

Introduction — Duck Pond Dedication — September 27, 2008

We are honoring here today a couple of people from among the many who, over the years, have contributed to maintenance, enhancement, and improvements to this park area.

Some of those who have contributed in the past as Civic Association officers and members still reside here and are still concerned with the upkeep of the park. These include Jim and Sue Thompson from Purdue St, Marshall and Barbara Dunn from Stanford St., and John and Delia Scott and Hank and Carrie Cirbee, these last two couples both from Rosemary Lane. There are undoubtedly more that my senior-style brain probably has forgotten.

But there are two others I would like to mention who were active in the past but who are no longer with us.

One was a long-time very active officer in the Civic Association, Walter Troeschel, more commonly known as Colonel Troeschel, U.S. Army retired, who lived on Wells Blvd near Adelphi Rd. Among his many Civic Association duties as President, Colonel Troeschel took special interest in maintenance of the park.

Another Civic Association member and long-time resident who was actively involved in watching over the park was Frank Leser from Rutgers St. Frank lived here from the beginning of University Hills until his death about twelve years ago. During that time, anybody who was in or near the park in the morning or in the evening couldn't help but notice Frank and one of his succession of Terriers making their daily stroll and policing the park (an army term). Frank also was a member of the Civic Association's Park Committee, serving at the same time as my wife, Alice Eichman.

I could tell you a lot about Alice, but I'd better not.

What I will do is go on to tell you what the park means to our neighborhood and how it is that the park is still here for us to enjoy today, thanks to the efforts of another long-time resident.

Duck Pond Dedication — September 27, 2008

We are here today to once again dedicate an enhancement of a portion of our neighborhood's park, the Duck Pond.

The Duck Pond is the distinguishing feature of University Hills Neighborhood Park. It is its landmark. Many people think of this area as "the Duck Pond".

And our park is only a portion of a larger area known as the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Parkland. Our park and the parkland area next to it contain recreational facilities that for several decades have been important in the lives of University Hills parents and their children.

Right here, on the other side of the parking lot, is a nice, fairly new set of playground equipment that lures people with children from both sides of the Northwest Branch.

And on the other side of the stream is an area called Lane Manor Park. That area contains playing fields for soccer and baseball that have served as the home grounds for teams organized by the Lewisdale University Park Boys and Girls Club. That's the home team and this is the home park.

My wife and I have lived adjacent to Northwest Branch Parkland since 1975. Beginning in 1980 our home has been right across the street here. In 1982, our son was born here and grew up putting good use to the recreational facilities in this parkland, the playground, the various baseball fields, the soccer field, and the tennis courts. Incidentally, the current playground equipment is the third set that has been there since we've lived here. The Park and Planning Commission has regularly improved and enhanced the facilities for the enjoyment and safety of the neighborhood's children.

As a historical sidelight, the Duck Pond isn't the only landmark for which this area of the parkland has been known. Until a few years ago, a gigantic slide stood on the other side of the duckpond and was commonly called — because of its design — the Rocket Ship. It was located near the entrance off University Boulevard between Adelphi Rd. and W. Park Drive. For a long time, the Rocket Ship was a thoroughly enjoyable but also very intimidating fixture in the park. Safety concerns, I believe, contributed to its demise.

This portion of the Northwest Branch Parkland has meant a great deal to the families who live around it. And not just those families on this side of the stream. We love our homes, we love our park, and we are glad the park isolates our neighborhood from through traffic. You can drive into the University Hills area only by turning off Adelphi Rd. And you can drive out of University Hills only by going back to Adelphi Rd. The Northwest Branch Parkland is the northwestern boundary of our tight-knit community.

It might have been different, except for the efforts of a group of concerned citizens, including a longtime resident who, like me and my family, lived just across the street from the park.

The Goldblatt family have lived on Stanford St. facing the park since 1969, close to 40 years. One cannot have been around the park very long without having seen one or another Goldblatt in the park. These days, Abe Goldblatt and his son Jonathan make regular daily walks around the Duck Pond. The entire family have always had the maintenance of this wonderful facility as a primary concern.

One of the Goldblatts played a very significant role in preserving the integrity of Northwest Branch Parkland. Abe's wife and Jonathan's mother, Marty Voss Goldblatt, in the early 1970's was a member of a very active group of DC and Maryland residents who successfully prevented extension of I-95 down through this area. The plans they thwarted would have eaten up a great deal of the park, eliminated some of the homes adjoining it, and routed tons of traffic directly through the Northwest Branch area.

Unfortunately, Marty is no longer with us. She passed away this year, in April.

Today is National Public Lands Day, a day that encourages civic involvement in the improvement and enhancement of public lands that Americans enjoy. And today, when we are here celebrating the recent enhancement of the Duck Pond, it seems appropriate to take this opportunity to recognize Marty's original contributions to preserving the parkland. Through her efforts, Marty Voss Goldblatt helped make it possible for us to continue improving and enhancing the public parkland we in this neighborhood enjoy so much.

Thank you, Marty, *in absentia*, and thank you, Abe and Jonathan.