



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Fall 2011

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Belle Rive • Ferry Landing Estates • Ferry Landing Villa • Ferry Point Estates • Mount Vernon Forest • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Westgate • Wycliffe • Yacht Haven

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 12, 2011

Speaker

Marcelo Ferreira
Fairfax County Office of
Emergency Management

Subject

Tips and tools to prepare for
an emergency

Where and When

Washington Mill Elementary
7:00 PM pizza and soda
7:30 PM program

President's Message

I am grateful to report that we hosted our 5th annual picnic on June 4th at St. James Episcopal Church. Many thanks to Jeanine Simmons for heading up our picnic committee and to all our great volunteers, especially Dave Simmons and Jimmy and Monika Ortiz- our grillmeisters extraordinaire. It was another special day for our community as over 200 gathered to enjoy great company, delicious food, lively entertainment, and good cheer. Planning is already underway for our "6th Annual." See you there!

Our guest speaker at our October 12 MVCA Membership meeting is Marcelo Ferreira from the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management who will provide tips and tools to prepare for an emergency. Having experienced an earthquake and hurricane in the past six weeks, I'm sure you'll find Marcelo's presentation both interesting and useful. As always, pizza is at 7:00 pm and our meeting starts at 7:30 pm. If you have a new neighbor please bring them along. Please note that

we will be meeting in the school library this year so everyone will have a real seat (hurray!) Thanks again to Washington Mill Elementary School for their hospitality, and especially for granting our request to meet in the library.

Our bi-annual elections will be held in January 2012. (Tempis Fugit!) In accordance with our Association bylaws, a nominating committee is being formed to solicit nominations for our elected Board positions. If you are interested in serving as an elected officer of Your Association, please contact Sean McCarthy, nominating committee chair at 703 360-0372 or send Sean an email at mclucid@verizon.net. Our Civic Association depends on participation from throughout the community to be successful. I encourage you to consider running for a Board position. All members are welcome!

Thank you for your support. It is my privilege to serve as MVCA President.

*Best wishes,
John*

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

We were deeply saddened by the untimely death of Jeff Todd in late July. Jeff was a great friend and benefactor of the MVCA and to many in the Mount Vernon area. As President of the Mt. Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, Jeff was the guest speaker at our January 2010 membership meeting. Jeff also provided generous support to our annual community picnic. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Todd Family and we will hold Jeff's memory dear in our hearts.

Education Committee Report

Mount Vernon High School

Mt Vernon High School's enrollment increased significantly this year, causing the school to add additional classes. As a result of this increase in enrollment and need for additional classes, MVHS was awarded additional teaching positions.

Congratulations! Our neighbor and friend, Michael Gailliot, is the new Mount Vernon High School Athletic Booster Club President.

New Virginia Graduation Requirement for Economics and Personal Finance

Because of legislation passed by the 2010 General Assembly, one additional credit in economics and personal finance must be completed prior to graduation beginning with students in grade 9 during the 2011-12 academic year.

FCPS has developed a course entitled Economics and Personal Finance to meet the new requirement which can be taken face-to-face or through the FCPS Online Campus; the online course is available this fall. In addition, two semester courses, AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics, will meet the state diploma requirement. Further, FCPS is working with local colleges and universities to seek dual enrollment options after school and during summer in another

alternative effort to meet the requirement.

New Advanced Mathematics Standards to Start This Fall in All Elementary Schools

Beginning in September, Fairfax County Public Schools will implement the 2009 Virginia Department of Education mathematics standards. These new standards parallel FCPS' Elementary Mathematics Instructional Sequence (EMIS), which allows students to access advanced mathematics when they are ready, beginning as early as kindergarten.

This curriculum will allow students to delve deeper into mathematics concepts beyond their grade level, so more students will be prepared to take Algebra I in Grade 8.

School Bond Referendum on November 8 Ballot

A school bond referendum will be on the general election ballot Tuesday, November 8, 2011.

The 2011 proposed bond referendum includes \$240.4 million for renovations, including \$97.7 million to renovate Canterbury Woods (construction), Clermont (planning and construction), Sunrise Valley (planning and construction), Garfield (planning and construction), Terra Centre (planning and construction), Westgate (planning and construction),

Terraset (planning), Haycock (planning), Woodlawn (planning), Forestville (planning), North Springfield (planning), Springfield Estates (planning), Keene Mill (planning), and Bucknell (planning) elementary schools; \$46.4 million to renovate Sandburg (construction) and Thoreau (planning) middle schools; and \$96.2 million to renovate Thomas Jefferson (construction), Langley (planning), and West Springfield (planning) high schools.

In addition, \$26.2 million is included for infrastructure management, including roof replacements; heating, ventilation, and air conditioning replacements; athletic improvements; security enhancements; asphalt paving; technology upgrades; and improvements required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The referendum also includes \$13.6 million for capacity enhancements at Fairfax Villa, Greenbriar East, and Union Mill elementary schools, and for modular relocations.

Prior bond savings, realized through lower than anticipated construction costs for previous bond projects, have reduced costs for this bond by \$29 million.

*Valerie Schalk-Day
Education Committee Chair*

October Watch Report

Each night of the week, we have two volunteers patrolling our neighborhood, reminding us that our security cannot be taken for granted, but that it devolves upon each one of us to be one another's eyes and ears. Over the summer, there have been mercifully few incidents of property crime, a few reports of suspicious intruders, and thanks to quick-thinking neighbors, a couple of arrests. We want to keep it this way.

As the next six months schedule goes out, I am happy to report that we have 54 volunteers on the streets. This is a record for participation in this preventive program. We are perilously close to Rte. 1 where theft, robbery, and assault are in the weekly news.

As before, we remind you to be vigilant about locking your property and vehicles at night, to keep all valuables—especially laptops, cell phones, and navigation devices—out of sight. The property damage costs the owners of these lost items more than their worth

and much more than the profits accruing to the thieves.

On behalf of our neighborhood, heartfelt thanks to these recently retired and long-serving volunteers: Leon and Jeannine Sample (Volunteer Drive), Gail & David Richmond (Forest Haven Drive), Jeff Grelson (Allwood Drive), Dennis Phillips and Wayne & Maureen Mason (Tarpon Lane).

Welcome to these new members of the Neighborhood Watch: Antony Androsky (Reef Court), Brent Pope (Old Mill Road), Jeff & Maggie Jones and Bob & Patti Towsley (Belle Rive Terrace), Anne Sandel (Brambly Lane), Pete & Debbie Thrapp (Craig Avenue), Dick & Suzanne Floyd Hr (Ferry Landing Road), Jack & Brenda Sanders (Neptune Drive), Phil & Megan Ben Ary

(Riverwood Road), Paul & Sheila O'Connor (Robertson Boulevard), Fred & Lisa Zamer (Washington Woods Drive), Mike & Catalina Holland (Forest Haven Drive), and Bill & Fran Neville, Charlie & Candy Portaluppi, and Gail Mlinarchik (all of Tarpon Drive). With this new lineup, Tarpon Drive moves ahead of Ferry Harbor Court and Robertson Boulevard as the street with the highest level of participation in the Neighborhood Watch program.

Cóilín Owens, Coordinator



Directory Correction

Please make the following correction to your MVCA directory:

Page 4: Brigadier General USA (retired) Walt Bachus of 3803 Great Neck Court (Add to Helen Bachus at the same address.)

Budget and Finance

On September 13, the Board of Supervisors approved the 2011 Carryover Package. The highlights of that package include county revenues that were higher than anticipated, a significant savings in the litigation reserve fund of over \$8 million and a change in a federal unfunded mandate regarding county street signs of \$250,000.

Using part of the savings, the Board approved a county employee raise of 2%. Although, the employees had requested a 3.5% raise to match the teachers' salary increase, the 2% was greater than initial projections. The county employees have not had a salary increase since 2009.

The Board also approved using the \$250,000 for traffic calming measures. This will help to "mitigate the impact of cut through traffic and keep residents safe in their own neighborhoods." Due to state cut backs, traffic calming is no longer funded by the state.



The remaining carryover balance of \$28.69 million is to be set aside in reserve. This reserve is to be used to meet the projected 2013 budget shortfall or to fund critical flood requirements from last month's flood.

State Delegate Surovell Meeting

Delegate Surovell attended our June 2011 Budget and Finance Committee meeting to discuss state financing issues. One of the topics of discussion was funding of state road maintenance and construction. State road maintenance and construction are generally funded by the state's fuel tax, license and registration fees and vehicle sales tax. We all agreed that the money raised did not appear to be enough to meet our needs.

Delegate Surovell noted that Virginia has not adjusted its fuel tax since 1985. The tax has been the same 17 cents per gallon since 1985. He advised that we are paying 2011 construction and labor costs with 1985 money. He also made the point that vehicles have also become more efficient over that same time period. With the same gallon of fuel we are traveling over more of our roads.

Win at the MVCA Meeting!

When you attend the MVCA neighborhood meeting, you can enter a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to

Mamma's Kitchen.

"We LOVE this place!" --
Urban Spoon

Affordable Housing

We discussed with Co-chair, Al Bornmann, the possibility of having a more even distribution of affordable housing throughout Fairfax County. There may be opportunities to build new affordable housing near the new rail extension to Dulles Airport. This could also help to reduce commuter traffic to Tyson's corner.

Lastly, the Fairfax County Auditor is looking into condo fees being charged for affordable housing. There are questions whether utilities, pool and other fees are being paid for by the county. The Auditor is looking to reduce the costs of these subsidies to tax payors.

Sean McCarthy
Budget and Finance Committee

Public Safety

Road Safety

Shorter fall days bring the need for drivers to be very aware of others on our roads. Stop signs, crosswalks, and speed limits should be observed. Walkers should consider carrying a cell phone and whistle, safety vests in daytime and in the hours of darkness or reduced visibility. Bicyclists can install lights and reflectors, and they can wear high-visibility (in day) and reflective (at night) vests or arm/leg bands.

Burglary/Vandalism Prevention

The Mount Vernon District continues to have a problem with thefts from (and in some cases of) motor vehicles both locked and unlocked. FCPD Crime Prevention Officer/ Master Police Officer (MPO) Greg Kotteman recommends

Fall Festival

October 29, 2011 from 9am-5pm is the Mount Vernon High School Fall Festival and Bazaar. If you would like to participate as a vendor (arts, crafts, or other) or a family garage sale space, email Ron Skaggs at MVHSFallfest@gmail.com or call Marsha Spillars in the Activities Office at 703-619-3140. Come out for fall fun on Saturday, rain or shine.

Call 911 for fire, rescue, EMS, ambulance, and police emergencies.

Be as precise as possible about the location and nature of the emergency. Do not assume that "someone else has called it in."

preventive steps to limit burglaries and vandalism: Lock vehicles, keep home and garage doors closed and locked, install external lighting. Call the FCPD non-emergency number to report suspicious vehicles or individuals. Call 911 in the event of crimes in progress.

Fire Prevention

Be sure your fireplace and chimney is safe. Do not dispose of fireplace ashes in the home or garage. Gasoline and similar fumes can travel and be ignited by the gas water heater or gas furnace. Keep laundry dryer hoses and filters clear of lint. Insert new batteries in smoke detectors and check fire extinguishers. Ensure that all residents know of exit routes in case of fire and know an outside meeting place.

Road Safety Enhancements Near WMES

A citizen raised concerns in a letter to the MVCA President about speeding and

other traffic safety issues near Washington Mill Elementary School. The MVCA asked Supervisor Hyland's Office to have a traffic survey conducted. The resulting survey by the County DOT noted the volume and speeds of the traffic as making the area eligible for "traffic calming" measures (such as speed bumps/tables, etc). VDOT funding is very limited at this time so other road safety measures (more and better 25 mph signage, clearer crosswalk signs, "painting/stripping" of some unmarked but designated crosswalks, better signs for the WMES School Zone, possible flashing light School Zone signs, police motorcycle and patrol car sweeps) are being considered. Dr. Howard, WMES Principal, has been very proactive and supportive of the efforts. Utmost care is needed at the times of school staff/ student/parent arrivals and departures.

Emergency and non-emergency numbers for government agencies, public utilities and special needs such as animal control are on the back cover of your MVCA directory.

Best wishes for the fall and early winter seasons!

*Your Neighbor,
John A. Hurley
Public Safety Chair*

Fort Hunt Park: Park Service Proposes Major Changes

The National Park Service (NPS) is drafting a long-term development plan that would mean some dramatic changes to Ft. Hunt Park. Park officials believe the park is over used and that its resources (parking, restrooms, cultural and environmental resources) are under strain. They attribute this to the large number of people using the park's picnic pavilions and ball fields. They also believe there are insufficient facilities devoted to presenting the history of the park.

They are proposing scenarios for the park's future development that would stress historical interpretation and drastically reduce the picnic and recreational focus of the park. Specifically, the NPS has drafted a plan with four alternative scenarios. The first would be maintenance of the status quo. The other three scenarios would all mean the

removal of four of the five picnic pavilions and one of the ball fields, along with the construction of a visitor facility.

While the NPS stresses that they are still in the public comment phase and that nothing is set in concrete, they are clearly pressing for one of the latter development scenarios.

The Park Service is asking interested residents to submit comments on their proposal from Sept. 6-Oct. 6. Given that our next general meeting is on Oct. 12, i.e. after the conclusion of the comment period, the MVCA Board met on Sept. 20 and voted unanimously to oppose the NPS scenarios that would mean the removal of four of the five picnic pavilions and instead argued to support the status quo. That position was expressed at a public hearing held by the NPS on Sept. 20. Participants at that hearing,

some 50-60 residents, were overwhelmingly critical of the NPS' plans. In addition, the board has expressed its opposition to the NPS' plans in a submission to the NPS website.

The NPS says they will take resident's views into account and prepare a "decision document" on the future of the park for release in late Oct.

Mike Habib

Mulch Sale

The annual Mount Vernon High School Mulch Sale will be held on Saturday, October 22. Only \$5.00 for three cubic feet of shredded hard bark mulch. Orders of 10 bags or more will be delivered to your house. For information contact Carlton Evans at evanspraise@verizon.net.



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Toadstools (of the Political Sort)

It's that time of year again, when, during the brief respites between successive rounds of soaking rain, those awful, icky and toxic things seem to pop up out of turf just about everywhere. Campaign season is upon us.

Although our current governor issued an opinion in his former capacity as Virginia's Attorney General in support of the placement of campaign signs on public land, Fairfax County's Zoning Ordinance (Section 12-104, to be precise) plainly restricts the placement of political signs to private property. What this means for all of us is that the jumble of signs at intersections is illegal in Fairfax County.

Ever cognizant of the fact that campaigning is essential to aspiring office-holders as well as incumbents, and that campaigning is critical to furthering public discourse, I remain mindful of the fact that plunking a sign down where one sees fit on public property serves as an unwitting inducement to further illegal sign placement by commercial entities. Just as fungi love to grow on rotting matter, campaign signs seem to proliferate with other, often competing postings.

To the extent that campaign signs are a blight on our community, as well as in some cases a public safety issue (tell me in all honesty that you're not going to be distracted by an over-dimensional poster blocking a clear view of oncoming traffic at a 4-way stop), I've been doing my best to reach out to all candidates on both sides of the aisle to let them know that their signs are often illegally placed. The levels of ignorance regarding this simple matter have thus far been stunning, and perhaps also indicative of the larger disconnect between many of our pols and those they represent.

On a final note, please bear in mind that currently, only the Virginia Department of Transportation has the authority to remove the illegal signs. To report an illegal sign to VDOT, citizens can call the agency at 1-800-367-7623. A more meaningful result may be achieved,

however, by contacting the campaigns and their respective party offices to request removal. In this way, I encourage us all to take place in the great debate, to exercise our rights to free speech, and to ensure that the worst of our commercial corridor's blight is not visited upon our local roadways.

Pete Esser
Transportation Committee Chair

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**Upcoming Events in
Mount Vernon**

Oct 12, 2011	Membership meeting Open to all! Washington Mill Elementary 7:00 pm pizza;7:30 pm meeting
Nov 8, 2011	School bond referendum
Oct 22, 2011	MVHS Mulch sale
Oct 29, 2011	MVHS Fall Festival and Bazaar 9 am - 5 pm
Jan 11, 2012	Membership meeting Open to all! Washington Mill Elementary 7:00 pm pizza;7:30 pm meeting
Every night	Neighborhood watch

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Officers

President: John Skudlarek(703) 704-5213
 1st Vice President: Paul Schray(703) 619-9377
 2nd Vice President: Pete Esser.....(703) 799-5150
 Secretary: Karan Cerutti(703) 360-9559
 Treasurer: Tom Cleary(703) 360-3903

Directors

Mike Habib.....(703) 360-7742
 Ron Neitzke(703) 360-3807
 Valerie Schalk(703) 619-6312

Committee Chairs

Budget and Finance: Sean McCarthy(703) 360-0372
 Community Picnic: Jeannine Simmons(703) 360-3613
 Education: Valerie Schalk(571) 522-0228
 Environment & Recreation: Mike Habib(703) 360-7742
 Health & Human Services: Babe Loughridge(703) 780-3845
 Membership/Directory Co-Chair:
 Elizabeth Bancroft(703) 360-4206
 Membership/Directory Co-Chair:
 Ken Poortinga(703) 360-7740
 Neighborhood Watch: Coilin Owens(703) 780-5218
 Planning & Zoning: Karan Cerutti(703) 360-9559
 Public Safety: John Hurley.....(703) 799-9353
 Transportation: Pete Esser(703) 799-5150