

Letter from the Editor

Signs of Christmas are everywhere. They've been everywhere since about mid-October. It's little wonder that by December a chorus of "Deck the Halls" sends us into "carol rage." "Deck this, pal!" "Buddy, you know what you can do with those boughs of holly don't you!"

All we want is some peace and quiet, and Christmas isn't here yet! Then December 25 arrives, and the day just flies by. In the evening while we watch the twinkling Christmas tree lights, we wonder if the two-month frenzy was really worth it. Lost in the shopping and preparation is the meaning of the holiday - the reason for the season.

We are suggesting a different approach this holiday season. Begin by reading **Jan Beiler's** story "Project Blue Light" on page three and buy a blue bulb. Share some of the cookies you baked with **Meals on Wheels**. Buy a gift card for the food pantry. Visit the Boulevard for gifts. If you haven't checked out the gift possibilities on the Boulevard, you are missing out on some great ideas.

Make this the year that you don't do it all, all by yourself. Let one or two or three of the Boulevard merchants bring a dish to your holiday party. Treat yourself and join the adult book discussion at the library. Go out for dinner or bring it home with you. There are many meal choices available on the Boulevard.

This year we plan to enjoy every minute of Christmas day. In the evening, we will sit and admire the decorated Christmas tree. Our reluctance to move will be attributed to the brandy in the eggnog and not exhaustion. Whatever you celebrate, we wish you a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, and Seasons Greetings!



ALTERATIONS by Rina

712 Brookline Blvd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15226
412-344-1113

Hours: Tues. Wed. & Fri. 10:00AM-6:00PM
Thurs. 12:00PM-7:00PM
Sat. 10:00AM-2:00PM
Sun. & Mon. Closed

How does a nice girl from Australia end up in Brookline? Marriage. Twenty-seven years ago while visiting cousins and attending a fair at **St. Pamphilus**, **Rina Constantine** met her future husband. That meeting was definitely a win for Brookline.

Rina attributes her sewing skills to her paternal grandmother. While she raised her children, Rina took on sewing projects at home. Then her husband came home one day with an announcement. There was an empty storefront on the Boulevard. Just the place for Rina.

The best was yet to come. The storefront was owned by **Lynn and Sal Bondi (Sal's Barber Shop)**. Lynn and Rina were enjoying breakfast the morning I stopped. A meal they share a couple times a week after the spa. Rina has just finished her busy fall wedding season. When we stopped in September, Rina was surrounded by wedding gowns.

Lynn is enthusiastic in her support of Rina. It's easy to see why. Sewing is Rina's passion and her work reflects her extraordinary skill. As we talked, Lynn retrieved a christening gown from the rack. Rina is making the gown for her friend **Rachael Brandi's** baby.

Rachel decorated the shop for Rina, and it reflects Rina's ebullient personality. Rina greets every customer with a smile and a cheery greeting. Then it's down to business. What do you need? Mending? Alterations? A hand-made First Communion dress? Rina does it all. She particularly enjoys making communion dresses.

If you've never touched a needle and thread, or if you are just too busy to mend, have a chat with Rina. She can do anything from sewing on a button to mending curtains. She can make your daughter's communion dress or alter her wedding gown. Stop in and say hi to Rina.

-Pamela Grabowski



HERE KITTY, KITTY



Where are all the cats? Don't worry, we know cats. We ARE NOT going to ask you to bring your furry friend to the Boulevard for pictures. We will come to you. If you have a "run under the bed when the doorbell rings" cat, you can send us a picture. See our contact information below.



On page eight of November's issue, Chuck Davoren should be **Bill (Butch) Davoren**. We apologize for the error.

**Remember
The Brookline**

Please consider adding **The Brookline** to your gift list this year. No contribution amount is too small. Plus, it's tax deductible! Merchants please consider placing an ad in **The Brookline**. Even a one month ad will help.

Please help those who still need paper. Send your contribution to **The Brookline** at the address below.



412-531-7447

907 Brookline Boulevard

Garcia's Cut Off

\$5.00 Off

Any Service with Heather

Hair Salon

Family Hair Care

50 WAYS TO SURVIVE WINTER



We have received some fantastic verses and two complete songs! Where's yours?

We are planning a get together on a Brookline Boulevard street corner to sing your creative entries during the first week of February. We need a reason to get together between Christmas and Spring Fling. A rousing rendition of "50 Ways to Survive Winter" sung by the Brookline Residents' Chorus could be the perfect occasion. We will print the songs in our January issue. Deadline is December 15.

The Brookline Connection

Have you checked out the **Brookline Connection** website. **The Brookline Knights** page "is classic Brookline history in the making" according to **Clint Burton** who runs the site. "The Knights' page has been rocking! I reached 275 hits in a day, then 382, then 561! Their season is running down and the 13-Under team will most likely win the championship."

Clint has summaries of the games as well as scores, statistics and plenty of photographs. Click and browse at www.brooklineconnection.com.

CONTACT THE BROOKLINE

The Brookline Staff
Pamela Grabowski Editor
Carol Sossaman Writer
Stephen Rozwood Graphic Design
Jan Beiler Proofreader
Amy Fisher Proofreader
Deb Park Proofreader
HK Photo Studio Photographer
Rosemarie Traficante Delivery
South Hills Printing - *The Brookline's official printer*

We want to hear from you. Send your questions or comments by email, phone or mail. January issue's deadline is December 10. February issue's deadline is January 10.

ADVERTISING RATES

Contact Pamela Grabowski at mnp.grabowski@verizon.net or call 412-343-2859 for more information. We now have over 1,150 readers.

Year
 SPDC Members \$280
 Non Members \$400
Six Months
 SPDC Members \$160
 Non Members \$225
Three Months
 SPDC Members \$100
 Non Members \$125
 Annual SPDC membership dues are \$10.00. Do the math!



ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIAL ONE MONTH RATE!

The Brookline by email is in FULL COLOR!
 The Brookline is available by mail. One year subscription \$25.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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

Funding for newsletter by Pennsylvania Department of Community & Economic Development

Copyright 2008, South Pittsburgh Development Corporation - All Rights Reserved

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



SENATOR WAYNE FONTANA

In May 2007, the Pittsburgh Penguins announced that they would be staying in Pittsburgh for the next 30 years, thanks to a deal that provided a new \$290 million arena. While plans for the Consol Energy Center continue towards completion, a key part of the deal recently was jeopardized.

While the conditions of the Rivers' license included the commitment to arena funding, the devil was in the details. The Rivers Casino and the Sports & Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County (SEA) couldn't agree on the terms of payment. I, along with my colleagues in the Senate, called on the PA Gaming Control Board to act to address this issue. That action resulted in the Bureau of Investigations & Enforcement monitoring the negotiations.

I also acted to include language in the table games legislation that would have prohibited Rivers Casino from applying for a table games certificate if an agreement was not reached, but also makes provisions for future penalties if the agreement between the SEA & the Rivers is ever breached. This proactive legislation protects our region's investment in the Penguins and ensures that the Commonwealth's taxpayers aren't on the hook for the payments that the Rivers assumed when they got the gaming license for the City.

Under the agreement, the Rivers will pay \$7.5 million annually, making two payments for 29 of the next 30 years; one due October 1 and the second due April 1.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE CHELSA WAGNER

Last spring in this column, I told you the exciting news that I had secured funding to provide a coalition of neighborhood groups from Brookline and Beechview with a shared staff person to advance and coordinate their initiatives. In recent days, this coalition announced the hiring of **Carrie Nardini**, and she is expected to begin work before the end of the year.

Ms. Nardini was chosen by a committee of community members from a wealth of qualified applicants for this position. A Brookline resident, she holds an M.B.A. from the Katz School of Business at the University of Pittsburgh and is an experienced entrepreneur and development professional.

While the participating groups have always made great contributions to their communities, access to a full-time staff person will help them to achieve even more and to work toward a comprehensive vision for the future of the southern neighborhoods. The groups are: **Brookline Area Community Council, Brookline Chamber of Commerce, South Pittsburgh Development Corporation, and Community Leaders United for Beechview.**

In preparation for the arrival of their first employee, my office sponsored Board members of each organization to complete the South Pittsburgh Workshop for Neighborhood Leaders, a rigorous series of seminars developed and conducted by the Community Technical Assistance Center.

Strong community organizations embracing a spirit of cooperation will make for exciting developments and bright futures for Brookline and our neighbors. I am happy to have been able to assist these groups in taking this significant step, and will continue to work closely with them as they continue their important work.

My Constituent Service offices will close for the holidays at 5:00PM. December 23 and will not reopen until January 4. While the deadline for submitting Property Tax/Rent Rebate application remains December 31, my offices will not be available to assist with or submit these applications after December 23. Please feel free to stop in for assistance before this date.



PROJECT BLUE LIGHT



Project Blue Light is a nationwide recognition of those Police Officers who have died in the line of duty. It began in 1988 in Philadelphia when Dolly Craig wrote a letter to COPS (Concerns of Police Survivors) stating that she would be honoring her late son-in-law, Philadelphia Police Officer Danny Gleason, during the Christmas season by placing a blue light in her window. The tradition has spread nationwide, and has become a source of encouragement to the dedicated men and women who patrol our streets every day. The color blue is symbolic of peace and has long been the color associated with Law Enforcement in the United States.

Until now, burning a blue light in ones window was only displayed during the month of December. On April 4, 2009, three City of Pittsburgh Police Officers were killed in the line of duty. **Officer Stephen Mayhle, Officer Paul Sciuolo and Officer Eric Kelly** were responding to a domestic disturbance between a mother and son in the Stanton Heights section of the city. The suspect, who was

armed with several guns and protected by a bullet resistant vest, killed the three officers and then engaged responding patrol and SWAT officers in a gun battle, in which over 100 rounds were fired. After a four-hour standoff in which he was shot several times in the legs and vest, he surrendered. Richard Poplawski was arrested and charged with three counts of aggravated homicide and assault. His trial is pending.

During the evening of the tragedy, our next-door neighbor, a City of Pittsburgh Detective, knocked on our door and asked if we would mind replacing our front porch light with a blue light in memory of the three fallen officers. Since that day, the blue light has burned night and day from most of the houses on our street. [See photo on page 8.] They will continue to shine as a lasting memory of all law enforcement personnel who have died in the line of duty.

-Jan Beiler

JOANNE'S CORNER

Things that aren't here anymore - Part Eleven

How about an assortment of trivia from the past. I'm told that **Joe Basilone** (Dry Cleaners) and **Margie Brown** were the best jitterbug dancers in Brookline in the 40s. I believe they eventually married.

Also, I'm told that Monday night at the **Boulevard Theater** was family night. Only fifty cents per family.

The bake shop before **Party Cake** was owned by the **Herold** family whose son and his bride Sylvia were fatally injured in a car accident on their way to their honeymoon in Erie.

Speaking of tragedies, do you remember December 1953 when three Brookline boys were killed at this end of the Liberty Tunnels in a traffic accident? They were **Gene Baird**, **Tippy Scharding** and **Tommy Coyne**. Only **Fish Meade** survived. Sad day for Brookline. Can you believe that was 56 years ago!

On a lighter note, don't you miss having a local hardware since the one on McNeilly Road closed? Remember **Jays**, **Nolans**, and **Bryants**? Not to mention the lack of a grocery store. Remember **Joe Pulia's** where **Violet Bouquet** is now? There used to be a line outside on Sundays. Life in the day!

Question of the month: What was the make and year of the car in front of Reisacker's Market pictured in my October column?

-Joanne Fantoni

Last Month's Memory Teaser

Question: Does anyone know the name of the first Brookline newspaper from the 30s & 40s before becoming the **Brookline Journal**?

Answer: Brookline Shopper

HALLOWEEN PARADE WINNERS

Scariest: **Kingston Cox** (Zombie Troy Polamalu)

Funny: **Gregory Steedley**

Original: **Justin Carder**

Group: **Andrew, Lex & Gus Ferris** (Lobster & fishermen)

READER'S RESPONSE

First of all, I really enjoying reading about the past, present, and future of our community. I have lived in Brookline for 41 years, making me a transplant to this neighborhood, by way of marriage.

My late husband, Tom, worked at J&L steel mill and his friendship with **Michael Zang** brought us to 956 Brookline Blvd. and the chance to be the downstairs neighbor of Mike and his wife. We were fortunate to have **Angelo and Mary Capuano** as our landlords, and the rest is history. We lived behind **Red Capuano's** shoe shop and **Raffaele's Barber Shop**. The **BYM Club** was the most happening place in the City.

Upon deciding to choose a homestead, we never looked beyond Brookline. We lived, raised our children and became a part of our community, building friendships to last a lifetime.

I was reflecting on the advantages of Brookline, while enjoying a wonderful spa morning at **Salon Canova**, the day before our son's wedding. Janet and Thorunn agreed to open (on their day off), to provide myself, several good friends, daughter and future daughter-in-law, with manicures/pedicures and a relaxing party atmosphere.

It was at that time that I thought about the "in your backyard" services available. Trousers were cleaned at **Chuong's Cleaners**. **Rina's Alterations** took care of alterations and pressing of bridal, two bridesmaids and my dress. **Party Cake** provided the fabulous array of desserts which I took to the rehearsal dinner. **Christina's Hair Salon** fit the bride-to-be in for an early morning wash and blow dry. A good friend came from out of town in need of a haircut. I sent him to **Sal's**. His need of breakfast led him a block away to [**Tisha's**] **Sunny Farms**. Last minute necessities - **CVS**. A night out with the parents of the bride (flew in from Florida) was no problem. **The Getaway** is always there for good food and a friendly staff. A few drinks with longtime Brookline friends at **J.R.'s** afterwards - what more could you ask for? And of course, an extra bottle of wine and a few cases of beer are right nearby. And last, but not least - a beautiful wedding at the **Church of the Resurrection**, complete the Boulevard of dreams.

I hope that everyone who resides here realizes how lucky we are to have this great neighborhood.

-Judy Kuhn

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERT IN BROOKLINE!

Amy Fisher, REALTOR®
Accredited Buyer Representative (ABR)
Quality Service Certified (QSC)

Serving Brookline & All South Hills Communities.
Ask me about other communities.

412-344-0500 x212 or 412-889-7510

 **REAL ESTATE SERVICES**

amy.fisher@pittsburghmoves.com
www.pittsburghmoves.com/amy.fisher

Galleria Office
1539 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228



Goldwell Banker® is a registered trademark licensed to Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. An Equal Opportunity Company. Equal Housing Opportunity. Owned And Operated by NFI LLC.

Kribel's Bakery Inc.

Family Owned AND
OPERATED FOR OVER
60 YEARS



Brookline 412-531-1942 Pleasant Hills 412-653-1717 Great Southern 412-220-8548



Brookline Students Recognized

Clara Ferreira was a winner in **Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's** Six Burgh contest. Her rightfully proud aunt, **Carla Ferreira**, shared the news with us. Check out Clara's winning essay at <http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/sixburgh/>.

Marilyn Walsh, Director of Development at **Seton-La Salle High School** shared the following student achievements with us:

- Sophomore **Katie O'Toole** was recently commissioned as a full-time Catechist at **Resurrection Parish**. She will be teaching every Sunday morning and is also involved with Vacation Bible School and Fun Flair at **Resurrection**.
- Senior **Victoria Lewis** was selected as President of the Rebels for Life Club for the 2009-2010 school year.
- Senior **Stefany Mandarin**, the student council president this year, received a \$250 award from St. Francis University in a year-long contest as the junior with the most community service.
- **William Nuss** was named an AP Scholar by the Advanced Placement Program by earning grades of 3.0 or higher on three or more AP exams this past spring. He also received a Certificate of Merit from The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency for earning one of the top 5,000 highest scores on the SAT and ACT in all of Pennsylvania. He now attends Penn State University.

FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Hunting season is upon us, and it is time to set your target for the Medicare prescription drug plan that's best for you.

Newly eligible Medicare beneficiaries, and current beneficiaries who are considering changes to their Medicare Part D plan, should mark their calendars now. The "open season" runs from November 15 to December 31.

The Medicare Part D prescription drug program is available to all Medicare beneficiaries to help with the costs of medications. Joining a Medicare prescription drug plan is voluntary, and participants pay an additional monthly premium for the coverage.

While all Medicare beneficiaries can participate in the prescription drug program, some people with limited income and resources also are eligible for "extra help" to pay for monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments. The extra help is worth an average of \$3,900 per year.

To figure out whether you are eligible for the extra help, Social Security needs to know your income and the value of any savings, investments, and real estate (other than the home you live in). To qualify, you must be receiving Medicare and also have:

- Income limited to \$16,245 for an individual or \$21,855 for a married couple living together. Even if your annual income is higher, you still may be able to get some help with monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription co-payments. Some examples where your income may be higher include if you or your spouse:
 - Support other family members who live with you;
 - Have earnings from work, or
 - Live in Alaska or Hawaii, and
- Resources limited to \$12,510 for an individual or \$25,010 for a married couple living together. Resources include such things as bank accounts, stocks, and bonds. We do not count your house or car as resources.

You can complete an easy-to-use online application for the extra help at www.socialsecurity.gov. Click on Medicare on the top right side of the page. Then click on "Apply for help with Medicare prescription drug plan costs." To apply for the extra help by phone or to have an application mailed to you, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) and ask for the *Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs* (SSA-1020). Or go to your nearest Social Security office.

If you would like more information about the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program itself, visit www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY 1-877-486-2048). So this open season, hunt for something that could put \$3,900 in your pocket - bag the best Medicare prescription drug plan for you and see if you qualify for the *extra help* through Social Security.

- LeeAnn Stuever
Social Security Manager, Pittsburgh

There Is Never Any Reason To Settle For Inferior Funeral Service

Complete Traditional Funeral Packages
Including Casket Starting At \$3,995.00

DeBOR
FUNERAL HOME, INC.

*The Finest In Funeral
Service And Facilities*

NOW WITH EXPANDED PARKING

1065 Brookline Boulevard

412-561-0380

www.deborfuneralhome.com

**OVER 100
YEARS
QUALITY
SERVICE**

Plumbing
Heating
Air Conditioning
Water Heaters
Sewer & Drain Cleaning
Gas, Water & Sewer Lines
Emergency Service Available
Residential & Commercial
Fully Insured
Free Estimates



BROOKLINE PLUMBER

412-531-0183

613 Brookline Blvd., Pittsburgh
Registered Master Plumber # HP 1611

DECEMBER AT THE LIBRARY

For Kids and Teens:

Storytimes

Baby/Toddler: Stories, songs, rhymes and fingerplays. For children birth through age 3 with a caregiver. Thursdays, December 3 - 17 at 11:00 AM

Preschool: Stories, songs, games and the occasional craft. For children ages 3-5 with parent or caregiver. Thursdays, December 3 - 17 at 12:30 PM

Craft Club

'Tis the season for fun at your Library. Get ready for gift giving by designing your own recycled paper cards and tags. Grades K-8. Younger children should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Monday, December 14 at 4:00 PM

After School Movie Fun

Nothing to do after school? Come to the Library and watch a movie. We will provide the popcorn, you bring a drink. Grades K-8. Thursdays, December 10 & 17 at 3:30 PM.

Get Your Game On

Come try your skills at the PS2. Grades 6-12. Registration is not required. Bring your friends! Wednesday, December 9 at 3:30 PM

Teen Book Club

Monday, December 28 at 4:00 PM. Grades 6-12 are welcome.



For Adults:

Explore new ideas and perspectives through fiction and non-fiction. New members are always welcome. Adults 18 and older.

Monday Evening Book Discussion – Monday, December 21 at 6:00 PM – Reading *Dewey: The Small-Town Library Cat Who Touched the World* by Vicki Myron.

Wednesday Afternoon Book Discussion – Wednesday, December 16 at 1:00 PM – Reading *This Year it Will be Different* by Maeve Binchy.

Call for Volunteers

- **FOREVER HOME BEAGLE RESCUE** call 412-304-4034 or BeagleHQ@msn.com Foster homes needed as well as donations of dog food, blankets and bath towels.
- **MEALS ON WHEELS** call 412-343-8144
- **SENIOR VAN TRANSPORTATION** call 412-344-4222
- **BROOKLINE CHRISTIAN FOOD PANTRY** call Pat Erny 412-344-8451
- **CLOTHES CLOSET MINISTRY** call **Brookline United Presbyterian Church** at 412-531-0590

Are you unable to volunteer your time right now? You can still help many of these organizations.

Meals on Wheels accepts cash and donations of cookies, desserts and bread.

Will your holiday dinner table feature an almost embarrassing array of good food? Add a grocery store gift card to your shopping cart for the **Brookline Christian Food Pantry**. Send it to the **Brookline Christian Food Pantry**

c/o Pat Erny

2918 Pioneer Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15226 –2038



“Unless we make Christmas an occasion to share our blessings, all the snow in Alaska won’t make it ‘white.’” -**Bing Crosby**, singer known for his rendition of the Christmas carol “White Christmas.”

Talk to TIM
Your Brookline Realtor

Tim Reitmeyer

412-833-3600

412-343-5372

treitmeyer@howardhanna.com



South Hills and City of Pittsburgh specialist



Michael Whitlinger is ready for the holiday. Photo by **HK Photo Studio**



Rina's christening creation. Photo by **HK Photo Studio**

Imagine Brookline aglow in blue!

This holiday replace your porch light with a blue light bulb. Add to the Brookline blue glow this season as a tribute to the officers we lost in 2009, and a thank you to the officers living in our community who willingly serve everyday. Photo by **Bob Beiler**



FRANCO HARRIS VISITS BROOKLINE



Former Steelers' running back, Hall of Fame and Super Bowl IX MVP, Franco Harris (Pictured above with **Corey Novelli** at left and **Ivyann Castillo** at right in front of **No Name Coffee Shop**.) visited Brookline during the Halloween weekend for a Get Out To Vote rally for his son Franco "Dok" Harris who was running for Pittsburgh mayor.

Though the former running back was in Brookline for political reasons, Harris still offered his time to shake hands, give a smile, take pictures and sign autographs with the local residents.

According to Harris, it has been a great experience and he enjoys meeting Pittsburgh residents, even though he was "eating too much" with the constant food that was given to him during his visits.

- Ivyann N. Castillo



This is the perfect time to stop at **HK Photo Studio**. Set up an appointment to have a family photo taken for the holidays. Check out the new artists' market. Did you know that in addition to Christmas cards, Harmonie can make your birth announcements, invitations and wedding thank you cards?

Photo by **HK Photo Studio**

