost run its course and with it the agitation over silver. Deferring action on the money question, he called Congress into special session to enact the highest tariff in history.

His second term, which had begun auspiciously, came to a tragic end in September 1901. He was standing in a receiving line at the Buffalo Pan-American Exposition when a deranged anarchist shot him twice. He died eight days later.



Businesses We Like & Recommend

Shirley Lewis Larke

House Cleaning

302-661-0327

If you would like to recommend a company or individual please contact Rita Berry. For a complete list of past featured businesses and referral source please visit our Web site.

Newsletter Contact:

Rita Berry at 388-7420 or ritaberry333@hotmail.com

Midtown Brandywine Neighborhood general email:
midtownbrandywine@gmail.com

What's Your Doggy Doo Doing?

When pet waste is left on the ground, rainwater can wash it into storm drains or directly into streams and rivers, contaminating drinking water sources. Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey estimate that pet waste contributes 20 to 30 percent of the water pollution in America. Excessive nutrients from animal waste contributes harmful bacteria, promotes excessive plant growth and causes algae blooms, all of which rob the water of vital oxygen when plant materials decay.

The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary can provide you with more information 1-800-445-4835 or <http://www.delawareestuary.org>.

What can you do?

Stormwater runoff pollution is the leading threat to water quality in the Delaware Estuary. This occurs whenever rainwater and melted snow flows across impermeable surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks and streets. Rather than naturally soaking into the ground, this stormwater picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants on its way into sewers. This polluted water is then discharged as untreated runoff into the waterways we use for swimming, fishing, drinking water and more. Below are a few simple things that you can do to help combat this life-threatening form of contamination:

- Put litter in its place: off the streets & into trash cans.
 - Only rain should go down storm drains, never use them as garbage cans or waste dumps.
 - Service your car regularly to keep engine fluids off the street and out of storm drains.
 - Choose water-based paints.
 - Bag or compost leaves to keep them from washing into storm drains and waterways.
 - Minimize the use of toxic substances and substitute organic products whenever possible.
 - Dispose of dog waste by bagging it and then flushing it down the toilet.
 - Recycle! Doing so reduces refuse in landfills.
 - Tell a friend that everything we do on land affects water quality.
- Everyone can make a difference!

– Information from the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary



**Look for our next Quarterly issue
coming in January 2009**