

Brook Park Journal

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New Year, New Start!

2020 certainly turned our lives upside down. People working from home, kids live-streaming school, activities cancelled, hair growing long (and grey showing), beards filling in and sweatpants filled out...right was left and up was down. In spite of it all, our neighborhood was able to pull off some good times. We hosted a spring Scavenger Hunt, Art Show had a great pool season and amazing food trucks all year (Thanks Nicki)! Come October, we had a Halloween movie night, pumpkin carving contest and mini-golf. Santa even seemed to have found his way despite the torrential downpours putting out the traditional Luminaries. This past year proved that what makes our Brook Park community special is NOT going away. Yes, our socializing events and activities may look different for a while, but we will always find a way to make it work.

Plans are in the works for a spring egg hunt and maybe another scavenger hunt. Hopefully by fall we'll be back to regularly scheduled programming with Kid Connection, Book Swap, Bunco, Creative Cooking and more. Creativity & perseverance got us through 2020. Who knows...maybe this is the beginning of new beloved Brook Park traditions. Have ideas or want to help? Contact Heather Byers at byers_heather@hotmail.com.

New Monthly Features

WE NEED YOU! Our BP Newsletter will include some new features in 2021 and we'd love your input. Submissions are welcome in the following areas:

Kid's Corner

Does your child like to write? Has your child created something they are particularly proud of? Submit it! We would love to celebrate the talented kids of Brook Park, and there is no commitment...just send us your masterpiece!

Resident Reflections

What is your fondest memory of our neighborhood? PLEASE share them! It's wonderful to hear the stories of past traditions, how things got started, or even just "remember when." Pictures would be great too, especially if you have a story to go with it.

R.A.K.

Have you seen someone in the neighborhood participating in a Random Act of Kindness? PLEASE share it! We all need good news right now and reasons to smile. A little refueling of faith in humanity goes a long way. No matter how small, please share the good you see around you.

Professional Help

No, not counseling, although we could probably all use some quality time on the couch. Are you an accountant and could share tips about tax time? Are you a massage therapist and could share ideas for stretches or at home practices? Maybe you're a teacher and can offer tips for making homework less painful. We're looking for more articles (like our monthly realtor article) that can offer helpful tips to our neighbors.

Have ANYTHING that fits any of the above OR ANY OTHER IDEAS, PLEASE contact Theresa Wilkinson at wilkinson.theresa@gmail.com. We are truly looking forward to connecting with each other this way!

BROOK PARK NEWSLETTER



Luminaries 2020

It may have rained on our parade - or on our luminaries - but we still managed to pull off not just one, but SEVERAL beautiful nights of illumination. Neighbors were able to enjoy some luminaries on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas Day. We even got a bonus night of luminaries AGAIN on New Years Eve. In the future, be on the lookout for an official rain date.



This year, 173 homes participated! King Albert and King Charles were nearly all lit up, it was beautiful! Our hard working volunteers put together and delivered 349 kits. A huge thank you especially to Amy Kane who organized the whole endeavor. Our community relies on dedicated neighbors like her. Thank you!



Brook Park Care Team

Brook Park Manor is looking to start a care team. The goal of the care team is to help residents of Brook Park in a time of need. The care team could provide assistance with errands, grocery delivery, snow or leaf removal, or just a friendly check in. We are looking for someone to initiate and organize the care team, as well as some team members who can help out when they get a call. We are still developing this idea and what might be involved. If you are someone with a passion for community service, and want to lead this team, or if you are in need we can help. Please contact Nate Bopp by email at nate.bopp@gmail.com



Resident Reflections

We are the Greco family living on King Charles Drive in this great community of Brook Park. For those that do not know us, we are a sports-oriented family and, in particular, have a great love of hockey. Well, some years back, we decided to take advantage of our large back yard and constructed an ice-skating rink there for the winter seasons. Now this was not a little pond, but a large rink that could accommodate a good hockey game. It soon became the gravitating place for the kids in the neighborhood for over 10 seasons looking to have a fun time ice skating, which of course we welcomed. If a child did not have skates, no problem as our laundry room had hockey and figure skates of many sizes.



One night, we decided to have a skating party. The atmosphere was perfect, snow was falling accented by the floodlights shining on the ice rink. Not more than an hour into the party, there were at least 50 people skating and singing to the background music. The funny part is those that could not skate still felt as though they had to participate as we watched them sliding on their shoes and even doing cartwheels on the ice, laughing throughout. Not to be left out, our golden retriever joined in on the fun, tail wagging and slip sliding while chasing the skaters. Such fond memories!
 ~ Dale & Julie Greco



Laughter is Good for You!

We've all heard that laughter is the best medicine. Turns out, that's true! According to the Mayo Clinic web site, "Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air; stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain." More endorphins mean better moods. Laughter also cools down your stress response. It can also "stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress." The benefits are not just short-term, laughter is also good for you over the long term. Laughter may:

- **Improve your immune system.** Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. By contrast, positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- **Relieve pain.** Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- **Improve your mood.** Many people experience depression. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety and may make you feel happier.



So, let's all feel better and enjoy some laughter!

Why does a duck have feathers?
 To cover his butt quack!

What do you get when you cross a vampire with a snowman?
 Frostbite!

What does a house wear? Address!

Why is dark spelled with a K, not a C?
 Because you can't C in the dark!

What did the grape say when it was squeezed?
 Nothing. It just let out a little wine!

What do you call an alligator in a vest?
 An investigator!

If a cow doesn't produce milk, is it a milk dud or an udder failure!?

Have you ever eaten a clock?
 No, why?
 It's time consuming!

I don't trust stairs. They're always up to something.

If you ever get cold, just stand in a corner.
 They're always 90 degrees.

If you ever get an email about pork, ham, salt and preservatives, don't open it. It's spam.

I went to the zoo yesterday and saw a baguette in a cage. The keeper said, "don't worry, it was bread in captivity."

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

Visit our Little Free Library

In need of a new book to read? Stop by the Little Free Library at the corner of Woodview & Broadlawn. Books for all ages can be taken and added. Happy reading!



Welcome Hosts

Brook Park is a uniquely connected and active neighborhood - that's not news! It's one of the things many of us love about where we live. With the added challenges of the pandemic, we need YOUR help to make sure that our new neighbors are properly welcomed into the fold and made aware of all the opportunities that are available to them. We're sure each of you extends that welcome daily; we also have **a network of welcome hosts** that provide our new neighbors with directories, menus, coupons and more upon moving into the neighborhood. It's the official welcome and they provide lots of practical aids. If you are aware of new neighbors, **please contact Mardy Byrnes** mardybyrnes@gmail.com. She can notify the appropriate welcoming host to officially reach out to any new neighbors. THANK YOU for keeping your eye out and for welcoming our new neighbors yourselves!



Save the Date: Easter Egg Hunt!

Plans are in the works for an Easter egg hunt this spring. More details TBD. If you're interested in helping out please email hollykikel@gmail.com

Street Parking Prohibited During Snow Events

Like it or not, winter is here! Please remember that during the winter months, both McCandless and Franklin Park have restrictions on street parking to enable snow removal.



From the McCandless website:

Severe road conditions prompt some drivers to leave their vehicles on Town streets. Vehicles parked on streets during such conditions make some operations extremely difficult and jeopardize the safety of vehicles. Vehicles must be removed as soon as possible, so that the town can conduct its snow operations effectively.

From the Franklin Park website:

202-13 Parking prohibited during certain hours.

No person shall park a vehicle upon any Borough street between the hours of 2:00am and 6:00am, prevailing local time, and/or during snow removal times.

To make snow removal (and all our commutes) easier, please refrain from parking on the streets this winter!



KIDS CORNER

Teddy Bear Chair by Eliza Cottone

The chair Eliza is holding has a precious story! It was a Christmas present for her Teddy. Her dad had her draw it, then make a Lego prototype. She built it, sanded and spray painted and stenciled it!



Drawing by Eliza Cottone



Ovals By Pennelope Cottone



City By Pennelope Cottone

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Advice for this VERY HARD Season By Lynn Holden, LPC Grieve the “once was” - Be with “what is” - “Love the “not yet.”

Grieve the “once was.” Grief is characterized by anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance...not in a neat little sequence. You can't check the boxes and be done with it. The sad reality is that you can experience all of these states cyclically, repeatedly and simultaneously. And remember, grieving is not the same as clinging...it is in service to making way for something new. The autumn trees show us how it's done every year! I wonder what it feels like for trees to lose so much, to be so empty then simply to stand and wait for refilling? It sounds so simple, so easy. It isn't easy. But it's possible.

Be with “what is.” Really, what other option do you have? Pushing against “what is” is exhausting and, besides, that which we resist persists. Allow don't resist. Allowing is not the same as condoning. Allowing yourself to experience what you are experiencing will better position you to choose how you want to respond. Keeping 80% of your attention on the “what is” that is going on within you, and only 20% on your perception of what is going on outside of you, you will be more grounded in the present moment and better able to access your wisdom.



Love the “not yet.” Life is not fixed or static; nothing stays the same. We don't like that this is true when we are happy, and we grow impatient when the unpleasant seems to overstay its welcome. Life is dynamic and new life is constantly trying to emerge. Can you imagine that something new is trying to emerge even now? Think about babies...they need love from conception to birth and beyond to thrive. Expand your heart and engage your imagination. Draw your attention inward. What new life/new possibility is gestating in you? In your home? your communities? In our nation? the world? Allow a vision to emerge. Love the “not yet” into being.

Lynn Holden is a licensed professional counselor and spiritual director who serves as a mentor and guide for those seeking holiness and wholeness in everyday life. www.lynnholden.com

Another helpful link from Lynn:

[8 things you can do to mentally prepare for winter during covid 19](#)

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Let's Talk Real Estate: Is Now a Good Time to Refinance? By Darla Garcia



The answer—it's complicated. While realtor.com states that mortgage refinances rose over 200 per cent during the summer of 2020, the process of refinancing can be time consuming and not always worth it for some homeowners who already have a relatively low rate.

Refinancing also comes with costs including closing fees. And if you're not shortening the length of your mortgage when refinancing, you'll be adding on a significant amount of interest over time. We like the advice from investopedia.com, which says that refinancing can make sense if you “have an

FHA loan with private mortgage insurance (PMI) that can't be cancelled, and you go for a shorter term than your current mortgage. If you have more than 20 percent equity, you can refinance into a conforming loan with no PMI due.”

While the low interest rates are very attractive, be sure to get a full snapshot of how a refinance will impact you now and for the future. We can help you to make these calculations, so contact us with questions (412) 726-5958 or visit our website: MindyAndDarla.com.



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Heather Byers byers_heather@hotmail.com (412) 364-1054		Jessica Deible jessdeible@aol.com (412) 367-7356	
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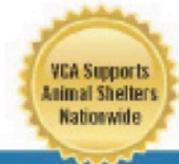
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I CAN HELP! My name is Kathy Evans-Palmisano and have lived in Brook Park Manor for almost 25 years. As a retired RN and CNM (Certified Nurse-Midwife) with a Master's Degree in Maternal-Child Health, I am also a certified Personal Trainer and Energy Healer who has been helping people live healthier for 4 decades. You may have seen me in Wellbella or Let's Live Magazines as the Corporate Trainer for GNC's Body for Life Challenge or NFL Hall-of-Famer Lynn Swann's 12-week Transformation.

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