



The BAN Quarterly

AN OPEN LETTER TO BRIARWOOD RESIDENTS

It was a true pleasure spending today at the It's My Park Day event. The Kids, the Jazz, Alba's Pizza, everyone together working on cleaning up the park. Tomorrow's my birthday but I felt like today was my Birthday Party.

So here's the story I wanted to tell you: Last year I was allowed to work from home (an office job for a Clinical Research company). As long as I have an internet connection, I can work anywhere in the world. So I thought, why does it have to be in Briarwood? Why not Live and Work on the Beach? So last summer, my wife, son and I rented a luxury apartment on the beach in Puerto Rico for a month. We had a pool in the back. I had a rooftop terrace with a commanding view of the beach where I set up my "office". It was great! But I kept missing my Briarwood friends. I missed that sense of Community. I'm actually happier here in Briarwood, doing my simple little hanging out in the park with a cup of coffee and chatting with some neighborhood friends. So here's a Bronx Cheer to the Briarwood Locals!

Thanks for being my good neighbors

Javier Cordero

DID YOU KNOW.....

That Parsons Blvd is named after the Parsons Family who were a remarkable family. The founder of the family was a Quaker Preacher, whose sons ran a nursery which was located in what is now the northern part of Kissena Park. Generational family members were part of the Underground Railroad and one of the chief engineers in the building of the NYC subway system.

That some of the homes on the west side of Main Street, on Coolidge and Hoover Avenues, were originally built as a private community called Briarwood Estates, which was a gated community. It was built in the late 1930's and named after two Presidents.

That Briarwood was named after the briar trees that were numerous in the neighborhood.

That there has been no such road as Van Wyck Boulevard since the 1950's. That is why "Boulevard" has been eliminated from the subway station. Van Wyck Expressway was named after the first NYC Mayor Robert Van Wyck after the boroughs were consolidated.

to be continued.....

A GIFT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Recently I attended a Holiday Concert at the Center at Maple Grove Cemetery. Included was a presentation titled "Jacob's Gift" which was the story of Jacob Riis, the humanitarian, journalist, and photographer.

The "gift" refers to an innovation introduced by him at Christmas time. It became one example of the growth of civic culture and strengthening of community connection in the United States and our local Queens neighborhood.

In the early 1900's Riis was living in the Richmond Hill area. At that time, if one wanted to hear Christmas music, it was necessary to go to church. However, this was not the case in his native Denmark. There, carolers traveled throughout the community sharing their songs. One Christmas, Jacob learned that his dear friend, Ella, was ill and could not attend church and was saddened that she

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THE REFORMATION OF MILTON



When Pope Francis came to visit America, Milton was just glued to the screen for hours and hours. Everything Pope Francis said and did was just a delight to Milton and he could not get enough.

Everyone in the house loved to watch when Pope Francis visited New York. Even after The Pontiff left for Vatican City, his every move was followed.

We are not sure when this happened, but Milton decided to have some sacraments of the church. In no time he received baptism, Eucharist and confirmation. We here have no clue how this came about, but we know that Milton used to disappear in the afternoons.

Milton then declared that he be called Milton Franz Paco Pramberger. The Franz was in honor of Pope Francis and the Paco from Latin is Pater Communicates (father of the community); therefore, "Paco" the first syllable of each word.

Where this all came from we are still in question of.

Milton's younger brother, Bumpy says, "Milton was always very smart. But, I don't understand why we now have to refer to him as Paco. Milton is Milton. Gee, all Milton used to talk about was baseball and physics."

Milton's younger sister, Nala says, "I am not going to pay any attention to this Paco stuff. But, the last straw was when he asked Bumpy and me to kiss his ring. Now, what was that all about?"

to be continued.....

Barbara D'Ambrosio
Board Member-At-Large
Briarwood Action Network

REMEMBRANCES: THE 50TH REUNION

I came back to the ancient halls of my childhood with great curiosity only to discover long ago hidden caverns of my womb: the streets, backyards, the grottos of my schooling, chalk filled rooms, dusty books and people all fill those ancient corridors. Like ghosts of Christmas past they have all come back to haunt me. Insecurities, inadequacies, anxieties, loneliness, inclusion, exclusion, relationships, friendships, desire, sex, parties, dances, clothing, love, meaning, learning, all crowded my thoughts that day.

No smooth faces of youth dotted by the occasional pimple; now deep lines of living etched clearly on our persona. On that afternoon the relentless forward movement of time was momentarily stopped. We searched eyes, faces, bodies for that innocence once shared. We found careers, achievements, husbands, wives, grandchildren, ambivalence, loss, caring, love, pain and after all these years, each other.

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A GIFT OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

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would miss hearing the music which she loved. Jacob, being very persuasive, reached out to the community, to tell of the custom of caroling as he had known it in Europe. He mobilized singers who would travel to where the old, feeble or sick people who could hear the music and be comforted by the song and message.

Thus, the custom of Christmas Caroling in the United States was born right nearby in Richmond Hill! Early in American history, the historian Alexis De Tocqueville wrote that he was impressed by the democratic culture he found, wherein Americans showed willingness to work for the common good and lend support wherever needed.

"Jacob's Gift" resonated with me as I was reminded of the roots of our civic culture. Found in so many institutions such as Parent Teacher Associations, Volunteer Fire Departments, Scouts, etc., and to our own Briarwood civic group, the Briarwood Action Network (BAN), are the involved participating citizens, who unselfishly have that volunteer spirit.

The most recent example of this was BAN's very successful Holiday Toy Drive, in which over 400 gifts were donated to benefit the children living in transitional housing in the Briarwood Family Residence. I think of all who made donations, who built and decorated boxes, who organized and delivered the contributions of toys, books, games and then of course, of the appreciative recipients: the smiling, excited children.

It is a good feeling to be part of this long national and local tradition of active participation in a civic association, showing dedication to the well being of our community, working in unison with so many other caring volunteers toward our common goal.

Sylvia Sherman
Vice President
Briarwood Action Network

REMEMBRANCES: THE 50TH REUNION

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Our last conversations were about colleges, universities, our future as scientists, lawyers, doctors, psychologists, architects, social workers, writers, anthropologists, musicians, artists, activists, lovers, parents and dreamers. Now our conversations were filled with who, how, what, when, where. We had come full circle and down in the primordial slime of our preternatural beings we could find the shards of our childhood.

A day of reflections and connections.

Larry Sherman
Director, Communications Committee
Briarwood Action Network

Cold and Alone
A Winter Haiku by Sylvia Sherman

Icy wind blows snow
Changing street to brightest white
I watch all alone



Thank You Briarwood!!!!

Your generosity helped BAN collect
Over 400 toys



to benefit the children of the Briarwood Family Residence
A non-profit organization providing temporary housing for families

BAN's 4th Annual Toy Drive was a HUGE success thanks to YOU!!!

Tips and Information – Winter Edition

It's obviously an important Election Year! Here are some dates to remember for early 2016:

- Last day to register in person to vote in the April 19, 2016 Presidential Primary is March 25, 2016.
- Last day to postmark mail-in registration to vote in the April 19, 2016 Presidential Primary is March 25, 2016.
- The 2016 Presidential Primary is Tuesday, April 19, 2016.

You can find more useful information on The NYC Board of Elections website - www.vote.nyc.ny.us

Cold Weather Tips:

- The World Health Organization recommends keeping indoor temperatures between 64 and 75 degrees for healthy people. The minimum temperature should be kept above 68 degrees to protect the very young, the elderly, or people with health problems.
- Watch out for signs of hypothermia. Early signs of hypothermia in adults include shivering, confusion, memory loss, drowsiness, exhaustion and slurred speech. Infants who are suffering from hypothermia may appear to have very low energy and bright red, cold skin.
- When outside, take extra precautions to reduce the risk of hypothermia and frostbite.
- Since cold weather puts an extra burden on the heart, if you have cardiac problems or high blood pressure, follow your doctor's orders about shoveling or performing any strenuous exercise outside. Even otherwise-healthy adults should remember that their bodies already are working overtime just to stay warm, and dress appropriately and work slowly when doing heavy outdoor chores.
- When heating your home, take precautions to avoid exposure to dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a potentially deadly gas. It is colorless, odorless, tasteless and non-irritating. It is produced by burning fuels such as wood, oil, natural gas, kerosene, coal and gasoline. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu but do not include a fever. At lower levels of exposure, a person may experience a headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, and shortness of breath. Exposure to very high levels of carbon monoxide can result in loss of consciousness and even death.
- Take care when using portable electric heaters. Keep the heater away from things that can burn, such as furniture, rugs or curtains. Follow the manufacturer's advice about installation, placement and use.
- If you are having trouble paying your bills this winter, you can visit the NYS Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) website - www.otda.ny.gov/programs/heap or call 1-800-342-3009.
- Tenants can report heat complaints by calling 311 or online at <http://www1.nyc.gov/311/>.
- For consolidated information on assistance in paying heating bills and ways to make your home energy efficient you can call the number toll free at 1-877-NYSMART (1-877-697-6278).

BAN continually strives, via emails, community meetings, and our website, to keep our neighbors informed. Check our website - **WWW.BRIARWOODACTIONNETWORK.COM** -, facebook page, and twitter feed -**@BriarwoodAction** - for neighborhood information. Please also use those forums to make us aware of any news. You can also email us at briarwoodactionnetwork@gmail.com. Or send mail to: **Briarwood Action Network**, PO Box 356068, Briarwood, NY 11435