

Newsletter designed by Adam Grayson

Betton Hills Neighborhood Association Fall, 2015

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Facebook: **Betton Hills Neighborhood**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey, BHNA Co-President

The kids are back at school which means that the Betton Hills neighborhood kicks-off its annual events. Mark your calendar for these annual events:

- Family Pizza Party and annual neighborhood meeting on Sunday, October 25 from 2 to 4 at McCord Park.
- Christmas Eve Caroling at Harriman Circle
- Arbor Day, Saturday, January 23rd, from 9:00 – 11:00
- Easter Egg Hunt at Chittenden Park on Easter Saturday
- Neighborhood garage sale, TBA but occurs on a Saturday in May
- Block parties, TBA but plan for May

New this past year was the start of block parties. Block parties replace the annual Spring Ice Cream Social. The idea was to bring the party to the neighbors. BHNA provided seed money to support the parties and the neighbors did the rest. The block parties were very popular last year and I expect they will grow in numbers this year. If you are interested in organizing a block party email me at bgaughanbailey@hotmail.com.

Also this past year, we started a new approach to welcoming new neighbors. A few times a year, a new neighbor reception will be held. It is a great way to meet other new neighbors as well as board members.

Betton is just full of so many wonderful opportunities. I remain impressed with the number of city parks in our neighborhood for families to enjoy. As always, Winthrop Park is busy with sports and playground fun. Betton is a great family neighborhood. I hope you enjoy the fall season.



Lion Steel and BHNAers jammin' at a fall Family Pizza Party.

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- Come on out for a **Family Pizza Party** on
- Sunday, October 25 from 2 to 4 p.m. at McCord
- Park pavilion. The Leon High School Steel Drum
- Band (Lion Steel) will be performing under the
- oak trees. The party also serves as our annual
- meeting, with about 20 minutes of discussion on
- emerging issues and electing board members.
- Let us know what you like about living in Betton
- – and what could be improved. Please share this
- party information with neighbors and come on
- out yourself!
- • • • •



Pizza Time!

WELCOME COMMITTEE: LET'S PARTY!

By Hilda Gilchrist, Boardmember

We are happy to report that the "Meet and Greet" held on August 9th at the Gilchrist home was highly successful. In lieu of delivering small care packages containing goods and coupons from neighborhood businesses, our committee (of two) approached new neighbors that live on the same street or within a block or two of one another and invited them to a **BYOB covered dish dinner**. Eight families were invited to our inaugural event. Four were able to confirm they could come.

The evening turned out to be highly successful opening the door to new friendships and discussing issues important to us as neighbors. All this while sitting around the table, enjoying great appetizers, salads, seafood, sweets and drinks.

We've promised the other four families (on Trescott) that we will schedule another evening for them to attend, but **with over 60 families throughout Betton still on our list, we are seeking committee members willing to host small groups**. Laguna Drive, Randolph Circle, Mitchell Avenue, Lemond, Armistead, Argonne or Belleau Wood, and Spruce are some of the streets we would love to get committee members on.

Would you like to be on our welcome committee? Please sign up by emailing us at BHNAalert@gmail.com.



Welcome to our new neighbors!

PLENTY OF ROOM AT THE TABLE

By Bonnie Gaughan-Bailey, Co-President

Neighbors are invited to attend a Betton Hills Neighborhood Association meeting to provide input on planned or proposed projects. Meetings are held the third Monday of the month (no meetings in June and July) beginning at 7:30 at the Ashford Club Apartments Clubhouse. Just last month there was discussion on a new Eagle Scout project for McCord Park. Do you have an idea to enhance our neighborhood? There is plenty of room at the table.

Are you interested in joining the board? Right now, we are in need of a Secretary to take meeting minutes. The minutes are then posted on our website as a reference for neighbors to review. Board members typically started coming to meetings because of an interest in a neighborhood issue. From there members decide their level of involvement. If you would like to learn more, please give me a call at 559-8887 (cell) or 385-4426 (home).

BETTON HILLS FACEBOOK GROUP

By Melissa Jacoby, Boardmember

492 members already know that we have a robust Facebook group called Betton Hills Neighborhood. It's been helpful in sharing information among neighbors about upcoming neighborhood events; reporting lost or found pets; locating needed service providers; comparing notes on power outages or storm damage; and informing the neighbors of crimes or suspicious activities.

The group is designated by Facebook as a secret group. That privacy setting has many benefits but it also means that some neighbors who want to join the group have encountered problems in finding out how to do that. So here's how.

If you are a Facebook friend with someone who is already a group member, your friend can add you to the group. The group administrators will be notified and will approve your admission. Otherwise, send an email to bhnaalert@gmail.com and ask to be added to the group. Facebook will email you an invitation to join the group. After you accept the invitation, you're in. Let the conversations begin!

BHNA LAUNCHES REVISED WEBSITE

By Mary Kay Falconer, Boardmember and Casey McLaughlin

This summer, BHNA was very fortunate to connect with a neighbor on Facebook for help revising our website. The new site will make it easier for you to learn about upcoming neighborhood events, get access to our community newsletter archives, and keep track of what the BHNA board has been up to. Casey McLaughlin stepped up to redesign and upgrade this very important online communication. With the new functions available, we will be able to update our event calendar, post board meeting minutes, post newsletters, answer frequently asked questions, post photos of our events, and have updated contact information for the board members.

The website makes an excellent complement to our very active BHNA page on Facebook. We appreciate the time and effort that was invested in this project and thank all of those who contributed, especially Casey. When you have a couple of minutes, check out the website at: mybettonhills.org.

The website is a communication tool for the neighborhood. If you have suggestions about content or things you'd like to see on the site, we would love to hear them! Some ideas we have moving forward in the future include providing an online tool to pay member dues and publishing historical archives for the neighborhood.

In addition to the website, we have an active Facebook Group (almost 500 members!), but it is a private group. If you are interested in connecting with your neighbors online, you can find out how to join the Facebook group at <http://mybettonhills.org/get-involved>.

CAROL BELLAMY NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION FUND

By Donna Legare, Boardmember

When you donate to the **Carol Bellamy Fund**, your dollars go to support neighborhood beautification projects. We fund our Arbor Day activities in area parks as well as park benches, tables, recycling bins, plants for traffic islands and Betton Hills Marker maintenance.



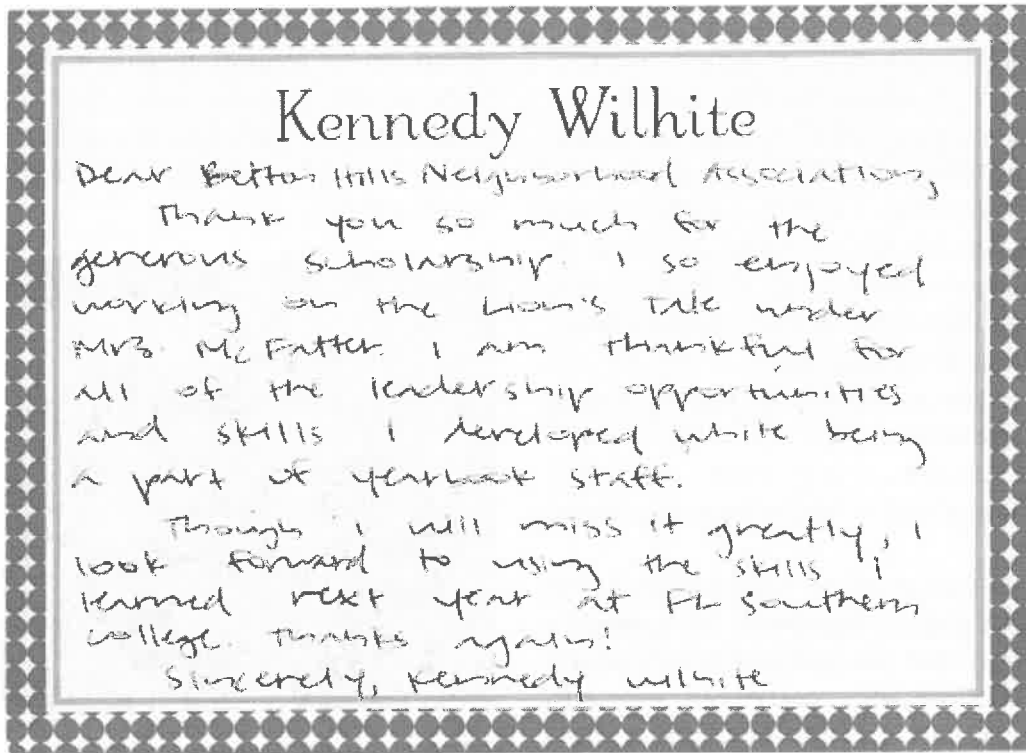
We will celebrate **Arbor Day** on Saturday, January 23, 9am - 11am by planting native plants in McCord Park, maintaining past plantings in various parks and islands, cleaning bluebird and wood duck houses, and by continuing the removal of invasive plants such as Chinese tallow, coral ardisia and Chinese ligustrum from area parks. We have been working on a native woodland restoration project in McCord Park for many years and are making good progress. We received added help this year from the City of Tallahassee Parks and Recreation workers.

We usually have one or two canoes with volunteers removing litter from the pond and another two volunteers picking up litter around the edges of the lake. The litter flows in with storm water runoff. If you have any ideas for Arbor Day, please contact Donna Legare at 386-1148. Watch for future newsletters and signage for details.

Bluebirds have been very active in McCord Park; we maintain three active bluebird houses in the park. Our Arbor Day efforts are significant in making McCord Park and other areas in Betton Hills more beautiful and beneficial for wildlife.

**BILL AND MARGE MANSFIELD
WRITER'S FUND REPORT**

Mike Brezin, Co-President



The rising cost of college and declining amounts for *Bright Futures* awards have made college financing increasingly difficult for many students and families. The BHNA aims to lessen this burden and acknowledge dedicated journalism students at Leon High through the Bill and Marge Mansfield Writer's Fund. Please contribute to this fund so we can continue to support future journalists and reward them for their efforts at Leon.

The Fund supports Leon students with writing talent and a commitment to journalism. For outstanding work on the student yearbook, *Lion's Tale*, we recognized the editors, Kennedy Wilhite and Kayla Larose. Award winners are selected based on the student's diligent efforts in journalism and serving as a key worker for either the student newspaper or student yearbook (the yearbook includes stories as well as pictures). They each received a \$500 scholarship from BHNA.

The fund honors the memory of longtime Betton Hills residents Bill and Marge Mansfield. Bill was a working journalist for much of his life and was committed to helping new journalists find their "voice." Bill came to Tallahassee in 1965, serving as Bureau Chief for the Miami Herald. He worked as the Editorial Page Editor for the Democrat in the 1980's and 90's. Bill wrote and spoke publicly on education, the environment, integration, and many other issues of local interest.

After his retirement in 1995, and until his death in 2000, Bill devoted his time and talents to volunteering his services to a number of worthy causes, one of which was the BHNA. Bill was our newsletter editor and a respected voice on our Board of Directors.

Bill would be the first to say that Marge contributed a great deal to his success. She was a fine thinker, didn't hesitate to voice her opinions, and had a strong desire to see each person in our society treated with dignity. Marge died in 2005.

THESE PARKS ARE YOUR PARKS....

By Mike Brezin, Co-President



How do you think about our parks in Betton Hills? I think of them as our common front yards. And we are fortunate to have such beautiful, varied, and useful front yards! As you can probably imagine, from time to time issues about the use of the parks bubble up to the neighborhood association board.

Let me say first and foremost, the BHNA very much wants people to use our parks. Over the last year, I have come to appreciate how well the neighbors around Chittenden Park use it as a social gathering spot and a place for children to play safely. That's what brings a neighborhood alive, with plenty of opportunities for neighbors to meet and have fun together.

Your neighborhood association (and your dues) helps to improve our parks. At Chittenden, we installed a Little Library (that's Mark Olive, the neighbor that promoted the idea; another neighbor, Peter Butzin, built the library), refurbished the rose garden bench, and hold our annual Easter Egg Hunt there. McCord Park is the focus of our Arbor Day planting and native plant restoration. At Winthrop, we've installed a bench at the south end and hold our Fall Pizza Party in the pavilion. We've done some plantings in Harriman and stock the pond from time to time.

OK, back to the issues. Over the years, I guess it is natural for neighbors that border the parks to sometimes think of them as an extension of their yards. We've had incidents of people mowing the park property by their yards, making trails, putting yard debris in the park, trimming trees, parking a vehicle in the park, that sort of thing.

My request: think of the parks as our common front yards. Enjoy them, but don't mess with them. This is a request that goes beyond those living on the park borders. For everyone using the park, treat them (and your neighbors) with respect. Pick up your dog's poop. If you drop paper or cans, pick them up. Mind your noise level. Keep an eye on what your kids are up to. I imagine most of you remember the Scout dictum: leave the place better than you found it. It worked when we were kids and it works now. Our parks serve many purposes, but I think we can all agree that keeping them beautiful and peaceful is worth the effort.

JACK ROBERTSON PARTNERS IN EDUCATION FUND

By Donna Legare, Boardmember

When you donate to this fund, you support our neighborhood public schools. The fund is divided equally among our three schools - Kate Sullivan, Cobb Middle and Leon High School. Each year we choose a department or a project at each school as the beneficiary of the funds.

Teachers, principals and students have been very appreciative of the extra money to fund special programs. Pam Stephens, the principal of Kate Sullivan, sent a beautiful card and wrote to thank us for our donation:

"... the money went to our media center to purchase more books. Our ongoing goal is to reach 10,000 books to have on hand for our students. Thank you, thank you! Your gift is greatly appreciated!"

From Billy Epting, Principal of Leon High School:

I cannot begin to express how thankful we are to receive your generous donation of \$600 to the Leon High School Hands Up Fund. The Hands Up Fund was established a number of years ago to help Leon Families who were experiencing hard times. Donations from this account are used to reconnect utilities, provide meals, prevent evictions, and provide clothing to current Leon High Families. Your generous contribution of \$600 will go a long way towards providing assistance in these crucial areas. Thank you again for your kindness and generosity.

From Cobb:

Greetings!

On behalf of the Cobb Robotics Team, I want to thank you for the awesome donation of \$600 for our robotics program. This is unbelievable and I cannot think of a better way for our season to end. With this money we will buy the materials needed to build our robotics club a practice table of our own, another EV3 robot for the team, two NXT-DC-rechargeable batteries for two of the club's NXT robots, two EV3 medium motors and at least ten swivel wheels. Our wish list is long and this will certainly help!

We won a bid for regionals this past season, after placing at our Challenger competition for the first time ever. Once we got there, we looked around and saw drones flying through the sky, robot-tanks on the ground and a lot of MacBooks on the tables. With our 2002 Dell, missing the k key and the screen so dim you could turn it off and it would have been brighter, we were befuddled and astounded by the amount of money people have invested in robotics.

So far, our school has been our sole source of money and we wouldn't have our robotics program without their help. Please accept our gratitude for the Betton Hills Neighborhood Association's generous donation of \$600 to Cobb Robotics.

*Gratefully,
Jackson Stump,
S'More Cubs Team Leader*

In the past, the money from this fund has been used to purchase sheet music, tune instruments, purchase novel sets for language departments, purchase books for media centers, provide supplies for art departments, purchase audio materials for language classes, sponsor math summer camp and much more.

Your donation to this fund will truly be appreciated!
Teachers would welcome mentor volunteers as well.
Let's grow this fund!

LENDING LIBRARY AND BAT HOUSE MCCORD PROJECT

By James Ford

My name is James Ford and I live in Betton Hills. I am an Eagle Scout candidate with Troop 109. As an Eagle Scout candidate, I plan and lead the completion an Eagle Scout project providing service to the community.



200 bat bathouse

The BHNA has approved my proposal to acquire and install a small (200 bat), bat house to replace the Purple Martin house in McCord Park. As I understand, the Purple Martins are no longer frequenting the house possibly as result of the increase presence of owls and hawks in the immediate area. The bats are great predators of mosquitoes, moths, and other insects. Additionally, I will be designing and leading the construction and installation of a lending library near the existing kiosk in McCord Park (which was built by Adam Grayson, also a Troop 109 Eagle Scout).

I have a twostep approval process with my Troop and then the local Scout Council before I can begin my project. I anticipate that the projects will be completed by spring, 2016.

IMPORTANT: I am looking for someone to volunteer to serve as the steward for the lending library. As a steward, your role would be to periodically check on the library and to solicit books as needed from others in the neighborhood. If you would like to volunteer, please contact my Eagle mentor, Mr. Andrew Grayson at asgrayson@hotmail.com or by telephone at 567-1448.

GET CONNECTED!

By Tom Vickers, Membership Chair

I joined the BHNA Board because I love living in Betton Hills. I think this is a great neighborhood, and I want to help make it better. In our Spring Newsletter I asked more of you to join the effort by becoming members. At the time we had fewer than 300 dues-paying members and we were sending out more than 950 newsletters. The response was gratifying. We ended the year with 426 members, increasing our participation rate from near 30% to near 50%. We can still do better. Joining is easy. Send \$10 (or more if you want) to PO Box 15612, ZIP 32317. Include an email address and I will add you to the BH email alert list if you are not already signed up. You can also ask for access to the BH Facebook page by writing to me at BHNAalert@gmail.com. Get connected to know what is happening in the neighborhood. Urge your neighbors to join too. This year let's break the 500-member mark.