

Letter from the Editor

It's February. Rejoice! Only a month and a half of serious winter left. Mid-month we celebrate the holiday of love and romance - Valentine's Day.

Our Valentine gift to you is a new feature. This month we introduce columns from Senator Wayne Fontana, Representative Chelsa Wagner and Councilman Jim Motznik. They will be updating us monthly on various projects relevant to our community.

When you go shopping for your Valentine, start your shopping on the boulevard. You can buy that special dessert from Party Cake or Kribel's. Stop at Michael's for a card and

flowers. Or Salon Canova for a gift certificate. If your Valentine is a comic book fan, stop at Geekadrome. Plan dinner at Moonlite or It's Greek to Me. Can't find a babysitter, bring dinner home from Mateo - don't forget the cannoli!

Last month President Obama exhorted us to work for a common good. We agree. After all, this newsletter is a volunteer effort. You don't have to search the web for a place to volunteer. You can volunteer right here in Brookline. Some of us remember a different time when street sweeping

was done every week, and home mail delivery was twice a day. Times have changed. We can sit and rail about what we don't have, or, like Sam Riston pictured on page two, we can pitch in and improve our community. We're all in this together. In upcoming issues, we will be introducing local volunteers and offering you opportunities to volunteer. Change is in our hands.

The tea kettle is whistling so we will put our soapbox aside for now. Time to curl up with a cup of chai tea and the 2009 Seed Savers Catalog. It's never too early to plan the garden.

By Pamela Grabowski

IT'S GREEK TO ME

Has the winter chill sent your mind wandering to the warm sunny Mediterranean? Mike Petrou, owner of It's Greek to Me, can't give you the warm Mediterranean, but he can give you the Greek meal.

Mike emigrated from Cyprus about 30 years ago and brought his love of food with him. In fact, his motto is "Eat, Live, Love. If you like to eat, then you know how to cook," Mike explains.

Clearly this man must REALLY like to eat.

Gyros lead the menu. These gyros are a balanced mix of meat and vegetables. In addition, the menu includes several dinners including calamari, loubia, coriander-crusting shrimp and souvlaki, marinated pork shoulder. Appetizers include saganaki, fried cheese with lemon juice, and Skordalia. Skordalia is like hummus, but made with pureed potatoes instead of chick peas.

The cozy dining room is available

for private parties and can accommodate approximately 34 people. Mike is a long time Brookline resident and points out the variety of dining establishments available to residents. "You can have Greek one night, pizza another, Italian the next."

It's Greek to Me is BYOB. So get your bottle of wine and escape to our local taverna. Ah, a glass of Retsina and a plate of Skordalia - heaven!



**1011 Brookline Blvd.
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**Hours: Sun. to Thurs. 11:00—10:00
Fri. & Sat. 10:00 to 11:00**



*Above: Mike Petrou preparing a customer's order. Left: Gyro anyone?
Photos by Catia Alencar*

Litter Bugs Meet Pittsburgh's Finest

By Keith Knecht

My office window overlooks the intersection of Brookline Boulevard and Flatbush Avenue. Over the years I've witnessed a lot of boulevard action from parades to auto accidents. Recently, I saw something that I had never seen before. A mini-van with two 50-ish looking passengers rolled to a stop at the intersection light and threw trash out of their vehicle. Fortunately, two city cops were sitting in the window of Antonio's Pizza having a slice. Both officers were young, strong guys and immediately leapt from their chairs and stopped the car. Unbelievably, the car's occupants gave the cops some lip! It was clear that not only were these people litterbugs, but stupid litterbugs! The officer gave him five minutes of his mind and a big

ticket to boot.

As an organizer for Brookline's Earth Day and ongoing litter clean-ups, our volunteers have picked many hundreds of bags of litter, I was practically jumping up and down with excitement! I ran from my house and over to the cop and thanked him so very much! It was so cool to see that happen; it made my day! Those two sharp-eyed officers interrupted their lunch to make a point about something that affects our image and quality of life. City police can't be everywhere, but obviously they do care about our well-being.

So if you think littering is a trivial matter, get out your checkbook. Your hefty fine will help city finances and is greatly appreciated.



Sam Riston, formerly of Mazza Pavilion, currently travels from his home on Pioneer Avenue near Seton Center to Brookline Boulevard to clean up after litter bugs.



Keep those shovels handy



Don't forget to clear your sidewalk!
It's a city ordinance.

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Brookline Block Watch

By Pamela Grabowski

January's Block Watch meeting was cancelled due to the weather. Amy Fisher received an update from Commander Scott Schubert on the burglaries that occurred in November.

According to Commander Schubert, "The burglary detectives arrested several people earlier this month [January], but it is unclear if they were involved in all the burglaries. They [detectives] are still actively working the cases. On a positive note,

there were no burglaries reported in Brookline during the month of December.

Block Watch reminds residents to lock all windows and doors. A good way to check on how secure your home is - stand outside and pretend you lost your house key. How would you get in? If your first thought is the cellar door or back window that's always unlocked - lock it! Get the idea?

READERS RESPOND

Regarding the "toby tree" article [January's issue], my grandparent's house on Milan Ave. (the section off of Edgebrook Avenue) had two large catalpa trees in the front yard. The seed pods showed up every year, and every year my cousins and I heard the stories from our elders of Indians smoking them. Naturally as soon as we were old enough to get a hold of some matches we had to try smoking one ourselves. Needless to say, it wasn't a very pleasant experience. I had to assume that the stories were either fiction or that Indians have lungs of steel. We never tried that again, but I still have a fondness for toby trees and will

never forget those days gone by.

**-Bob Daley,
South Hills Art
Center**

Also, there is a Catalpa (Stogy) tree at the end of the dead end on Kenilworth Street (from Pioneer Avenue going toward's St. Pius parking lot). Across the parking lot from St. Pius X Church. I've often wondered what the tree is and what the cigar shaped fruit was good for. Now I know!!

- Kim Sabol



Have you stopped at Mazza Shoe Store & Repair yet? Photo by Pamela Grabowski



The Brookline Staff

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- Deb Park *Proofreader*
- Catia Alencar *Photographer*
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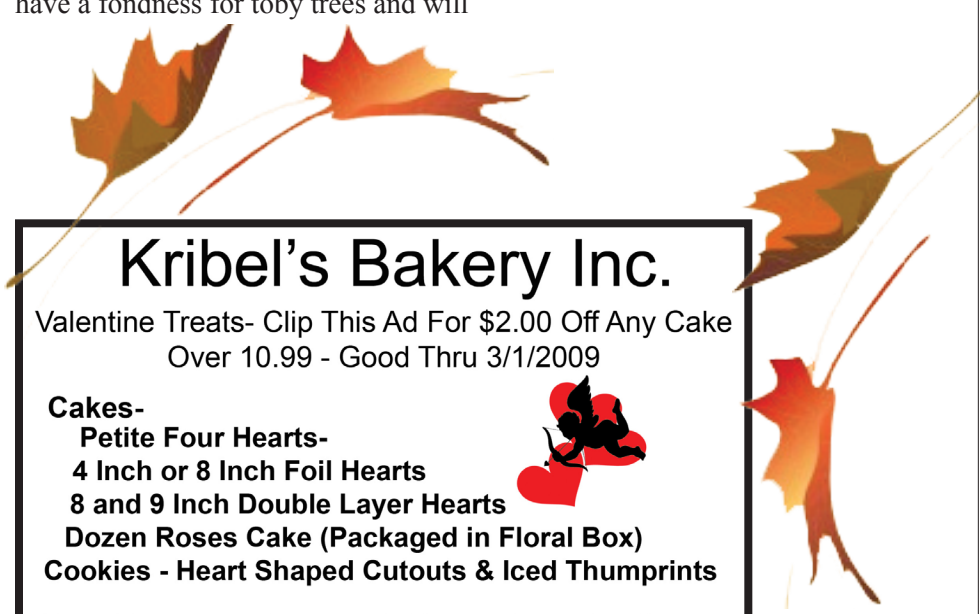
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From Senator Wayne Fontana

In late December, I was pleased to be named as the Minority Chairman of the Committee on Community, Economic and

Recreational Development and am looking forward to the opportunity this committee chairmanship presents.

I am hopeful that 2009 will be a year of progress for economic development in Brookline. Our neighborhood is truly on the cusp and with the appropriate attention can continue to thrive and develop. I am committed to working with you to maintain and

improve our business district and will be looking for every opportunity to talk to officials, developers and other parties about the possibilities that Brookline presents. There is great opportunity to work with individuals and companies that have a real interest in the community and I hope that people will continue to use my office to help identify state programs that can assist with costs, provide letters of support for grant and loan opportunities, and to assist in providing other resources. I look forward to the continued communication and cooperation surrounding the things that are important in our neighborhood.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the 42nd Senatorial District and the Brookline neighborhood. I hope that you will continue to utilize my office for assistance in any state-related issue. My office and I stand ready to help you and look forward to working together with you.

Senator Wayne D. Fontana
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www.senatorfontana.com

From Councilman Jim Motznik: *Start the street paving process now*

With snow on the ground the last thing people are probably thinking about is their street being paved, but now is the perfect time to start the process. This summer the City of Pittsburgh will be paving miles of streets all over the city. There are streets in District 4 that desperately need paved but without hearing the voices of the residents some may get missed; that is why we need your input.

If your street is in need of repair I

want to know about it. Call my office at 412-255-2131 and tell my staff the street which is in need of repaving. Be prepared to give my staff the terminals for that specific portion of the street (example – Woodbourne from Freedom to Oakridge). Once I have a list compiled I will pass those streets on to the Department of Public Works for paving evaluation.

I will do everything I can to make sure each of those streets are paved

during the 2009 paving season. Until your street is paved, please continue to call my office to report any potholes and I will be happy to send Public Works to repair those areas. If you have any questions about the street paving process or any other neighborhood concerns please contact my office.



From State Representative Chelsa Wagner



As a Pennsylvania state legislator, it is my privilege to provide all of my constituents with services to help them. My District Office, at which anyone is invited to drop in with their concerns or

questions, is located at 900 Brookline Boulevard. We are open all weekdays from 8:30am until 5pm and are always happy to assist you. Our staff is here to help you navigate the red tape in government; even if it is not a state matter,

we won't just hand you a phone number and tell you to call someone else. We'll work on your behalf to make government work for you.

You can stop by my office to have your license renewed, or to resolve other PennDot issues. For example, we recently helped a resident clear up a technical error on his car registration so that he could continue using his car to get to and from work. We also have driver's manuals available in the office for new drivers.

Seniors can utilize my staff to assist them in applying for a Property Tax and Rent Rebate. In 2008, we helped over 400 constituents with their

Property Tax and Rent Rebates, which gives seniors an average refund of \$500. Additionally, we helped almost 50 seniors with ACCESS applications last year.

In 2008, we also assisted 135 voters with their registrations or absentee ballot applications. My office provides a free notary service, which is available anytime our office is open.

Please feel free to visit my office at 900 Brookline Boulevard, call us at 412-343-2094, or email me at repwagner@pahouse.net with any questions or concerns you may have. We are happy to serve you.

Do You Remember?

Joanne Fantoni an SPDC board member offered this month's memory of stores that aren't here anymore.

"Having lived in Brookline since 1943, I am going to try to stretch my memory. Correct me if I'm wrong. Let's start with grocery stores—the pet peeve of most Brookliners because there are none on the boulevard."

- *Forbes - Corner of Brookline Blvd & Whited
- *Grumets - Next to JJ's.
- *Neusers - Creedmore & Brookline Blvd.
- *Max's Star Market - Currently S & L Glass
- *Demma's
- *Joe Palia's - Currently Violet Bouquet
- *Isalys
- *Melmans
- *Bards
- *A&P - Currently Chelsa Wagner's office.
- *Dattilos Fruit Market - Corner of Flatbush & Brookline Blvd.
- *Klases



Bryant's Hardware was a mainstay on Brookline Boulevard at the corner of Stebbins Street for 63 years.

- *Dattilos & Louie's Corner Market - Castlegate & Brookline Blvd.
- *SunnyFarm - Next to the post office.
- *Foodland/Thorofare/Hechts - Currently Pita Land

Plus there was the little store on Pioneer and a store at the corner of Capitol and Woodward.

Can you add to Joanne's list?



We want to hear from you. If you have questions about Brookline, maybe we can help you get answers. We welcome your comments. Send your questions or comments by email, phone or mail.

**Email: mnp.grabowski@verizon.net
Telephone: 412-343-2859
Mail: The Brookline c/o SPDC, PO Box 9606, Pittsburgh, PA 15226.**

Get The Brookline in COLOR! Send your email address to mnp.grabowski@verizon.net. Put "The Brookline" in the subject line.

Pick up The Brookline at a Boulevard merchant. Look for "The Brookline Available Here" sign in the window.

**South Pittsburgh Development Corporation
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READERS ASK

In response to Bob Beiler's update on the Brookline Boulevard revitalization, we received this inquiry from Brookline resident Kim Sabol.

"In the January newsletter, it refers to the revitalization of Brookline Bou-

levard and that it may never happen without a public outcry. What can we do??

Please tell us who to write or call to finally get this project done!!"

A very good question. Does anyone out there have some ideas on how we can get Brookline residents to push this project?



BROOKLINE REC CENTER

YOUTH PROGRAMS:

Boys & Girls Indoor Soccer
\$15.00 Fee

Kinder Sports

Free program of sports and crafts with Mickey and Milan.
11:00AM to Noon.
Age 6 and under

Girls Fast Pitch Softball

Sat. 2:00PM to 3:00 PM Free

Mr. Joe's Fitness Program

Come and receive personal in class training and nutritional from Joe Syzmanski. Ages 13 to 17

Boxing

Get ready for Golden Gloves.
Mon. Tues. Wed. 6:00PM to 9:00PM.
Ages 8 to 36. Subnovis, novis and open divisions are trained by Mike and Carlos.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

Joe's Fitness Club
Come and receive personal in class training and nutritional from Joe Syzmanski. Men & Women age 18 and over

Boxing

Get ready for Golden Gloves.
Mon. Tues. Wed. 6:00PM to 9:00PM.
Ages 8 to 36. Subnovis, novis and open divisions are trained by Mike and Carlos.

Body Sculpting and Weight Loss Program

Mon. and Thurs. 6:30PM to 7:30PM
\$30.00 Fee for 10 classes

Yoga

Tues. 6:15PM to 7:15PM
\$50 Fee for 6 week session or \$10 per class.

February 2009						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

THIS MONTH

February 9

Chamber of Commerce Meeting 6:00PM at Magistrate Charles McLaughlin's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

February 10

Brookline Block Watch Meeting 7:00PM at Magistrate Charles McLaughlin's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

February 17

South Pittsburgh Development Corp Meeting 7:00PM Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church 1036 Brookline Boulevard

February 23

Brookline Area Community Council "Education in Pittsburgh Public Schools" at 7:30 PM St Mark's Church Corner of Brookline Blvd. and Glenarm Ave.

PUT YOUR AD HERE!!!

We currently have over 900 readers, and that number doesn't include those who read **The Brookline at the website.** Contact Jessica Luffy at jess@jessicaluffy.com or call 412-343-8035 for more information.

YEAR:

SPDC Members	\$280
Non Members	\$400

SIX MONTHS:

SPDC Members	\$160
Non Members	\$225

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Annual SPDC membership dues are \$5.00. Do the math!