

## Letter from the Editor



Our wedding series interviews are on hiatus this month to introduce you to **Tong Garden**. Perfectly appropriate since in addition to Valentine's Day, February 14 marks the beginning of Chinese New Year. Our wedding series will return in March.

If you are reading this before Groundhog's Day, we hope to see you at the **Brookline Pub** for our 50 Ways to Survive Winter Sing-a-long. Never was there a year when this was more appropriate. We are so sick of the snow and the cold. The first two weeks of January dragged by in slow motion. Just hang on! It's almost over. A month and a half to go. Remember St. Patrick's Day is our all-clear signal. We have 52 minutes more daylight than we did in December! Of course you know we have been watching that statistic since the first day of winter.

Keep your eyes open for strange cars on the street that haven't moved for a month or so. This always seems to be the time of the year for abandoned cars. People must think we won't notice the abandoned cars in the snow. We have a couple in our neighborhood. We will be calling 311. Might as well start the redd up now.

As you read the seed catalogs and plan the vegetable garden that will nourish you and your family, remember you have to nourish the community where you plant your garden. Take advantage of a good weather day (less snow and temperatures in the 30s) and take a walk on the Boulevard. Paczki will be available until February 16. Browse Las Palmas. Cannon Coffee is scheduled to open this month. The merchants need you in the winter when business slows down.

# TONG GARDEN



956 Brookline Blvd  
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Lunch \$8.00  
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Hours: Mon - Fri. 11:00AM-9:30PM  
Sat. Noon - 9:30PM  
Sun. 4:00PM - 9:00PM



February 14 is not only Valentine's Day, but this year it's the start of the Chinese New Year. Why not combine the celebrations? Take your sweetheart to enjoy Chinese cuisine at Brookline's **Tong Garden**. **Yue Zhen Qin** and his wife **Jian You** have taken over the business from Yue's father **Kwong Tong Chun**. Kwong continues to cook, although Yue says he has to begin learning that phase of the business.

There is an extensive menu of well-known favorites like Moo Goo Gai Pan, Kung Pao Shrimp, Szechuan Beef, and General Tso's Chicken. General Tso's is the local favorite according to Yue, and it's also available with shrimp or beef. If you want something a little different, try the Cha Shiu Tofu & Vegetables, roasted pork with fried tofu, mushrooms and vegetables, or Ma Po Tofu, fresh tofu combined with mushroom, peas and carrots in a spicy sauce. From soup to fortune cookie, you are bound to find something you like at **Tong Garden**.

Kwong started the restaurant 12 years ago, and in addition to cooking, you might see him in front of the restaurant playing with his grandson **Haojie Qin**. Like many local businesses, **Tong Garden** is family owned and operated. If the weather this winter makes going out for dinner a chore, **Tong Garden** has free delivery for a minimum dinner order of \$10.00. Or, order take out on your way home from work.

Celebrate Valentine's Day and welcome the Year of the Tiger, Geng Yin, at **Tong Garden**.



**Kwong Tong Chun**, left and his son **Yue Zhen Qin** welcome you to **Tong Garden**.

*-Pamela Grabowski Photos by HK Photo Studio*



## Counting Down The Brookline Print Edition



Five months left for the **The Brookline** in print format. We had one reader call us with a lead on funding. We are investigating that. If you have any ideas on how to fund the newsletter, send them, email them or call us with your ideas.

We welcome your contributions as well. No 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.

### LOOKING FOR FLAGS

A reader has suggested an article on the many residents of Brookline who fly the flag daily. We are looking for pictures, names and stories. Why do you fly the flag? We want to feature these stories along with flag etiquette in the May, June and July issues, but we need to hear from you. Please contact us.



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### THE BROOKLINE BACK ISSUES

Clint Burton has agreed to archive past issues of **The Brookline** at [www.brooklineconnection.com](http://www.brooklineconnection.com). If there's an article you want to revisit or one you want to pass on to a friend, you will soon be able to find them at Clint's site.

Bookmark **The Brookline Connection** along with our site to keep up with local events and local team scores. Check out the photographs of Brookline then and now.

Check out **The Brookline Connection** [www.brooklineconnection.com](http://www.brooklineconnection.com).

#### CONTACT THE BROOKLINE

##### The Brookline Staff

*Pamela Grabowski* Editor

*Stephen Rozwood* Graphic Design

*Jan Beiler* Proofreader/Advertising

*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. March issue's deadline is February 10. April issue's deadline is March 10.

##### ADVERTISING RATES

Contact Pamela Grabowski at [mnp.grabowski@verizon.net](mailto:mnp.grabowski@verizon.net) or call 412-343-2859 for more information. We now have over 1,200 readers.

##### Year

SPDC Members \$280

Non Members \$400

##### Six Months

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##### Three Months

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Annual SPDC membership dues are \$10.00. Do the math!



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##### CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: [thebrookline@brookline-pgh.org](mailto:thebrookline@brookline-pgh.org) or

[mnp.grabowski@verizon.net](mailto: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

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



### SENATOR WAYNE FONTANA

On January 7<sup>th</sup>, Governor Rendell signed Senate Bill 711 in law, enacting gaming reforms and expanding gaming to include table games as Act 1 of 2010. While there are many negatives that can be said about this effort, I believe that the positive greatly outweighs the negative. The expansion will create over 10,000 jobs, boost the economy, and generate badly-needed revenues for the Commonwealth.

The expansion will help the state's casino industry remain competitive, help inject the revenues necessary to fill the state's budget gap, and fund struggling area programs such as our libraries. Under the final agreement, 100% of the City's local share will be earmarked for distribution to the Carnegie Library, provided that the library system is maintained. These funds are in addition to the money provided by the City this fall and are separate from RAD funds. The new law gives the library until June 2011 to work through the stakeholder process it has begun and to allow time for the RAD Board to complete its audit so that final decisions may be made. If the commitment made by the Carnegie is not met, then the revenues would be used to fund the City's pension plans.

I was proud to be one of six members on the Conference Committee that hammered out a final agreement after months of negotiations between the two chambers. I am even more proud that we were able to work cooperatively with our colleagues to secure the local funding for our libraries and look forward to our continued cooperation on issues that are important to our region.



### STATE REPRESENTATIVE CHELSA WAGNER

While we have already endured several months of another long Pittsburgh winter, we unfortunately know that there is still more to come. We also know that many families are struggling to heat their homes and to make ends meet under the weight of increased energy bills.

However, there is some good news for these families. Pennsylvania's Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, has increased cash grant amounts by \$100 and extended the program through April 2.

LIHEAP helps income-eligible households pay for heat during the winter months and is administered by the state Department of Public Welfare. A family of four with an annual income of up to \$33,075 can qualify for this assistance.

LIHEAP's closing date has been extended from March 15 to April 2. In addition, cash grants for this winter are expected to average \$326.

Expansion of this program will ensure that Pennsylvania families can more easily heat their homes this winter, bringing much relief to the many families who continue to struggle to make ends meet.

Please call or stop by my Constituent Service offices at 900 Brookline Blvd. (412-343-2094) to learn more about LIHEAP. Applications are also available through the Allegheny County Department of Human Services by calling 1-800-851-3838.

I also wanted to remind homeowners that the City of Pittsburgh is accepting applications for grants for weatherization projects such as window replacements, crack patching, weather stripping and insulating pipes and water tanks. Due to the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 10 times the amount of weatherization funding is available in Pennsylvania as in past years. Weatherization can significantly lower utility bills, reduce the use of fuels that cause pollution, and create jobs and investment in our communities. Applicants can earn up to twice the federal poverty level: \$21,660 for an individual or \$44,100 for a family of four.

For more information, or to apply, call (412) 227-5700 ext. 2102.

Left: Snowy Brookline courtesy of **Jessica Luffy**.  
Below: **Mel Abboud** of **South Hills Printing**. Photo by **HK Photo Studio**



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## JOANNE'S CORNER

*Things that aren't here anymore - Part Twelve*

These near zero and snowy days bring me back to my childhood winters (1940s and 50s) and how rough they really were, but we didn't know it then. The streets in Brookline (known then as the suburbs) were rarely plowed.

My father, Jim DeBasi (pictured below) operated a grader from the City of Pittsburgh. It was a huge machine with a plow in the front in winter. I remember the big snow of 1950. He was not home for a week. He would grab a few hours sleep at the division headquarters on Water Street (now Ft. Duquesne Blvd.). The snow was so deep we dug tunnels and would safely sled ride (not a car on the road).

There wasn't any rock salt so we used cinders and ashes from the coal furnaces. Another winter necessity was tire chains. They were difficult to put on, but they were the only way you could drive the residential streets. When a chain would break, you can imagine the clanging noise it would make. I can remember leaving the car on the Boulevard and walking home many times.

Schools were closed for a week. All the stores and markets on the boulevard kept us in food and supplies. The only thing was you had to walk to the boulevard to get them.

I think it is people who remember those days who flood the stores and stock up on milk and bread when a threat of snow is in the forecast.

**Question of the Month:** Do you remember what we called snow boots back then?

*-Joanne Fantoni*



### Last Month's Memory Teaser

**Question:** Does anyone remember the cowboy who used to direct traffic at Capital & West Liberty?

**Answer:** Earl the Cowboy

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## Readers' Response

What a nice article on Rina. So often people ask me where to go to have alterations done, and I have no idea but now I know...thanks so much for the insight.

I am from the Whitehall area but since I went to school in Brookline (**Elizabeth Seton High School**) I like reading about a lot of the places I visited for many years while in school and afterwards keeping friends in Brookline.

Your Newspaper is a special treat to me and I enjoy [it] to no end.

Thank you to all who help put it together.

*Terry Schilling Mueller Class of 1957 ESHS*

**Joanne Fantoni:** January Question - does anyone remember Cowboy?

His name was Earl but everyone called him Cowboy. I believe his last name was **Ebersole** and he lived with his parents on Dunster. He had more than one costume, but the one he wore most often was a broad brim western hat, wrangler shirt, and high laced boots. I can also remember him in an Indian chief costume with eagle feather head-dress. In the 40s when there was a parade on the Boulevard he always marched in it near the head of the column. He directed traffic often at the intersection of the Boulevard and Pioneer, and also at Moore Field on special occasions. How he worked that out with the police I'll never know - he was good at it. He was a very nice guy to talk with. It was part of the unique drama of growing up in Brookline to have our own resident character on the scene, appearing in costume every day. Very few neighborhoods can brag about having someone special like the Cowboy.

I'm glad Joanne brought up the subject. I have always lamented I do not have a photo of Cowboy. I've never seen one, and I wonder if anyone else has one? I'm not exactly sure about his last name, but perhaps people who knew him better than I did will respond to Joanne. In my travels around Pittsburgh and around the USA, I find people are incredulous when they hear of a resident who dressed in costume all the time.

*Don Sayenga, Tucson, Arizona*

## FROM THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

**Michael J. Astrue**, Commissioner of Social Security, and **Chubby Checker**, Grammy Award winner and rock and roll legend, today launched a new campaign to inform millions of Americans about a new “twist” in the law that makes it easier to qualify for *extra help* with Medicare prescription drug costs. The *extra help* program currently provides assistance to more than nine million senior and disabled Americans -- saving them an average of almost \$4,000 a year on their Medicare prescription drug plan costs. To apply for *extra help*, there is an easy-to-use online application available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

“The changes in the Medicare law that take effect this month will allow hundreds of thousands of Americans who are struggling to pay their prescription drug costs to get *extra help* during these tough economic times,” said **Commissioner Astrue**. “I am thrilled that **Chubby Checker** has volunteered to help us spread this important message through a new television, radio, and Internet spot as well as pamphlets and posters.”

“Listen up, America! For 50 years, people of all ages and backgrounds have danced the Twist,” **Chubby Checker** said. “Now it’s important everyone learn about this new twist in the law. Check it out at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).”

To qualify for *extra help*, people must meet certain resource and income limits. The new Medicare law eases those requirements in two ways. First, it eliminates the cash value of life insurance from counting as a resource. Second, it eliminates the assistance people receive from others to pay for household expenses, such as food, rent, mortgage or utilities, from counting as income. There also is another important “twist” in the law. The application for *extra help* can now start the application process for Medicare Savings Programs -- state programs that provide help with other Medicare costs. These programs help pay Medicare Part B (medical insurance) premiums. For some people, the Medicare Savings Programs also pay Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) premiums, if any, and Part A and B deductibles and co-payments.

To learn more about the *extra help* program and to view the new TV spot featuring **Chubby Checker**, go to [www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/extrahelp).



### CITY COUNCILWOMAN NATALIA RUDIAK

This winter has been a harsh experience for Pittsburghers as snow, sleet, ice, and sub-freezing temperatures have wrangled our roadways and closed our schools. The city’s Department of Public Works has been out almost non-stop since the snow began to fall a few weeks ago and their hard work has helped to ease the inconvenience of our excessive snow fall.

My office has also been on alert, fielding your calls and complaints and working to make sure that District 4 is getting attention. We have been in almost constant contact with the Department of Public Works and the men and women who work at the City’s 311 office to make sure all of your issues are being addressed. If you are having any problems getting your street plowed or salted, please do not hesitate to call my office at (412) 255-2131 and we will be able to assist you.

When the snow does start falling, it’s important to know how the City prepares for and responds to your plowing and salting needs. In the first 24 hours after a “snow emergency” begins, the City sends out its plow trucks to clear the roads, starting with major thoroughfares. After that, Public Works begins responding to resident complaints for specific streets, sidewalks on public property, and intersections. Finally, once the snow has melted, Public Works sends out paving crews to repair the sizeable potholes that develop from the freezing and thawing in the roadways.

As neighbors, we also have the responsibility to care for each other. City residents and business owners are responsible for clearing paved sidewalks on their property within 24 hours after snow fall, regardless of whether they are a tenant or property owner.

If you are having problems getting your streets plowed or salted, please do not hesitate to call my office at (412) 255-2131 and let us assist you in getting the attention that your house, street, or block deserves!



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## FEBRUARY IS LIBRARY LOVER'S MONTH!



### For Kids and Teens:

#### Storytimes

Baby/Toddler: Stories, songs, rhymes and fingerplays. For children birth through age 3 with a parent or caregiver. Thursdays, February 4 - 25 at 11:00AM

Preschool: Stories, songs, games and the occasional craft. For children ages 3-5 with parent or caregiver. Thursdays, February 4 - 25 at 12:30PM

#### Celebrate the Winter Olympics!

Go for the Gold at the Library. We're counting down to the 2010 Winter Olympics with a sporty story, mascot crafts and mini-competitions. Grades K-8. Monday, February 1 at 4:00PM.

#### Craft Club

Spice up your winter with paper bead bracelets. Join us to turn old magazines into beautiful new jewelry. Grades K-8. Younger children should be accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Monday, February 8 at 4:00PM.

#### 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, February 11 & 25 at 3:30PM.

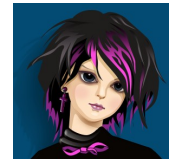
#### Get Your Game On

Come try your skills at the PS2. Grades 6-12. Registration is not required. Bring your friends! Wednesday, February 10 at 3:30PM.

#### Anti-Valentine's Day Party

Tired of mushy talk about love, roses and hearts? Come to our party and make goth sock puppets, Anti-Valentine's Day cards and listen to music. Grades 5-9.

Monday, February 15 at 4:00PM.



#### Teen Book Club

Monday, February 22 at 4:00PM – Reading *Step to This* by Nikki Carter. 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, February 15 at 6:00PM – Reading *What the Dead Know* by Laura Lippman.

**Wednesday Afternoon Book Discussion** – Wednesday, February 10 at 1:00PM – Reading *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox* by Maggie O'Farrell.

## Call for Volunteers

- **FOREVER HOME BEAGLE RESCUE** call 412-304-4034 or [BeagleHQ@msn.com](mailto: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. 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

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“Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love...”

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## THIS MONTH

### February 2

**"50 Ways to Survive Winter" Sing-a-long** 6:00PM at the **Brookline Pub** 734 Brookline Blvd. Bring the song lyrics, your completed SPDC membership form and \$10.00 dues. Sing and join at same time.

### February 6 & 13

**Brookline Little League Sign-up** 1:00PM to 3:30PM at Moore Park

### February 8

**Chamber of Commerce** 6:00PM at Magistrate Jim Motznic's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

### February 9

**Brookline Block Watch** 7:00PM at Magistrate Jim Motznic's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

### February 15

**South Pittsburgh Development Corp.** 7:00PM at Brookline Blvd. United Presbyterian Church 1036 Brookline Blvd.

### February 22

**Brookline Area Community Council** 7:30PM at St. Mark's Church corner of Brookline Blvd. & Glenarm Ave. A representative from the Port Authority will discuss the March 1 schedule changes.



Chinese New Year is February 14. On the Chinese calendar it is 4707 -4708, The Year of the Tiger, Geng Yin.

"The characteristics of the Tiger are tempered by one of the five Chinese elements of Metal, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth overlaying a 5-year cycle of characteristics on the original 12-year cycle."

### THE METAL TIGER 1950 AND 2010

The Metal element gives the Tiger its sharpness in action and speed of thought. Tigers born in the Metal year like to stand out in a crowd.

### THE WATER TIGER 1902 AND 1962

The Water element gives the Tiger a soothing characteristic making this breed a bit more tranquil. Their ability to consider feelings and ideas from other people makes them quite sensible and understanding.

### THE WOOD TIGER 1914 AND 1974

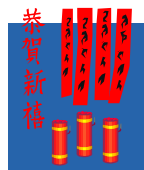
The Wood Tiger is more adaptable to working with others and therefore does not demonstrate the typical "take charge" attitude of other Tigers.

### THE FIRE TIGER 1926 AND 1986

Eccentric and dramatic, Fire Tigers are aglow with passion and verve. They are outgoing, expressive and look on the bright side of things.

### THE EARTH TIGER 1938 AND 1998

Earth Tigers are realists and tend not to get caught up by their own enthusiasm and excitement. They have a stout and sincere sense of responsibility that other Tigers haven't quite cultivated and are not so easily distracted.



For more visit: <http://www.usbridalguide.com/special/chinesehoroscopes>

## BROOKLINE RECREATION CENTER

**412-571-3222**

### YOUTH PROGRAM

**Kinder Sports** Starts October 8 and runs through May 2010. 11:00AM to Noon. Ages 2 - 5

**Youth Fun Time** For boys and girls. Thursdays Ages 3 - 5 at 3:30PM - 4:15PM. Ages 6 - 8 at 4:30PM - 5:30PM Program is FREE.

**Martial Arts Classes** A martial arts class based especially for the 5-10 year olds in mind. Taught by our own instructor, Joshua Kern. Specifically made to help foster and build the martial artists of tomorrow as well as to have a lot of fun this summer! Cost per child is \$20 per month. Tuesdays and Thursdays, ages 5-7 at 6:00PM - 7:00 PM, ages 8-10 at 7:00PM-8:00 PM. Older brothers and sisters can join in the fun as well!

**Mr. Joe's Fitness Program** Come and receive personal in class training and nutritional info from **Joe Syzmanski**. Ages 13 to 17

**Boxing** Get ready for Golden Gloves. Mon. Tues. Wed. 6:00PM to 8:45PM. Ages 7 and up. 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 info from **Joe Syzmanski**. Men & Women age 18 and over.

**Body Sculpting with Pilates** with **Roxanne Eibeck**, a trained Pilates instructor. Mon. and Thurs. 6:15PM to 7:30PM \$30.00 for 10 workouts.

**Yoga** with **Lori Grable**, a certified yoga instructor. Tues. 6:15PM to 7:30PM \$50 for 6 week session or \$10 per class.

## FREE MEALS



**Brookline Recreation Center** is serving free dinners for children 18 years of age and under from 5:30PM - 6:30PM. Snacks are served from 3:00PM - 4:00PM.

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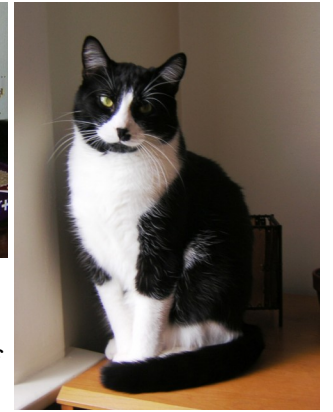
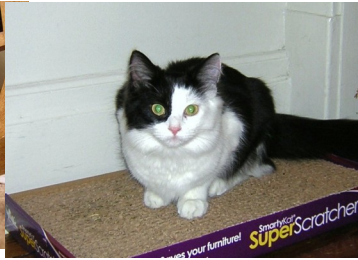
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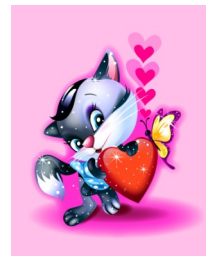


# COZY CATS OF WINTER



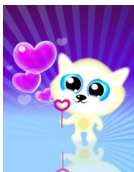
Allow us to introduce you to the **Hale-McKeithen** cats. From left: **Kate Hale** with **Buddy**, **Monkey**, **Pretty Girl** and **Panda**. **Pretty Girl** and **Monkey** were rescued from the streets of Brookline. **Buddy** and **Panda** are leash trained and take regular walks in their backyard.

*Photos by Kate Hale & Rance McKeithen*



**Tinkerbell Grant** lives with **Dottie Grant**, a long time resident of Brookline.

*Photo by Dottie Grant*



Above: **The Brookline** cats hard at work on the next issue. **Midnight** at left works on layout, while **D'Argo** above keeps track of expenses.

*Photo by Michael Grabowski*

Left: 20-year-old **Midnight** lives with **Karen Faust**. Look closely at **Midnight's** paws. He's what is known as a polydactyl or Hemingway cat. He has extra toes!

*Photo by Michael Grabowski*

## LOOK AT WHAT'S NEW ON BROOKLINE BOULEVARD



Far left: **Luffy's Professional Carpentry** Below left: **Mateo's** has moved to 718 Brookline Blvd. It's a bigger location with more tables. Below right: If you haven't checked out **Las Palmas**, stop in. They have fresh meat, and they make their own chorizo.

*Photos by HK Photo Studio*

