

# MH-CK Association News



Volume 4, Issue 1

[www.mhckcivic.org](http://www.mhckcivic.org)

Spring 2011

## New Civic Association Officer Bios

### **President, Vincent Bradley**

Vincent grew up in Silver Spring, and has lived in the city for 29 of his 39 years. He moved into the McKenney Hills - Carroll Knolls neighborhood in August of 2008, and found out about the neighborhood's organized community in 2010 from a sign that had fallen onto the sidewalk advertising the 2010 Winter Blues Festival. He thought, "Can a neighborhood get any cooler than this?" Following up on that appropriately, his first "official act" as President of the CA was to welcome everyone to the 2011 Winter Blues Festival. Vincent's various interests include playing and performing music, juggling, tai-qi, qi-gong, yoga, puzzle and strategy games, and internet technologies. His agenda for the upcoming year includes; restoring the Neighborhood Watch, making the Civic Association and community relations stronger with more accessible and transparent responsibilities, and restoring the neighborhood's Block Party. Thinking back on his first reaction to discovering the organization he now has been elected to direct, he firmly believes the only way the McKenney Hills - Carroll Knolls community could possibly be any cooler is by having more people

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## Bylaws Changes Coming

As a sign of the association's new direction, we have created a bylaws committee led by myself. I, along with attorney Andrea Gehman and enrolled agent Beth Johnson, will review the bylaws that were set in 1994 and seek to update them, tackling areas such as the neighborhood's boundaries and the e-mail forum, or listserv.

Once we complete a legal review of the bylaws, we will seek input from the community and finally will propose changes that we'll open to a discussion forum. At the January meeting, a motion was passed for the board to give an update on our progress in April, and we plan to do just that.

Bylaws are the rules of a corporation established by the board of directors during the process of starting a corporation. They're essentially the road map for how to conduct civic association business including voting, elections, meetings and the various committees. The association's founders did a good job in selecting rules in 1994, but we'd like to revise and streamline them to reflect today's community.

Revising the bylaws will take time and effort from the entire community. In fact, the bylaws MAY NOT be amended unless the officers first circulate proposed revisions one month prior to a special community meeting set for the purpose of revising the bylaws. During that meeting, a two-thirds vote of community members present is required to amend the bylaws.

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## President's Corner

Hey neighbors! It's a great honor to serve you all in 2011 as the civic association's president.

I see my role as an agent for developing and expressing the voice of the community, both internally and outwardly to the County. The community has 1080 households in it, with less than 150 paid memberships, and our most active voices directing the actions of the civic association seems to come from the community's Yahoo! -mail group, which has about 254 members. The year ahead poses many challenges for our neighborhood, and remaining silent won't guarantee what you want from the County as a community. School zoning, possible land-repurposing for the former Montgomery College School of Art and Design site, and a \$300 million Montgomery County budget deficit are just some of the major issues facing us as a community. Ultimately, our collective voice will be stronger if more people speak up and participate.

The best way I see to make all this happen is to have more events that bring the community together. If anyone has suggestions as to how we

can make fun things happen more frequently, please write to the new civic association board, either via the mailing address on the membership form or the email address below. I will be trying to figure out how to make regular, creatively-focused, events occur monthly or even weekly. Bigger social events will potentially require more funding; one easy way to help contribute to your community's development is simply to pay the annual \$10 membership dues. Membership funds go directly into funding community events like the annual Halloween party and Winter Blues Festival; they also fund your monthly community meetings. The membership form is here in the newsletter on page 2. We're looking at making paying dues easier online – stay tuned! To stay informed, there are three ways to reach the association board: our website at <http://www.mhckcivic.org/>, by e-mail at [mhckca\\_boardmembers@googlegroups.com](mailto:mhckca_boardmembers@googlegroups.com), or snail mail (see the membership form).

Speaking about emails, the community's free Yahoo! e-mail group is quite active. Members

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Please detach this portion of the form and return it along with a check for **\$10** suggested contribution made payable to **McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls Civic Association** to:

**McKenney Hills – Carroll Knolls Neighborhood Association**  
**Post Office Box 2102**  
**Silver Spring, MD 20915-2102**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional- for use on neighborhood list only): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (optional- for use on neighborhood list only): \_\_\_\_\_

Paying your dues allows you to become a member of the Civic Association for the 2011 calendar year. All residents of the community (both renters and owners) are eligible for membership. These dues help pay for: neighborhood events such as the Community Earth Day Celebration and the Neighborhood Party, the newsletter, rental of meeting space and other items and activities that are vital to the Association. Thank you for becoming a member, or, if you are already a member then thank you for your continued support. We can not do it without you!

involved, doing more amazing things together.

### **Vice President, Nancy Stewart**

Happy to be a resident of this neighborhood for 15 years, Nancy is a "semi-retired" librarian with most of her work for the Newseum and several newspapers including USA TODAY. She also administered library services for the blind in the state of Oregon and has worked for the Oregon legislature. Currently, Nancy is involved in special projects for DC Public Libraries.

### **Secretary, Ewy Mathé**

Ewy and her husband Greg have recently moved into the neighborhood, in the beginning of 2009. The community events, listserv, and friendly neighbors have made this a wonderful environment for us to live. In light of this, Ewy wanted to return back to the community and serve as secretary for the Civic Association. When she's not spending time with family, riding horses, running, or quilting, she is a cancer researcher at the National Cancer Institute, NIH.

### **Treasurer, Eric O'Neill**

Eric and his wife Juliana bought their home on Kohler Court in 2004 and have enjoyed the many friendships our community has brought to us. Professionally, Eric serves as the General Counsel for CHF International, a locally-based non profit humanitarian relief organization with offices around the world. Before taking the position at CHF, Eric received his legal degree from George Washington Law School and practiced law at DLA Piper in Washington DC. His early career was as a counter terrorism and counter intelligence operative for the FBI, a background he currently uses to support The Georgetown Group, an investigative services business Eric founded. As an officer for the CA, Eric hopes to use his legal and professional background to support the CA's many new endeavors, including a revision of the bylaws. □

There are several issues that we are currently reviewing, including:

1. The bylaws currently call for three official committees -- Zoning, Neighborhood Watch and Special Events -- and their heads make up three members of a seven member association board that also includes the president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. The president appoints the committee heads.
2. The bylaws do not have an Executive Committee or a Communications Committee. While the President may appoint ad hoc committees, these two may be pertinent enough to add to the bylaws as official committees.
3. The official committees do not have descriptions. The bylaws should list short (1-2 sentences) descriptions and we should explore a separate charter for each committee.
4. Voting by "members" is unclear. Should a voting member be defined as a household - or as a dues paying person? Can multiple "members" from the same household vote? A literal reading of the bylaws would suggest that two members from a single household could vote - at least on elections - but the issue is unclear.
5. The number of community meetings for any given year required in the bylaws is three - although it says "quarterly meetings." We should clarify the number and determine just how often the community should meet.
6. Boundaries. It appears the boundaries were set based on the designs of the association founders. The bylaws allow the boundaries to be changed through a proper amendment. I could not find any Maryland law or regulation that prohibits a private organization from setting the boundaries however it chooses. The boundary issue most likely came up because the MHCK CA joined the Montgomery County Civic Federation, although that does not seem to preclude us from changing our boundaries, and resubmitting them. If there was a desire to expand our boundaries, such a decision would require amending the

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## Treasurer's Report

As your new treasurer and as part of an energetic team of new officers, I hope to make a few changes to help enhance the community experience through the McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls Neighborhood Association. I'm also honored to support the community in my new role.

As of February 10, 2011, I'm pleased to report that the association has \$3,281.26 in the bank. Our last meeting saw enrollment increase, and I hope that we can keep the momentum going to grow dues-paying members to record heights. Thank you to everyone who has joined or renewed since the last newsletter! Remember, your annual dues and donations allow us to plan exciting events throughout the year.

I am also seeking to streamline the process of paying dues and making donations by adding a PayPal account to our website. Those of you who have used ebay.com, or many other websites, will recognize PayPal as an easy method of paying by credit card or bank account electronically -- all from the comfort of your laptop or computer desk.

Finally, in the next few meetings, we will continue the discussion regarding increasing the annual dues from \$10 to \$12. I'd very much like to hear your thoughts on this \$2 increase and encourage you to come to the community meetings to discuss in person, as well as engage the Board in a discussion on the Yahoo Groups List or through e-mail to the entire Board at [mhckca\\_boardmembers@googlegroups.com](mailto:mhckca_boardmembers@googlegroups.com). If you would like to contact me directly, you can always e-mail me at [mhck.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:mhck.treasurer@gmail.com).

I look forward to working with all of you to help make our Neighborhood Organization the envy of Montgomery County. ☐ -- Eric O'Neill,  
Treasurer

Have something to say or want to advertise  
in the newsletter? Please email  
[mhckca\\_boardmembers@googlegroups.com](mailto:mhckca_boardmembers@googlegroups.com)

## Blues Fest Warms Post-Snow Chill

The snow came and went but the blues were there to stay. At least for the afternoon as McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls neighbors enjoyed an afternoon of fun, food and music just days after a freakish snow thunderstorm pounded the area. The storm left 6 inches of ice and snow, knocked down massive tree limbs and left most residents without electricity for as long as four days.

But on January 30 in the Capitol View Homewood Recreation Center on the far west side of the neighborhood, neighbors warmed up to the tunes of newly elected Civic Association President Vincent Bradley and his band mates. Hot chocolate and apple cider also helped as did additional tunes by Jonathan Watkins.

Residents spilled in to the center, some more grateful for the outing than others. One family, who still did not have power at their house, afterward cheered the additional benefit of having a warm, well-lit place to go for a while. Nearly 100 residents turned out throughout the afternoon.

Children made festive crafts full of snowflakes, glitter and bows. Hummus, fruit salad, the infamous "Darrow Street Cookies," and other goodies filled everyone's bellies.

New this year was a raffle. Up for grabs were a brand-new photo printer donated to the civic association as well as sponsor raffles for a carbon monoxide detector and jewelry.

Festival sponsors included Best Hill Services, Mandalay Restaurant and crafter Kristen Snelling.

Thanks to all our neighbors who turned out, especially those who also paid their dues. Special thanks to all those who lent a hand, especially: Vincent Bradley, Martha Randall, Elizabeth Managan and Chris Elsasser, Kathryn Toffenetti, Ellen Cosgrove, Norman Kaplan and Jonathan Watkins.

Interested in more social events in 2011? Join the MHCK-CA's Events Committee. For more details, contact [mhckca\\_boardmembers@googlegroups.com](mailto:mhckca_boardmembers@googlegroups.com).  
☐--Susan Heavey

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bylaws because the boundary map was made part of the original bylaws. Doing so will require a month to discuss the proposed changes prior to a special meeting to vote on them.

7. E-mail listserv. The Yahoo Group (listserv) is not mentioned in the bylaws and should not be mentioned in the bylaws. The listserv is not part of how the association board operates and would be inappropriate for the corporate rules. Instead, the community should decide the level of involvement the association has in moderating the listserv and how such will continue. If the association were to continue to moderate the listserv, rules for doing so are more appropriately placed in a Communications Committee charter, not in the corporate bylaws.

8. Filing status: we'll be looking at our current tax status and whether it is worth it to reorganize as a

501c(4), a 501c(3), a corporation or some other entity.

Your new officers feel very strongly about community by-in for association decisions. If we appear to not be moving as fast as some of you might wish, it is because we are being methodical in determining what has been done in the past before making rapid changes to affect the future.

And when decisions are made, we will make every effort to ensure that they are shaped by you - the community.

Please make every effort to come out to community meetings because we'll be giving an update on the bylaws review each meeting and seeking input from all of you. This is YOUR chance to help grow and shape the association into the future. □ -- Eric O'Neill,  
mhck.treasurer@gmail.com

## 2011 Calendar

Community Meeting	Tues., March 22, 8 p.m	<i>County police speak on parks/neighborhood safety</i>
McKenney Hills Park Clean Up	Sat., April 30, 10 – 1 p.m	
Community Meeting (tentative)	Thurs., April 27, 8 p.m	<i>Update on CA by-laws</i>
Community Meeting (tentative)	Tues., May 24 8 p.m.	
Community Meeting (tentative)	Thurs., June 23 8 p.m.	
No Community Meetings July/Aug.		
Community Meeting (tentative)	Thurs., Sept. 22, 8 p.m.	
Halloween Event - (tentative)	Sat., Oct. 22, 3 -- 5 p.m.	(rain date Oct 23)
Community Meeting (tentative)	Tues., Oct. 26, 8 p.m.	
Community Meeting (tentative)	Thursday, Dec. 6, 8 p.m.	
Winter Blues Festival (tentative)	Sunday, Jan. 29, 2-5 p.m.	

*Tentative dates may change; please check the listserv, newsletter, and signs in the neighborhood. Additionally, the calendar is updated online at: <http://www.mhckcivic.org/calendar>.*

**All community meetings are held at the Capitol View Homewood Parks and Recreation Center behind Oakland Terrace Elementary School. Lower parking lot is off of Leslie St.**

offer up household items to give away, recommendations for home improvement businesses, and occasional debates about hot topics in the community. This is one 'neighborhood' in the community that is far from silent. You can join: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mckenneyhills>. When you sign up, you'll have the option to view the messages only on the Web or either receive 1) all e-mails, 2) a daily digest of e-mails or 3) only special notices from the group administrators on behalf of the civic association. Special notices will primarily focus on special events the Civic Association is aware of, or coordinating, for the community. You can change your preferences at anytime. The group is currently un-moderated message-wise, but membership applications are reviewed by the civic association to try and make sure the group remains an MHCK community focused service.

As president, my personal goal is to meet at least half of all the community members before my term as president is over next year. I am determined to move the civic association into a more community-owned entity by expanding on the current online services to include a history of the civic association as well as documentation of all of its processes and legal bindings. Currently an ad-hoc by-laws committee is reviewing the documents that govern the role of the association, and full presentation of their findings will be made during the April community meeting.

Additionally, current by-laws call for three committee chairs to fill out the current board: Zoning, Neighborhood Watch, and Special Events. I am seeking volunteers for these committees who would also have a vote on the civic association board. I assure you that being a volunteer for this community will put you in great company! My first month as president has connected me with some truly amazing people that have helped build the civic association and the community into what it is today. Please consider joining us as active members of the community. Additionally, we have several ad hoc committees that need volunteers: Communications (website, e-mail lists, newsletter, and signs and welcoming new neighbors), History (historical information about the McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls community and its civic

associations) and Parks & Plants or Traffic (both part of Zoning).

Obviously there are a lot of roles to fill. Please consider how you can contribute to any of these committees. Any help at all is better than none, so please give it a try. Contact the board if you need more details. The MHCK Civic Association wants to help you make the most of your community. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you. □ 2011 MHCK CA President Vincent Bradley

## Get Connected!

Check out our website for activities and more at: [www.mhckcivic.org](http://www.mhckcivic.org)  
Join our listserv to get service recommendations and keep up with other neighbors at: [www.mhckcivic.org](http://www.mhckcivic.org)

## McKenney Hills School Update

On February 17, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission unanimously approved the Final Forest Conservation Plan to allow construction of Downcounty Consortium Elementary School #29 (formerly McKenney Hills Elementary School). Designed to be the county's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-certified "green" school, it is slated to open August 2012. Aimed at relieving overcrowding at Oakland Terrace and Woodlin elementary schools, which combined have about 500 too many students, the school will be built at the existing site at 2600 Hayden Drive.

The board also gave Montgomery County Public Schools permission to begin the first steps toward construction, which school officials said after the meeting should start early spring. It's not clear how the planning commission's February meeting and vote – an extra step brought on by an appeal by

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the ad hoc McKenney Hills Forest Preservation Group – will affect the schools construction timelines and final opening date. The group could still try to force a legal challenge to the process. At issue are 19 trees that the county plans to protect and monitor but may need to be taken down if problems arise. School officials and the Audubon Society came to a "memorandum of understanding" last autumn to preserve about 25 extra feet of forest space and other concessions, which the planning board also considered.

Following the planning board's approval, county school officials at the MCPS' Long Range Planning Division met Feb. 24 in the first of a series of meetings to plan attendance boundaries and other issues. An advisory committee made up of representatives from Oakland Terrace, Woodlin, Newport Mill, and Sligo schools are participating in the process by getting input from the community and reporting back to the Superintendent. Ultimately the county's Board of Education will act on the recommendations from the committee and the superintendent.

MHCK residents have until late May to share their input via the four school's Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs). On May 25, the next meeting will be held at Newport Mills School to present the options to the public. If you have recommendations, contact PTA representatives at Oakland Terrace School (See: [http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/oaklandes/PTANews\\_files/ptaprograms.htm](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/oaklandes/PTANews_files/ptaprograms.htm)) or attend the meetings (see: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/communityinfo\\_boundary2.shtml](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/communityinfo_boundary2.shtml))□

-- Susan Heavey and Vice President Nancy Stewart

## New Park & Plants Committee Tackles Clean Up April 30

We'll be doing some major spring cleaning of our neighborhood green space, McKenney Hills Park, on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. We need neighbors of all ages to help pick up trash, cut threatening vines and pull Garlic Mustard and other invasive weeds. School-age children can also receive community service for participating. Trash bags and gloves provided; some small tools are also available but please bring your own handsaws and clippers if possible.

This special service project is sponsored by the MHCK-CA and its newly reinvigorated parks committee. We have some new projects and a new name: The Parks & Plants Committee. Led by Susan Heavey, the committee's new co-chair is Lisa Blumenthal. We're working to revitalize neighbors this year to not only help with the clean up but to also take a look at what they can do to "green" their own back yards. We're also looking for speakers at the association meetings to talk about everything from composting to rain barrels. We also plan to work with county officials and other local groups such as Friends of Rock Creek Park on various initiatives.

Most importantly, we're going to work on major tree planting initiative. This January's "thundersnow" not only damaged many of our neighborhood's trees, it really showed their age. Most trees are more than 50 years old and have been made severely lopsided by utility line pruning. Even if your trees survived the storm, chances are it is not very healthy. We've formed a special task force led by Julie Ryan Silva. We're planning a neighborhood Walk About to learn more about our greenspace, trees and other "green" issues as well as a major tree planting initiative this fall with discounted trees. **BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP.** Join our effort! Become a member and look at our webpage at [www.mhckcivic.org](http://www.mhckcivic.org) for the most up-to date information, including how to get involved in committees. □

-- Parks & Plants Committee Co-Chairs Susan Heavey and Lisa Blumenthal

