

Parkwood

Residents Association Newsletter, Winter 2019

The next meeting of the PRA will be held on Monday, February 25 at 7:30 p.m.
All-Purpose Room of the Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

Program

*Meeting with District 1 County Councilmember Andrew Friedson
and

- *Update on the multiple proposed developments in Kensington that will affect Parkwood
- *Vote on proposed PRA budget for 2019

It is time to join or renew your membership in the PRA for 2019. Please send in the form attached to this newsletter to our Membership Chair this month. Thank you.

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD IN THE ALL-PURPOSE ROOM ON THE LOWER LEVEL OF THE SCHOOL



Did you see this last Fall? Don't worry, you will have another chance in the Fall of 2019. And it is for a good cause. See page 12 to find out where.

PROGRAM/AGENDA

The winter meeting of the Parkwood Residents Association will be held on Monday, February 25th from 7:30-9 pm in the All-Purpose Room of Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School. We have invited our newly elected District 1 Councilmember Andrew Friedson to be our guest (see details about him on the PRA website). In our invitation letter, we mentioned some issues that are of interest to our neighborhood, such as:

- Local development plans in Kensington that have the potential to worsen traffic congestion at intersections already failing throughout the day, namely Connecticut and Knowles Avenues.
- The Zoning Text Amendment struggle that would kill the rights of local communities to weigh in on the placement and set back limits for 5G wireless transmitters and power transformers on neighborhood streets.
- The \$41 million County budget deficit that must be addressed.
- The County Council's plans to work with the Montgomery County Delegation to the General Assembly to address large infrastructure projects (e.g., 495/270 Widening) being discussed for the region.
- The development of a long-term transportation plan for the region.

PRA had a good relationship with former Councilmember Roger Berliner, and we want to establish such a relationship with Councilmember Friedson. It is good for him to meet us and recognize that we are civically active constituents, so we hope to see many of you at the meeting. He has asked us to share with him issues of interest to residents other than those included in our letter, so please send those to Kira Lueders, PRA President [kklarl@yahoo.com; 301-564-0263] to pass on to him before the meeting.

At the meeting we will also have a brief update on development projects in Kensington and we will vote on the proposed PRA budget for 2019.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Kira Lueders

At the beginning of each year, I tend to start thinking about how lucky I am to have made it to this point in my life. Every New Year's Day if I'm healthy I celebrate by taking a walk, which brings forth more thankfulness for living in such a walkable neighborhood. When we had the recent snow, a number of residents wrote on the list serve how grateful they were to have neighbors who helped them shovel walks or clear cars, and their story is also mine. Mike cleared my walk twice and Ryan helped to dig out my car. Vinita tosses my Washington Post from the sidewalk to my door every morning when she walks her dogs. Jerry offered his gas when my mower ran out before I finished cutting the grass the last time in 2018. I was in the Virgin Islands when Snowmageddon brought Parkwood huge amounts of snow and got stuck in Atlanta on the way home because the DC area airports closed. As I was finally in a cab from the airport several days later and saw the mounds of snow, I wondered how I would even get to my door. I'll never forget the neatly cleared path that awaited me from the street to the door thanks to Mark, my neighbor at the time. In April I will have lived in my house for 52 years and am truly blessed to be surrounded by neighbors who care about each other. I wish every resident of Parkwood good neighbors.

As president of PRA, I'm also thankful for the people who participate in making the association an asset for the neighborhood. Many members of the Executive Committee (EC) have served multiple terms and have taken on more than one role. We now have a new standing committee tasked with keeping track of area development that includes members who are also officers, (Jeff and Gerald) and beautification committee members (Clare and Gail). We have volunteers (Gail, Gerald, Debbie, and I) who keep the doggie-doo bag dispensers filled, and PRA pays for the bags. Once a year before a paper version of the PRA newsletter is delivered to all homes, the EC meets for a stapling party to attach the envelopes and membership forms. These newsletters are delivered to each home by 34 volunteers (block-captains) after I as block-captain chair distribute their allotted copies to them. Most of the 34 have made newsletter deliveries for many years, and until the last few years when we

switched to electronic copies, PRA newsletters were delivered to homes multiple times a year. PRA is a member of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, and the meetings have been regularly attended by Jeff and Bailey, who was recently elected president of MCCF. Our listserve is a treasure-trove of information rivaling “Googling”. All you have to do to get lots of help is put your request out there. These people make the PRA a great association.

I’m also grateful that so many Parkwood residents value PRA and support the organization with dues (still only \$10 a year per household) and with optional donations to the beautification fund. Many of you obviously value the community gardens as much as I do. With your donations and expert care by Bailey the gardens have flourished, and we have also been able to add the Little Library thanks to efforts by Liz and Jane. I hope you will continue to support the PRA. A membership form and envelope are included to make it easy, and PayPal can also be used, as described on the PRA website.

PUBLIC POLICIES AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

In anticipation of our meeting with Councilmember Friedson, this section briefly notes some of the major issues that will come before the County Council and the State General Assembly.

The winter and early spring months are busy times politically. Among many important matters, the County Council must review and pass an annual operating budget by June 1. The Council does meet throughout the year: the full Council on Tuesdays with committee work sessions on Mondays and Thursdays. Public hearings are often scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The Council agenda is posted on the Council website by the Friday afternoon before a Tuesday session and two days before committee meetings. Residents can also receive the agenda automatically by contacting Legislative Information Services at 240-777-7910.

The Maryland General Assembly is normally in session only into April and must pass the budget for the State by April 1. Bills must be introduced by the first week in February. The Secretary of the Senate prepares a legislative calendar or agenda

each day, reflecting the matters to be considered during the floor session. In the House of Delegates, the Office of the Chief Clerk prepares individual calendars for each committee report, bills on third reading, or other items of legislative business to be considered during the floor session.

Below are just some of the major issues that our County and State legislatures will be addressing in the next few months in the areas of economic development, transportation, education, environment, and development. We will have an opportunity to discuss some of these with Councilmember Friedson when he meets with us at our residents meeting on February 25.

Economic Development and County Budget and State Budgets

Here are some challenging facts:

- Business growth in the County has been described as “anemic” with very few net new businesses added in 2011-2016
- Job growth has been “soft”
- Office space utilization has declined

During this same period, our population has been aging (seniors are now the fastest growing demographic group) even as the number of students in our schools has continued to grow.

The net result is that the demand for County services is increasing at a time when our revenues are decreasing. Retired people often pay less income tax; the County is not adding enough new jobs, and average wages have declined. Marc Elrich, the newly elected County Executive, has proposed cuts up to \$46 million in this year’s budget of \$5.6 billion.

While the State revenues are projected to grow in 2019 and 2020, the General Assembly’s Department of Legislative Services Fiscal Briefing predicts significant deficits for 2021-2024.

Transportation

Traffic congestion is a major problem and is projected to become even worse in the coming decade. The County and State have undertaken several initiatives to address the problem, including

more public transit options, such as the Purple Line, which now has a delayed opening date in 2023; and Bus Rapid Transit systems on routes US 29 (Colesville Road), MD 355 (Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Ave), and MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road). The County Council has also approved a bikeway master plan that will take many years to implement.

The most expensive, ambitious, and controversial undertaking is an effort by the State to relieve congestion on the Beltway and I-270. According to the Montgomery County Planning Board this project is currently in the study stage with approximately 15 alternatives being considered under criteria that were presented by Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration [MDOT/SHA] during public briefings in July 2018. Among the possible solutions being considered are combinations of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, managed toll lanes and reversible lanes, all with the potential for some transit to be incorporated.

In its Phase 1 Solicitation statement of scope the Maryland Department of Transportation proposed a 50-year concession agreement that entails the following:

- Reconstruction/Rehabilitation of the American Legion Bridge.
- Construction of price-managed lanes and general-purpose lanes along the corridor starting in Virginia and going into Maryland along I-495 to I-95.
- Maintenance and operations responsibilities for priced managed lanes and associated assets.
- Developer responsible for financing the entire phase using toll revenues collected from the managed lanes. Developer to take revenue risk.

Additional information is available on page 7 of the January issue of the Montgomery County Civic Federation newsletter.

Schedule highlights:

Winter 2019: Study of Alternatives

Spring 2019: MDOT preferred alternative selected

Fall 2019

- Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- Final mitigation package delivered

Early 2020: Contractor hired

Education

The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) are regularly rated as among the best in the country. Parkwood is fortunate that it has one of the best elementary schools in the system and that its students can continue on to excellent middle schools and the Walter Johnson High School.

Nevertheless, MCPS faces significant challenges: providing quality education is expensive – the schools take half of the County’s budget – and revenues are not keeping pace. The incoming County executive has called for a \$25 million cut in the schools’ operating budget and a \$37 million cut in its capital improvement program. This comes at a time when the number of students continues to grow, schools are becoming overcrowded, and the County faces a continuing achievement gap among some of its minority groups.

These issues are of concern not only to parents whose children attend a County school. They can affect all residents, because the quality of the school system is a major factor in quality of the communities in which we live.

Environment

Here are a few of the important environmental issues facing the County.

Fraudulent Development Documents MC/PG 106-19 is a bill to discourage the submission of fraudulent development documents. It requires an applicant who seeks to subdivide land in the County to certify under penalty of perjury that development documents are true, correct, and complete to the best of the applicant’s knowledge. This seemingly technical bill is one of the Montgomery County Civic Federation’s top legislative priorities this session.

Additional information is available on page 11 of the January issue of the Montgomery County Civic Federation newsletter.

Bicycle Master Plan

In November 2018 the County Council unanimously adopted what is described as a world-class bike plan. This new “functional” master plan is a comprehensive proposal that aims to make the County a “world-class bicycling community.”

The plan recommends a network of protected bike lanes—lanes where people can bike and ride in a manner that is protected from cars—as well as low-stress routes throughout the County, in our urban centers, as well as connecting major activity centers.

To learn more about the plan and view online the digital map of the proposed network, or talk to staff contact David Anspacher at 301.495.2191 or David.Anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org.

Storm Water Runoff

Storm runoff is a serious problem. Montgomery and other counties face a major challenge in retrofitting 20 percent of its impervious surface area with “green” storm water treatment structures under its Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System permit. Despite being the first Maryland county to be assigned the 20 percent retrofit goal and committing significant resources towards it, the County recently agreed to pay the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) \$300,000 as part of a consent decree agreement for failing to reach its goal. The County will have 2 more years to reach the goal of retrofitting 3,778 acres (an area roughly three times the size of Takoma Park).

MDE has acknowledged the challenge in meeting the aggressive goal, which is currently shared by all of the counties subject to this requirement. The other affected jurisdictions include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, and Prince George’s Counties and Baltimore City. The affected jurisdictions are spending more than \$300 million annually to meet the 20 percent goal.

Development

After a number of years with relatively little growth, work on some new buildings is going to start appearing in Kensington (and nearby). As welcome as some of these may be (or not,

depending on your point of view), there is little question that they will lead to some disruption, at a minimum, during the construction period and possibly longer. See the new “Hot Topics” section of the PRA website for the current status of a number of these projects.

While none of these major developments are taking place within the boundaries of Parkwood itself, many houses in Parkwood continue to be renovated, as our neighborhood moves from the small 1950-era ramblers to the larger, more contemporary houses better suited to today’s families. As often mentioned on the listserv, this construction can have some noxious consequences for adjacent homeowners, e.g., noise, trash, traffic, and other complaints.

As noted in a recent listserv posting, Montgomery County construction noise ordinances are as follows: Weekday hours of construction are 7:00 am to 9:00 pm, with weekend and holiday work hours starting at 9:00 am. The maximum acceptable noise level is 65 dBA for daytime and 55 dBA for nighttime, about the level of an air conditioning compressor at 100 feet. Listserv contributors also complain about gas powered leaf blowers.

We can ask Councilmember Andrew Friedson to provide guidance about how we as a community can address the problem of developers not adhering to the rules when he comes to the Parkwood Residents Association meeting on February 25th.

PRA OFFICERS

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An Older Kensington

Here are some great pictures of Kensington, 1901-1977. They are hanging outside on the wall of a popular store. Can you find the originals? They are big and worth seeing. Hint: Look hard where they might be.



c.1901 Kensington B&O railway station



c. .1949 3758 & 3762 Howard Avenue



c.1930 Kensington Volunteer Fire Dept



c.1940 Howard Avenue



c.1977 Noyes Library



c. 1927 Dedication of the National Guard Armory at 3710 Mitchell. It housed the National Guard, the Fire Department, and then the Motor Vehicle Administration

2018 Treasurers Report and 2019 Proposed Budget

Gerald B. Sharp, PRA Treasurer
December 31, 2018

The 342 residents who paid membership dues in 2018 was the highest in PRA history. Total income in 2018 was also the highest in the history of our organization, due primarily to an increase of approximately \$1,000 in beautification donations this year over last (Table 1). A number of PRA members kindly gave more in 2018, anticipating that the Saul Island renovation would put us into the red. Paying dues and making donations via PayPal is becoming increasingly popular among PRA members, with a 66% increase in PayPal payments in 2018 over 2017 (\$1580 vs. \$950) (Table 2).

Because of that renovation, 2018 was the second year since 2008 that the Parkwood Residents Association exceeded total revenues. This also happened in 2011 when we installed a bench in the Wildwood Garden and signs at several entrances into the neighborhood. From 2008 to 2013, income exceeded expenses by from \$2000 to \$3000 annually, but in 2014 we began paying for landscaping services to maintain the Parkwood public gardens, and since then we have only brought in about \$500 more each year than we spend. As anticipated, this year the renovation of the Saul Island Garden took us into the red and slightly above the budgeted amount for 2018. As shown in Table 1, normal landscaping costs (excluding that renovation) were lower in 2018 than 2017, but the Saul Island renovation costs of \$3456 made the beautification total of \$7924 for 2018 substantially higher than the totals in past years.

Table 1 also details other 2018 expenses by category. *Administrative costs* at \$477 were similar to those of past years. *Newsletter costs* were higher in 2018 than in 2017 with the primary expense

being our winter newsletter which is printed off and distributed to all 930 houses in Parkwood. We have transitioned to sending out digital newsletters in the spring and fall with printed versions of those newsletters just being mailed to PRA members who can't receive them electronically. That printed, hand-delivered newsletter also includes a membership renewal form and envelope addressed to the PRA and is our major way to encourage Parkwood residents to renew their memberships and to inform new residents about our organization. *Meeting room expenses* were higher this year than last and slightly exceeded the budgeted amount for 2018, primarily because we bought a new slide projector for the meetings, replacing a failing borrowed one.

Because of our frugality in spending and the strong support of Parkwood residents who pay the annual \$10 PRA dues and make generous donations to the beautification fund, our organization has been able to function without raising that moderate \$10 annual fee for the last decade, and in spite of our deficit spending this year, we do not plan to increase the annual dues amount.

At the end of 2018, the balance in the PRA treasury was a healthy \$14,052.29. Although we need to maintain some reserves in case a situation arises that requires use of our resources, we have sufficient funds to consider another worthy Parkwood-centered project in 2019. The 2019 PRA budget will be discussed at the next meeting of the PRA later this month. Table 1 includes suggested amounts for some of the budget categories based on past spending patterns; the Beautification budget for 2019 and other budget items will be decided at the upcoming PRA meeting later this month.

The full Treasurer's Report, including historical data from 2008 to the present as well as a current balance sheet is available on the PRA website.

Table 1: 2017-2018 Budgeted & Actual Expenses, 2019 Budget

Category	Actual Expenses 2017 (\$)	Actual Expenses 2018 (\$)	Budgeted Amounts 2018 / 2019 (\$)
Administration			
Membership expenses (envelopes, membership forms, and address labels)	167.95	87.19	
Wells Fargo Bank fees	0	3.00	
PayPal fees	44.67	69.29	
Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) fees	50.00	125.00	
Website domain fee	22.71	27.87	
Misc. admin expenses	120.06	165.06	
Administration Total	405.39	477.41	500 / 500
Newsletters			
Printing costs	689.62	1444.45	
Newsletter distribution expenses (stamps, envelopes, labels, etc.)	0	40.20	
Total for Newsletters	689.62	1484.65	1500 / 1500
Beautification			
Special projects: renewal of Saul Island Garden	0	3456.00	
Landscaping costs (labor)	3875.00	2740.19	
Mulch, fertilizer, supplies, plants and other expenses	78.38	754.81	
Doggy potty bags	354.96	507.93	
Doggy potty bag dispenser	227.00	0	
PRA resource maintenance (signs, bench, etc.)	0	63.54	
Little library	203.49	0	
Little library dedication (music and refreshments)	0	401.88	
Beautification Total	4738.83	7924.35	7700 / ?
Meeting Expenses			
Meeting room rental	157.25	92.50	
Projector expenses, handouts	176.34	423.36	
Meeting total	334.59	515.86	300 / 300
Totals	6168.43	10,402.27	10,000 /

Table 2: 2017 & 2018 Receipts

Type of Income		Income 2017 (\$)		Total 2017 (\$)	Income 2018 (\$)		Total 2018 (\$)
		Dues	Donations		Dues	Donations	
2017 total dues & donations		3360*	3262	6622	3420*	4235	7655
PayPal Payments		(950)			(1580)		
		Interest: Well Fargo Checking & Savings @ 0.02% (\$0.17); Capital One 360 @ 0.4% (\$18.35)					18.52
		TOTAL INCOME 2018					7673.52

*Totals includes \$40 in prepaid membership dues

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: GERALD SHARP, PRA TREASURER and NIH EPIDEMIOLOGIST

It Started Out West

In 1947 his mother, at age 23, left Westchester County, NY after finishing Teachers College in New York City and took the train west to the small town of Wells, Nevada to teach kindergarten. Within two weeks of arriving, she had married his father. Ten years later, she became one of the first IBM computer programmers, coding initially in hexadecimal. That's a little like using Chinese characters to write a novel in English. His father dropped out of college to join the Navy in WWII and was never able to finish his degree. After the war, he started out as a surveyor for the state highway department, finally becoming head of highway design. Along the way he took correspondence courses in trigonometry, geometry, and civil engineering. He was in charge when I-80 was built across the state in the early 1970's. Once, when the highway was laid out to go directly between a casino and its parking lot, he redesigned the plan so that the highway could pass over the lot, creating a covered structure for the casino. The state then leased the now-protected-lot back to the casino, which has been happy to foot the bill for the subsequent decades.

Gerald's son is a PhD physicist who is now one of the U.S. State Department's representatives to the International Atomic Energy Administration in Vienna, Austria. His predecessor in that post helped to negotiate the treaty with Iran. His daughter has an MA in environmental policy and was hired by the Obama administration to oversee the Department of Interior's budget, moving later to a staff position on the Senate Appropriations Committee. She is now in the wife/mom looking-for-a-job position in London, England.

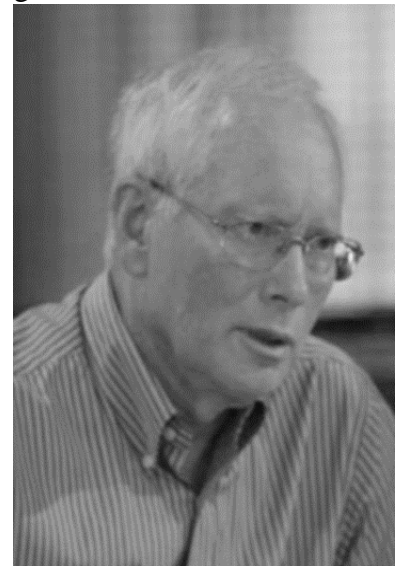
That is the interesting family of our neighbor Gerald Sharp, epidemiologist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health, PRA treasurer, and Parkwood resident living on Edgefield Road. Gerald still has a bit of cowboy in him from growing up in the west and riding horses every summer up in the Sierras.

At one time he was the rodeo reporter for the Nevada State Journal and had to interview barrel racers and steer wrestlers every Sunday night. He still has friends from his earliest days in Nevada.

College, Graduate School, and Work in Appalachia and the South

Gerald was the editor of his high school newspaper, going on to major in both journalism and social psychology at the University of Nevada. He then went to graduate school at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, majoring in anthropology.

His masters project as a graduate student was to look at how accurately dust levels were being measured in underground coal mines. His first research grant was for \$100 so he could buy steel tipped boots to go into the coal mines. He also had to wear a helmet with a light and carry a self-rescuer unit. And he got training in how to escape in event of an emergency.



Because his headlamp would shine directly into the face of anyone he was talking to, he had to learn how to do an interview without blinding the person. A more serious problem was that in Kentucky they don't like mine inspectors; sometimes they get shot. So, he had to learn how *not* to be seen as an inspector. He did not carry a clipboard, and he did not take notes. After talking to a miner, he went back to his car and entered as much as he could remember into his tape recorder. He was 23 years old.

He discovered that while the big mines did the dust collection properly, many of the smaller family-owned ones – there are a lot of these in Appalachia – did the dust collection by running the units in their offices instead of sending them down into the mines. Nobody wanted to put Daddy or Uncle

Bob's mine out of business. When he reported this finding, his advisers said this was getting dangerous and that no one was going to want to see these results—not the government, not the unions, and certainly not the mine owners, who tried to stop his funding. But his boss at the government agency stuck by him. His advisers said to call the fresh air dust record results “anomalous”, not “false”. A TV program wanted to do a story, but he convinced them that “coal dust” was not an interesting visual.

Gerald then went to grad school at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), for his doctoral degree in public health. He thought this would enable him to combine his interests in journalism, social psychology, anthropology, and, as he was to learn, epidemiology.

His interest in epidemiology came about through his doctoral research, overseen by Dr. Arthur Herbst, who had discovered the link between women who had been exposed during pregnancy to Diethylstilbestrol (DES), an estrogen medication once thought to prevent miscarriages and that is now banned, and a usually rare cancer found in their daughters. This led to Gerald's becoming a cancer epidemiologist, first at the University of Tennessee's Graduate College of Health Sciences, and then at the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. As did most untenured assistant professors, he repeatedly applied for grants from NIH, and, as happened to most, was turned down many times.

Off to Japan

But then a former patient at St Jude, who had been treated for leukemia and undergone multiple blood transfusions as a child, died from liver cancer at age 29. The hospital realized that this young woman, like many of their cancer survivors, had been transfused with blood not screened for the hepatitis C virus (HCV) before the virus had been identified. She had been infected during one or more of her multiple transfusions. After St. Jude uncovered the link between leukemia, liver cancer, and blood transfusions received at the hospital, Gerald was put in charge of testing blood samples stored in the freezers at St. Jude from former patients who had received even just one transfusion. Former patients who tested positive were flown into the hospital and

treated for HCV. Gerald had ideas about how to study the link between HCV and liver cancer, but he had only this one case.

Fortuitously, he came into contact with Dr. Gil Beebe, an American epidemiologist and statistician known for his monumental studies of radiation-related mortality and morbidity among populations exposed to ionizing radiation from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and the Chernobyl reactor accident in 1986. Beebe encouraged him to apply for a job as a research scientist in the Department of Epidemiology at the Radiation Effects Research Foundation, located in Hiroshima, Japan. This was a joint venture with Japanese Government and National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D.C.

With his appointment to this position, he now had access to the records of 120,000 Japanese atomic bomb survivors who had been followed since 1951. He was eventually able to show that the A-bomb radiation had caused a liver mutation, that together with HCV infection 20 years later, led to liver cancer. His work kept him in Japan for six years, where he did his best to learn the language as well as carryout his research.

NIH Calls

Early one morning in Japan, Gerald was woken up by a call from the chief of the epidemiology branch in the Division of AIDS in the infectious disease institute at NIH; she had learned of his work on HCV. They wanted his help to study a cohort in the U.S. of HIV-positive women and HIV-negative controls who had been followed for many years. About a third of the women had HCV, and they were dying, not from AIDS, but from liver disease. In 2003 he joined the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases as project scientist overseeing the group of investigators studying this cohort with his focus particularly on HCV, HIV and liver disease.

After starting work at NIH, Gerald got one of his most valuable ideas. Over the ten years of the study, not all study funds had been expended and several million dollars had accumulated as “unobligated” funds. Mindful of his own struggles as a young scientist trying to obtain research grants

from NIH, he expanded the study by allocating these “unobligated” funds to support proposals from researchers to use the data from the main study for additional projects. The idea was to allow young scientists to apply for small amounts of money to get them started and to give them access to the large amount of clinical data and specimens that had been accumulated over the long time frame of the study, and, thus, to obtain the necessary guidance and preliminary data they needed to write successful grant applications.

As a result of Gerald’s plan, the project was re-invigorated with new, highly motivated researchers who contributed their energy and their ideas. There were now more eyes and a broader network of minds looking at the data. The benefit for NIH, which was already paying the fixed costs of the study, was that additional studies could be done with the same participants without funding additional expensive cohorts—the only limitation being how many tests and interviews the women could endure during their visits every six months.

At last count, over a hundred grants had been awarded to cohort investigators, who had published 868 scientific papers investigating the relationship between HIV, other infections, and a variety of health outcomes and health disparities. Needless to say, many of the recipients of these grants were appreciative of this innovative approach to funding and grateful for its impact on their careers. Gerald reports that one fellow who early on was a beginning faculty member but who is now a well-funded full professor recently told him that they would have named their child after him, but they had a daughter. “I’m sure he was kidding, but it was nice to hear.”

New Research Directions

There is now a cure for HCV, and the treatment of HIV has advanced significantly since it was first discovered to the point where, statistically, the death rate for those infected is almost the same as for the general population. As a consequence, Gerald’s work now focuses more on preventing HIV (at last count about 37,000 people in the U.S. were infected with the virus annually), rather than studying the effects of the virus and its treatments.

Again, he has brought his inventive mind to bear on the challenge. One of the difficulties in finding the HIV-negatives most likely to be infected is that just having them come in for interviews and exams can change their behavior and make them less likely to become HIV-infected. This is what in science is called the “Hawthorne effect”, a well-documented phenomenon in the social sciences that occurs when the behavior of participants in a study changes because of their being in the study itself. In order to study HIV-negatives, Gerald has developed a research program to reduce both the Hawthorne effect and the cost of following HIV-negative participants by engaging participants through remote digital means (iPhones and computers) rather than having them come into brick and mortar clinics on a regular basis.

The four studies funded under Gerald’s program are now following about 18,000 gay men and transgender women throughout the U.S, including Puerto Rico, to find the people most at risk of HIV infection. The goal of this program is to find ways to intervene digitally to reduce people’s risks of HIV infection (i.e., finding ways to induce the Hawthorne Effect digitally to intentionally change behavior); once developed these interventions could be rolled out across the country to reach the people most at risk of HIV infection. Yet another example of the gifted intelligence that appears to run in the Sharp family.

Coming to Parkwood

Gerald bought his house on Edgefield in 2007 and has been the PRA Treasurer since 2008. He is also the author of a number of the most interesting stories and articles to appear in the PRA newsletter. Unfortunately, Gerald’s house caught fire in December 2011 (using a barbecue grill on a wooden deck has its risks). Fortunately, the fire department came quickly, and of course his neighbors helped out, which was good because he had had to run outside at 3 am in the winter wearing a T-shirt, cutoff jeans, with no shoes and no glasses.

Naturally he turned this into an opportunity to renovate his house in new and innovative ways. For example, after learning that the roof would have to be entirely rebuilt, he decided to add a second floor plus a door on the new top floor that would give

access to the roof. This would eventually enable him to get to the solar panels that he plans to install. His “creative” approach took so long that his long-suffering contractor eventually took his sign down because he did not want people to think that he was the one taking so much time to get the job done. Gerald finally moved back in 2017.

He loves living on Edgefield Road, which has changed a lot in just the few years that he has lived there. Lots of new families with kids have come in. He likes most of the new houses that have appeared on the street. He finds it interesting and loves seeing how the old houses have changed.

In addition to being the PRA Treasurer and contributing editor to the newsletter, Gerald supports Parkwood in several other ways. For example, the easement next to his house that provides a walking path between Edgefield Road and Parkwood Drive didn't have a name when he first moved in and was just called the "easement". The PRA beautification fund paid for Gerald to buy hundreds of daffodil bulbs, which he planted on both sides of the upper part of the trail. He renamed the path "Jonquil Lane" which means "daffodil" in French, and the PRA provided a small metal plaque now installed at the top of the path that notes this. He also maintains the doggy potty bag dispenser there, and Jonquil Lane has become a popular path for dog walkers in his neighborhood.



Jonquil Lane. It does not look like this now, but it will in a few months. You should take a stroll on if you have never had the pleasure.

By the way, he has three bikes that work and one that he acquired when he was in Japan that does not work. (It appears that the creative types don't like to rush things.) Welcome home, Gerald. We are very glad your house is repaired and that you are back.

Editor's Notes

Opera in the Park. Remember this photo from the Fall Newsletter? I promised to tell you who they were. Last year



the Friends of Warner Circle and the Noyes Foundation offered a free concert, featuring famous opera songs, at the Warner Circle Special Park, former home of Brainard Warner, who founded Kensington. This is Gustavo Ahualli, Cara Gonzalez, and Katelyn Jackman singing *Soave sia il vento* from *Così Fan Tutte*. It was wonderful!

Annual train show. And about that photo of the canoes on page 1. Taken at the annual Kensington Model Train Show held last September in the Kensington Town Hall. The event is a benefit for the Noyes Children's Library Foundation and the Kensington Historical Society. Great fun for little kids and big kids (aka adults). Didn't make it last year. Go next year for sure. In the meantime, you can check out the scene at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eS-JmJb_FI4

Ten years ago. From the Winter 2009 Newsletter. One of the big topics reported on was the upcoming closure of the Cedar Lane Bridge. According to the report by PRA rep Kira Lueders, residents attending a meeting with County officials strongly favored the three-months full closure option over the 12-15 months phased construction option. And membership dues were \$10.00.

PRA Newsletter is published in October, February, and June. Distributed to members by email; paper copy to all Parkwood residents in February. Please send comments and suggestions to the editor, Jeff Griffith, 4502 Saul Road, Kensington or email: jeff@jandjgriffith.com