

# THE OAKWOOD HEIGHTS LANTERN

NEWS ACTIVITIES OF THE OAKWOOD  
HEIGHTS HOME OWNER ASSOCIATION  
("OHHA")

ISSUE NO. 2  
February 2004

## BLOCK PARTY A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

After a false start on September 14, 2003 when the weather decided to throw a curve to our plans, we had our Block Party on the rain date, September 21. The weather was gorgeous and the party was a resounding success. Although our City Officials could not attend, both the Police and Fire Departments were there. The Police provided the barriers to block the street to traffic. The Fire Department brought a fire truck, which was not only fun but educational as well. We met new neighbors and reacquainted with old neighbors that we had not seen in years. We enjoyed a rich variety of delicious food, exchanged ideas, and enjoyed a rare sunny day in what was an exceedingly rainy season. We planned organized games for the children, but as it turned out, the children did not need our input at all. They organized their own games and had a good time.

The Block Party incurred stiff expenses. Thanks to the neighbors who went a step further and donated money to offset the costs for the permit and insurance.

The party was so good that many neighbors asked for an encore. The next date will be announced in July.

## THE LORRAINE TERRACE PROJECT

There was an impressive turn out at the General Meeting held on October 29, 2003 at the Wartburg Adult Care Community Center. The entire City Council and Ms. Blackwood, the City Attorney, attended. The main subject of the meeting was the sale of the strip of land, which is a deciding factor in the project. As you know, the developers have changed their plans many times and submitted one plan to the City Council, a different one to the Building Department and still another plan to OHHA. The developers are pressuring the City Council to sell to them the one foot wide strip of land that runs along the property. The City Council, with the exception of Mr. Lyndon Williams, seemed to lean toward authorizing the sale and tried to make a case for this proposal. They said that they could not legally refuse the authorization. Some of our members raised important concerns about the impact of traffic, foreseeable parking problems, environmental impacts, sewer system capacity and accessibility for Fire Department and sanitation vehicles. Our representatives were also reminded that they have not been elected to always say yes to special interests, but to protect the interests of their electorate. After some discussion, Ms. Eliza Allen, the President of Lorraine Terrace, made a startling proposal that

changed the dynamics of the whole discussion. She announced that if the strip of land is for sale, Lorraine Terraces is ready to buy it. As far as we have been able to ascertain, there have been no further developments, but we are following up and will keep you informed.

## ONE MORE CHURCH - RESOLVED

Oakwood Heights and the home owners on Esplanade have escaped the danger of a parking nightmare, not to mention other inevitable problems that a growing congregation would bring to a residential street. Our last issue stated our objection to a church on Esplanade. We are pleased to announce that the property was purchased in January from a fellow Mount Vernon home owner. Churches should be located in appropriate surroundings, with plenty of parking available, in a sound-proof environment. We thank the church for reconsidering and we thank those who let their voices be heard by opposing the project. We are certain that the new owners will restore the home to its former glorious beauty.

## FIRE ON MAGNOLIA AVENUE - UPDATE

As you know, our former neighbor, Anna Maria Assevero, lost her home on Magnolia Avenue to a terrible fire on February 17, 2003. She has since sold the property. Demolition construction should begin shortly.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Welcome to the new members who joined OHHA at the Block Party. Please remember that the \$20 membership fee is due every September. If you haven't paid your 2003-2004 dues, please send a check payable to Oakwood Heights Homeowners Association and mail it to Fiorella Kelley, 16 Magnolia Avenue, Mount Vernon, NY 10553.

## HOLMES ELEMENTARY

The Board of Ed and the Superintendent are proposing to convert Holmes Elementary into a middle school. Hundreds of people attended a meeting at Holmes on February 4. Overwhelmingly, the parents of Holmes praised the school and oppose this project. Many Oakwood Heights neighbors also oppose this project for many reasons (see Page 2). What do you think? **The next meeting on this issue will be held on Wednesday, February 25. Please mark your calendars.**



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## WE BELIEVE THAT THIS PROPOSAL SHOULD BE OPPOSED FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- THE CHILDREN CURRENTLY ATTENDING HOLMES WOULD BE DISPERSED THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO OTHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, CAUSING FURTHER OVERCROWDING.
- ALL PARENTS HAVE GREAT PRAISE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE STAFF OF HOLMES FOR ITS HIGH EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS. WHY DESTROY SOMETHING THAT WORKS WELL TO REPLACE IT WITH A METHOD THAT MAY NOT WORK.
- RESIDENTS WHO HAVE PURCHASED A HOME IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF A SUCCESSFUL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ARE HIGHLY UPSET ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL
- THE PRESENCE OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL IN THIS RESIDENTIAL AREA WILL CHANGE THE WHOLE DYNAMIC OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND IMPACT THE QUALITY OF LIFE.
- HOLMES WAS BORN AS AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY WOULD NEED TO BE SPENT TO MAKE IT ACCEPTABLE FOR A JUNIOR HIGH.
- THERE ARE CERTAINLY OTHER ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE. HOW ABOUT CONVERTING AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL THAT IS UNDERPERFORMING, POSSIBLY ONE IN A DIFFERENT QUADRANT OF THE CITY. THIS WOULD EVENLY DISTRIBUTE THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS ALL OVER THE CITY.

## NEXT MEETING ON THIS ISSUE:

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2004

HOLMES ELEMENTARY