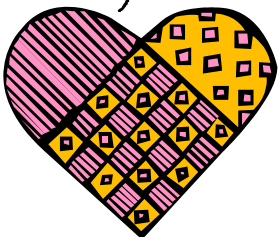


Letter from the Editor



Oh baby, it is cold outside, and there's no warming in sight! Cold or snow? It's a difficult choice. We are midway through the winter and that makes it bearable.

This patchwork quilt valentine reminded us of a Dove Dark Chocolate candy wrapper. You know - the wrapper with the message inside that makes you feel less guilty for indulging. We saved one that read, "Spending time is a greater gift than spending money." That's why going out for dinner is so popular on any day, but especially Valentine's Day. It requires you to spend time.

Before you make reservations at one of the many, new, trendy restaurants that have opened in the area, consider the second part of that quote, "spending money." With gasoline prices over \$3.00 a gallon, this is the perfect time to stay close to home. Not to mention that trendy new restaurants are also usually expensive and crowded.

If you live close to the Boulevard, consider walking to **Moonlite Café**, **Mateo's**, **Brookline Pub** or **Tong Garden** for Valentine's Day dinner. A little exercise with your sweetie will offset the calories and allow you to order dessert. If dinner out is too rich for your budget, opt for pizza from **Fox's**, **Antonio's**, **Vinny's** or **Krazy Bros**. You can always make a quiet dinner at home special with a treat from **Party Cake**, **Kribel's**, **Pitaland**, **Las Palmas** or **Vinnie's Pretzel Shoppe**.

It's the same refrain, just a different month. The merchants really need your business during the cold winter months. Just repeat our Christmas strategy and make your Valentine's Day gift a double gift. Spring will be here soon, and we want to see that all of our merchants survived the cold, snowy winter.



Cuts & Styles

748 Brookline Blvd.

Pittsburgh, PA 15226

412-969-4630

Hours: Mon.— Fri. 12:00PM to 7:00PM

Sat. 2:00PM to 7:00PM

& By Appointment

If you could sum up the style of a salon in a phrase, **Cuts & Styles** is the "Happy Hour" salon. "Most of my customers work during the day so they want their appointments after work. They schedule appointments with friends and bring their own beer or wine," says owner **Linda Mierzwa**. She keeps snacks on hand to add to the "joie de vive."

How can you pass up unwinding after work with a cut, color or perm shared with a couple of friends? You can also get hilites, extensions, updos and body waxing here. Linda is a graduate of the Pittsburgh Beauty Academy, and she grew up in Brookline. Longtime residents will remember Linda's grandfather, **Joe Sergi**, who had a tailor shop on the Boulevard. Linda had a shop on the Boulevard in the past then she moved to Florida, but she said, "It was time to come home."

"I never feel like I'm going to work. This is fun." That attitude could explain why Linda doesn't look like she has three sons Billy, Tommy and Bobby whose ages range from 19 to 25.

Men, you can stop at Cuts & Styles for your haircut too. Men's cuts are \$10.00 all the time. In fact, why not schedule a couple's appointment? You and your sweetheart can meet at Cuts & Styles after work and enjoy a glass of wine or stop after dinner and enjoy a post-dinner cordial. This is the salon for the multitasking generation.

-*Pamela Grabowski*

-Photos by *Catia Alencar*





NEWSLETTER SUSTAINING FRIENDS

If you are a merchant who would like a donation box, either call us at 412-343-2859 or ask Rosemarie when she delivers your next month's newsletters. We will happily provide a donation box and make monthly collections. Become a sustaining friend of **The Brookline**.

Donations thru December 2010:
Cannon Coffee - \$83.25
Kribel's Bakery - \$149.20

Request a box and add your name to the list. Or send a donation to the address below, and we will list your name.



Keystone Rehabilitation Systems

968 Brookline Blvd
 Pittsburgh, PA 15226
 Phone: 412.563.1076
 Adrienne Zeiler, DPT

PHYSICAL THERAPY



NEW AND IMPROVED BROOKLINE REC CENTER



In December, the **Brookline Memorial Recreation Center** reopened with a renovated fitness center and exercise classes including Pilates and yoga to offer you a close-to-home place for your fitness needs. Kinder sports is Wednesday at 11:00AM for children 0 to 6 years old, followed by story time. It's fabulous! This is especially valuable during the cold winter months! Please wear clean fitness attire.

A free program starts Thursday, February 17 at 7:00PM called "25 for 25 Fitness Challenge" for 13 years of age and older. We are challenging people to get fit for the Brookline Breeze. This program will increase your fitness level in preparation for the Brookline Breeze. It will include weekly weight checks, blood pressure checks & heart rates, and when the weather permits, a walk through the Breeze course.

-Michelle Trapolsi Underwood



Sunday hours for **Boulevard Tobacco Outlet** were omitted from last month's article. Their Sunday hours are 10:00AM to 6:00PM.



THE BROOKLINE PAST ISSUES

Clint Burton has archived past issues of **The Brookline** at www.brooklineconnection.com.

CONTACT THE BROOKLINE

The Brookline Staff

- Pamela Grabowski* Editor
- Jan Beiler* Proofreader/Advertising
- Amy Fisher* Proofreader
- Julie Salas* Proofreader
- Jennifer Askey* Proofreader
- Ryan Askey* Proofreader
- Catia Alencar* Photographer
- Rosemarie Traficante* Delivery
- South Hills Printing* - *The Brookline's official printer*



Your \$10 annual membership in **SPDC** supports projects like Jacob-Whited, DogiPots and **The Brookline**. Join today. See mailing address below.

We want to hear from you. Send your questions or comments by email, phone or mail. March issue's deadline is February 12. April issue's deadline is March 12.

*****ADVERTISING RATES*****

Contact Pamela Grabowski at mnp.grabowski@verizon.net or call 412-343-2859 for more information. We now have over 1,300 readers.

The Brookline by email is in FULL COLOR!
The Brookline is also available by mail. A one year subscription is \$15 with your \$10 membership to SPDC.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: thebrookline@brookline-pgh.org or mnp.grabowski@verizon.net
Telephone: 412-343-2859
Mail: **The Brookline** , PO Box 96136, Pittsburgh, PA 15226.

Standard ads are a width of 3.75 inches. We charge by the height of the ad at \$12.00 per inch. This is an example of a one inch ad space.

Remember ad graphics and artwork are free! Call us to place your ad in **The Brookline**.

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

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**IT'S THE SEASON. PLEASE CLEAN YOUR SIDEWALK!
CALL 311 TO REPORT THE LOCATION OF SIDEWALKS NOT SHOVELED.**

“ Last year, due to a State of Emergency caused by the blizzard of 2010, the City of Pittsburgh placed a moratorium on issuing citations to anyone failing to clear their sidewalks of ice and snow in a timely manner. A state of emergency no longer exists and the moratorium has been lifted. Under normal circumstances, it is the law to clear sidewalks of ice and snow 24 hours after a snow event. Therefore, please be advised that city inspectors



will be out this year citing businesses and residents who do not comply with the law.” - from the **City of Pittsburgh** website.

If you have an elderly neighbor, help them out by shoveling their sidewalk. It's an opportunity to volunteer.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE CHELSA WAGNER

Many Pennsylvania homeowners and renters meeting certain income and eligibility requirements can once again benefit from Pennsylvania's Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program and claim a cash rebate on property taxes or rent paid during 2010. Applications will be mailed to past recipients during February, and will also be available at my Constituent Service office at 900 Brookline Blvd.

The Property Tax/Rent Rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 and older; widows and widowers age 50 and older; and permanently disabled individuals age 18 and older. The income limit is \$35,000 for homeowners and \$15,000 for renters (excluding half of Social Security income), and the maximum rebate for both homeowners and renters is \$650.

The deadline to apply for a rebate on property taxes or rent paid in 2010 is June 30, 2011. My office staff is always available to assist constituents with completing and submitting the application. Documentation of all income received in 2010 must be included with your application. Homeowners must also submit copies of their property tax payment receipts for 2010, and renters must complete the rent certificate included with the application.

State and federal income tax forms and instructions are also available from my office. Please feel free to stop by and pick up the forms you need. Office hours at 900 Brookline Blvd. are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.



BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR

In a January email, Pittsburgh Police Zone Six **Commander Scott Schubert** said, “Please remember to look out for one another and report criminal activity and suspicious behavior. I am still getting reports well after the fact about suspicious activity that would have been very helpful had we received it when the incident was occurring.”

An “activity” that the Commander discussed at Block Watch is copper pipe theft. If you have a neighbor who winters in Florida or just takes a vacation to a warmer climate, keep your eyes open for anyone entering or loitering around their property. Just because someone wears a uniform doesn't mean he or she is legitimate. Call 911. Allow the police to check it out. Save your neighbor what could be several thousands of dollars in damages.

-Pamela Grabowski

SNOWMAGGEDDON FEBRUARY 2010

WEATHER BOMB JANUARY 2011

????????????? FEBRUARY 2011



JOANNE'S CORNER

Things that aren't here anymore - Part 23

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. February 14 as I recall. Some things never change. Most girls are Queen for a Day on that February holiday. A lovely gift is in order plus a beautiful card and of course a lovely dinner. Years ago dinner meant some place local. We didn't travel all over the city. In Brookline, that place was **Joe's Tavern** located on the site of the **Moonlite Café**. Joe's was the place to go on holidays like Valentine's Day and for sure Friday nights. It was standing room only. They were noted for their Friday night fish. Joe's was strictly local. Owner **Joe Gorski** lived upstairs. All the bartenders were local people. Everybody knew everybody else. We don't see that too much today. Brookliners have good memories to fall back on.

-Joanne Fantoni

Question of the Month: What were the names of the waitresses and bartenders at **Joe's Tavern**?



There's a new daily news site online for Brookline residents. Dormont-Brookline.Patch.com is edited by **Dan Nephin**, a Dormont resident who has been a professional journalist for 20 years.



Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak has agreed to pay for the column space for her monthly community column. Her \$1,152 check will increase our print edition by almost four more months!

THANK YOU

READERS' RESPONSE

Just finished reading *The Brookliner* [The Brookline]. The article about **Carmalt School** sent me back. I remember walking there and back each day with **Irene Meurer**. **Mrs. Rosenbauer** was my teacher. (Long-term [memory] is good, but can't remember yesterday.) Although I did know that it was changed to an academy, I can't help remember finger-painting, the outside playground, **Clifford Waterson** eating paste and the end of the year program we put on for our parents. Alma came, instead. I didn't know it at the time, but mother was pregnant with David and having some problems. But I was so happy having Alma walk me to and from school, that evening. I'm pretty sure that Irene and her mother came with us.

Anderson's Farm was on the property now converted to the community center. There were fruit trees all along the Breining Street fence. And cows. The bulls scared us the most, especially on days we wore red - dresses, socks or whatever. In the winter I wore a red hat! We ran, if we saw the bull(s). Some boys (**David Stricker** was one) told us that the bulls didn't like red and they would chase anyone wearing that color.

Alice Demetrius Stock lived in the yellow/orange house across the street from school. Now she lives in Mt. Lebanon and occasionally writes for the Mt. Lebanon magazine and the Post Gazette. We've discussed those days a lot, over the years.

- *Sue Schrenk's* email to her brother **Tim Reitmeyer**

"Earl was the man's name at **Sesto's Barber Shop**. I remember him being at our house all the time."

-**Micki Capuano** called to share her memory of Earl.



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COUNCILWOMAN NATALIA RUDIAK

As many of you may have heard, January 1, 2011 was a state mandated deadline for our City to fill its pension fund to 50%, or face a mandatory state takeover of our pension system. This takeover would have cost city taxpayers *over \$1 billion in additional funding* over the next 30 years. With just hours to spare, the City Council was able to put together a plan that will avoid the state takeover, while providing an unprecedented level of committed funding to the pensions, and avoiding any major budget cuts or tax hikes.

What we put together is called a revenue covenant—where the City commits additional revenues into the pension fund every year for a set period of time. All told, we will be paying a total of \$736 million into the fund above and beyond what we are required to pay over the next 31 years. If you calculate the inflation out of those payments (current dollars are worth a lot less in the future), we deposited \$253 million into the pension fund with this plan. Additionally, we deposited \$45 million from a special reserve fund into the pension, for a total of \$298 million deposited into the fund. This is approximately \$90 million more than what was required by the state to avoid the takeover, who will officially certify the funding level in September.

This plan will have an impact on our operating budget—we promised revenues to pension and now we have to make room for that revenue on our ledger sheets. To do this, the City has enacted a schedule of minor parking meter increases. While some neighborhoods are more affected than others, in Beechview and Brookline the meter rates will increase from \$0.50 an hour to \$1 an hour at some point over the next five years. Citywide these rates equate to an increase that is half the size of what was proposed by the Mayor's privatization plan.

I believe this is the best solution to avoiding the colossal burden of the state takeover. We didn't privatize any crucial public assets, we didn't approve catastrophic parking rate increases, we didn't incur any new debt, but we did make a promise to our workers that we would stand by their pensions—a promise that I was proud to make. Police officers and fire fighters do not receive Social Security; they and their families rely on all of us to do the right thing by them.

On New Year's Eve, City Council met to override the Mayor's veto of this plan, and we did it by a 9-0 margin. That shows that the most responsible solution to our pension fund won't be found in a high stakes privatization, or by massive one-time lump sum payments into the fund (which has been tried and failed in the past). We will fix the fund by doing what so many household do every-day—drafting a reasonable budget, making our annual payments on time, and being responsible with our money. But this isn't the end of the discussion - I look forward to working with Harrisburg and our labor unions to enact sensible reforms to *keep* our pension fund sustainable into the future for years to come.

Please don't hesitate to contact my office at (412) 255-2131 about this or any other issue.



SENATOR WAYNE FONTANA

Have you heard the news? This coming Spring, Beechview will be getting an IGA grocery store. As you know, an Aldi recently opened at McNeilly & Sussex Roads and small businesses have been sprouting up throughout our community. With all of these options, our community is sure to have all of the access to food that it needs.

I am proud to have played a part in bringing the IGA to Beechview. At community meetings, the operator of the new store, **Wayne Hancock**, has made it clear that their organization is Hometown Proud! The number one focus for the store when it opens this Spring will be on customer service and being responsive to shoppers. Even more important, our community must be supportive of these entrepreneurs and their efforts in our neighborhoods. Although not located in Brookline, having easy access to a grocery store, even with a short commute, is absolutely vital. These businesses have shown their faith and interest in our community and we must now do the same. Our support will be rewarded with an even more active business district, as we have seen so many times in our neighborhood.

My New Year's wish for Brookline is that our business district and our neighborhood continue to grow and become the Brookline that we have all dreamed of for our families. Together, we can make a difference, and I look forward to working together with you to accomplish great things for our community.

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GETTING YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME VERIFICATION

There are a number of reasons you may need written verification of your Social Security benefit amount. You may need to provide it to an energy assistance program or for subsidized housing. Perhaps you're ready to make a major purchase and you're trying to get a loan from a bank or financial institution. Or maybe you're applying for state benefits or moving into a new apartment or home.

Whatever your reason, if you need verification of your income from Social Security, obtaining it is easy and convenient. Please go to www.socialsecurity.gov. Then look in the left column under "Top Services," open the "Services for people currently receiving benefits" section, and select "Request a Proof of Income letter" to get a letter that verifies your Social Security benefit information.

You can use this letter for any reason that someone requires proof of your income. In addition to offering proof of your income, the letter is an official document that verifies your Medicare coverage, retirement or disability status, and age.

From the time that you complete the online request, it will take about 10 days for you to receive the proof of income letter in the mail. If you need one sooner, you'll want to call us at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) or visit your local Social Security office.

For most people, requesting the proof of income online is the most convenient way to get what you need. Get your benefit verification by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov/beve.

-LeeAnn Stuever

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Many low-income Medicare enrollees can save the \$96.40 that Social Security withholds for their monthly Medicare premium. Depending upon income, they may also be able to receive help with co-payments and deductibles for both their doctor's office visits and prescription drug coverage. There are now two separate programs that can help.

The Medicare Savings Programs:

The Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) cover the cost of Part B (outpatient care) premiums and may also help with co-payments and deductibles, depending on the applicant's level on income. To qualify, an individual's income must be no greater than \$1,218 (\$1,639 for a married couple) with resources no greater than \$6,600 (\$9,910 for a married couple). The resources that are counted for MSP include money in the bank, stocks, bonds or other types of investment. The lower the amount of income and resources the applicant has, the greater the level of assistance available.

The Low-income Subsidy:

The Low Income Subsidy (LIS), also known as "Extra Help" provides assistance with Medicare Part D (prescription drug) costs. In order to qualify an individual's income must be no greater than \$1,353 per month (or \$1,821 for a married couple). It also requires that the individual's resources be no greater than \$12,510 (\$25,010 for a married couple).

Those who qualify for LIS are eligible for either full or partial coverage and reduced co-payments, depending upon income and resources. The co-payments for prescription drugs can be as low as \$1.10 for generic and \$3.20 for a brand name prescription. As an additional benefit, LIS enrollees are not subject to the coverage gap known as the "donut hole."

Anyone wishing to apply or to find out more about either of the programs can contact the, Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Medicare Outreach Coordinator at 412-350-7079 or email: kburk@alleghenycounty.us.

-Kathleen Burk



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THIS MONTH

February 14 Monday

Chamber of Commerce 5:45PM at Carnegie Library 708 Brookline Blvd.

February 15 Tuesday

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

February 21 Monday

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

February 28

Brookline Area Community Council 7:30PM at St. Mark's Church corner of Brookline Blvd. & Glenarm Ave. Featured guest will be a representative from the Pittsburgh School Board.

WEDNESDAYS

Open Mic Series

Cannon Coffee

802 Brookline Blvd.

8:00PM

to

10:00PM



CHINESE YEAR OF THE RABBIT



February 3, 2011 is the first day of the Chinese new year, Year of the Rabbit or XinMao.

“People born in the Year of the Rabbit are articulate, talented, and ambitious. They are virtuous, reserved, and have excellent taste. Rabbit people are admired,

trusted, and are often financially lucky. They are fond of gossip, but are tactful and generally kind. Rabbit people seldom lose their temper. They are clever at business and being conscientious, never back out of a contract. They would make good gamblers for they have the uncanny gift of choosing the right thing. However, they seldom gamble, as they are conservative and wise,” according to the Chinese Culture Center website www.c-c-c.org/chineseculture/zodiac/Rabbit.html.

If you were born in 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, or 1999, this is your sign. From the description above, you are the kind of person this world needs right about now.

FEBRUARY AT THE LIBRARY

For Adults:

Monday Evening Book Discussion – Monday, February 21 at 6:00PM – Reading *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand* by Laura Helen Simonson.

Wednesday Afternoon Book Discussion – Wednesday, February 9 at 1:00PM – Please contact the library for book information.

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

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- **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.
- **DOGIPOT MAINTENANCE** call Ron at 412-527-4354
- **MEALS ON WHEELS** sponsored by **St. Mark's Lutheran Church** call 412-343-8144
- **MEALS ON WHEELS** sponsored by **Lutheran Service Society** call 412-366-9490
- **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 and send it to the **Brookline Christian Food Pantry, c/o Pat Erny, 2918 Pioneer Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15226-2038**

“When kids volunteer it tells others that they don't have to be perfect or famous or even grown up to make a difference.”

- Kalynn Dobos, age 7



Pick up your snacks for the game at **Boulevard Tobacco Outlet**. Buy a lottery ticket while you're there.

-Photo by *Catia Alencar*






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The **Brookline Chamber** thanks all merchants who donated to the Annual Christmas Lighting Project. This project helps with maintaining, hanging and removing the Christmas wreaths.

Again, thank you for your continued support.

Another thank you to all who participated in the Memory Tree Project that was displayed at Cannon Coffee, especially Nathan Mallory from Cannon Coffee for all his work setting up the Memory Tree. This project also helps fund the Christmas Lighting Fund.

BEGIN AGAIN SHOP

The **Begin Again Shop** is an additional resource for those who use the **Brookline Christian Food Pantry** at the **Brookline Boulevard United Presbyterian Church**. Under the direction of **Reverend Marsha Sebastian** and volunteers **Mary Lynne Tallon, Sherry Drozynski** and **LaVerne Luman**, **Begin Again** provides clothing to food pantry customers.

The shop renovation was Mt. Lebanon Presbyterian Church's second Mission: Possible project. The Mission: Possible crew painted, installed lights and shelving, and decorated the room just down the hall from the food distribution center.

Begin Again carries everything but underwear in sizes from newborn to plus sizes. Shoes line the racks in the back of the room and a long coat rack right outside the door features winter coats. There are party dresses as well as business attire. **Begin Again** started as a way to recycle baby clothes, but quickly grew to fill the needs of the many people who fill the basement of the church the second Saturday of every month for the food pantry. Like the food pantry, **Begin Again** also fills emergency needs when they arise.

Mary Lynne said they are looking for good wearable clothing. For those baby boomers who are retiring this year, listen up. This is the perfect place for the extra suits, ties, shirts, skirts, dresses and work shoes that you don't plan to wear again. Call and make arrangements for drop off. Your donation may enable someone else to find a job.

The return policy is simple, "Don't," according to Mary Lynne. Mary Lynne said they encourage people to pass the clothing on to someone else who might need it. Like many organizations, they can use volunteers. Sherry, Mary Lynne and LaVerne do a tremendous job sorting, labeling and arranging the clothing, but another set of hands couldn't hurt.

When I visited in December, the number of people and level of activity rivaled any big box store. Mary Lynne explained that what I was witnessing was the norm. If you can volunteer, call 412-531-0590. If you have clothes to donate, call 412-531-0590. The need is great, and many of us have more than we need.

-*Pamela Grabowski*



Middle: **Reverend Marsha, Mary Lynne Tallon** and **Christine Slivka**
Bottom: **Sherry Drozynski** and **Mary Lynne Tallon**