



MORNINGSIDE

By Judy Colbert

"WPGC-AM-FM, Morningside." It's heard at least once an hour all the way to the northern reaches of Maryland, to West Virginia, to Richmond. Contrary to what many think, this is not the morning side of things, as opposed to the evening side of things. Morningside is the town name that was used when WPGC-AM radio was licensed by the Federal Communications Commission in 1954. The long-forgotten person who was granted this license broadcast from a garage on a hill off Suitland Road. He needed a city for the application and Morningside was the closest.

WPGC licensed its FM station in 1959, and by that time the transmitter had been moved to District Heights. The station now broadcasts from Greenbelt, but every hour on the hour thousands of people in a 100-mile radius hear the announcers proudly say "WPGC, Morningside," according to WPGC engineer Joe Nunemaker.

Millions of other people have heard of Nicky Goode, the two-year-old who is suffering from a liver dysfunction and who was recently taken to a hospital in Pittsburgh for a transplant. Nicky lives in Morningside with his father and mother, Michael and Ginger Goode, and her parents, the Harry Chamberlains, who moved into Morningside in 1955. The entire country has extended its collective hearts to this little boy from Morningside.

And so, *Prince George's Magazine* thought it would be interesting to explore this town with less than 2,000 population, that lies cradled within the reaches of the Beltway, Suitland Parkway and Suitland Road and has the distinction of being a town no one drives into unless they're planning to drive there.

"The homes in Morningside were built on a 100-200 acre farm by Morgan Wayson and his brother-in-law Randolph Hopkins as early as 1938 and 1939," says Bill Brown, who works for the Wayson family. Wayson says it was named Morningside because it was east of the Capitol [on the morning side of Washington] and because of the early hour — 5 a.m. — that he had to get up to get out to work on the homes. At least, that is how he *thinks* Morningside was named. County historians, librarians, newspaper files and original residents can come up with no other explanation and early maps of the area don't show a farm or an estate by that name. Wayson has long forgotten the name of the farm property they bought, but Harry Chamberlain says the farmhouse is still standing.

In any event, Brown says, the builders left Morningside for a while and then started again in 1943. The houses were built to sell to people stationed at Andrews during the war.

"The houses were two-story Cape Cods," remembers Wayson. "Some of them had basements and they had an upstairs which was unfinished."

The price for these homes was \$2,730 in 1942. By 1949, when Jerry Glaubitz moved to Morningside because his southeast Washington one-bedroom apartment was too small, the price was up to \$6,930, with no down payment to veterans. As Glaubitz said years ago in a *Washington Post* interview, "There aren't any mansions out here, but to GI's who could just barely meet the no-down-payment requirement when they got out of the service, it looked like heaven." Many of the homes were FHA-financed with mortgage payments running between \$30 and \$50 a month.

Since Glaubitz moved in 33 years ago, he has been a member of the Morningside Volunteer Police Department, chief of the Volunteer Fire Department, a radio announcer at WPGC who decided getting up before 6 a.m. to give the county fire report was a little early and now mayor of the Town of Morningside—a position he's held since 1960.

Many of the early residents worked at the Naval Research Laboratory and at the Hydrographic Office in Suitland. Morningside and District Heights, with homes also built by Hopkins and Wayson but at a slightly higher price, were the only subdivisions around.

The community of about 500 homes and about 1,300 people (down from 2,100 a few years ago because of smaller families and older men dying and leaving widows, says Glaubitz) is described by County Council member Bill Amonett as "a community of moderately priced homes with a great deal of community spirit. It was built long before Prince George's had rules and regulations, building codes and street codes. Through the block grant program, we've put about \$3,000,000 maybe more, into improving the streets, and installing sidewalks, just as we have in Carmody Hills. It's upgrading the community and they've done a first-class job because the work that's been done has spurred the pride of ownership and upgraded property values.

"They used to have terrible flooding problems, from Henson Creek and drainage off Suitland Road. Glaubitz has really done a fine job and helped get storm water management in there so the houses and basements don't flood. Anyone driving through there