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Sept/Oct 2008

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PICNIC TIME, SEPT 21!



RSVP NOW!

General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Speaking:

Lara Fritts, Executive Director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corp.

Where and When:

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



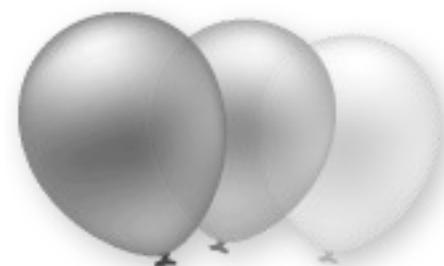
President's Message

Second Annual MVCA Community Picnic on September 21st!

Greetings Friends and Neighbors!

On behalf of the MVCA Board and Picnic Committee, it is my pleasure to invite you to our "Second Annual" Mount Vernon Civic Association Community Picnic! The picnic will be held on September 21st from 2-6 pm in Fort Hunt Park at Picnic Grove A (just as you enter the park from the George Washington Parkway.) We hope that you and your families will come out and join us.

Last year, over 350 members of our community ate, drank, played, visited, and enjoyed the sounds of Clarence "Blues Man" Turner at our "First Annual" MVCA picnic. A good time was had by all! We are excited about the opportunity to bring friends and neighbors together again this year and pleased to announce Blues Man Turner and his band will be back. We will also have plenty of cold drinks, and hot food from Paradiso Italian Restaurant. All we ask you to bring is yourselves, and an appetizer, side dish or salad to share. One last request,



PLEASE RSVP! It will help us tremendously if we know how many people are coming.

You can RSVP for the community picnic by sending an email to communityparty@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org, by going to the MVCA web site: www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org and clicking on the link on the picnic page. We are also looking for additional volunteers to help the party committee. If you can help out for even an hour to set-up, organize the food, serve, or run a childrens game, we would love to hear from you. Please send an email to volunteer@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org or call Tom Cleary at 703 360-3903.

New Board Members

I would like to again publicly acknowledge and thank Kristin Matheis for her many contributions to the Mount

(Continued on next page.)

Continued from Page 1

Vernon Civic Association over the last several years. Kristin deftly managed membership affairs, produced a superb 2007-2008 MVCA Directory, and stood up the first MVCA web site. We are indebted to Kristin and grateful for her service.

Heeding the call to service on our Membership and Directory Committee are Ken Poortinga and Elizabeth Bancroft. Ken and Elizabeth bring lots of energy, enthusiasm, and new ideas to the Board and I am excited to have them join your Association leadership team. You can contact them at membership@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org if you have any ideas that you would like to share or you can lend them a hand in these important areas. Welcome Elizabeth and Ken!

You may also have noticed that our Association web page moved. Thanks to the efforts of Mike and Catalina Holland you can now find the MVCA on the web at www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org. Mike and Catalina are experienced webmasters who are eager to help us improve our web presence and find new ways for this medium to support our community. We will be working with the Board members over the next several months to expand our content to better serve your needs. If you have any



thoughts or recommendations, please send Mike and Catalina a note at webmaster@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org. Welcome Catalina and Mike!

We still have a few vacancies on the Association Board of Directors. If you are interested in joining the MVCA Board and serving our community, please contact me at president@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org. I hope to hear from you!

Next Association Membership Meeting October 8th

Please put the next MVCA general membership meeting on your calendars. The meeting will be held on October 8, 2008 at the Washington Mill School. Pizza at 7:00, meeting to start at 7:30. Our speaker will be Lara Fritts, Executive Director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation (SFDC). Ms. Fritts will provide an update the SFDC efforts to revitalize the Richmond Highway corridor. SFDC initiatives have already yielded many successes. They are more relevant than ever to help proactively manage the changes that Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities are visiting on Fort Belvoir and the surrounding communities, like ours.

PLEASE NOTE:

There will NOT be another MVCA newsletter before the October 8th meeting. Please put this event on your calendar today!

It is my privilege to serve as your Civic Association president. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of service to you. I look forward to a great community turnout on September 21st and I hope to see you there!

*Best wishes,
John Skudlarek
President,
Mount Vernon Civic Association*



Fairfax County Budget Update

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors raised taxes and fees, made some cuts, and boosted school spending beyond what the county executive recommended in the new budget that went into affect on July 1.

At approximately \$3.3 billion, the general fund spending plan for fiscal year 2009 is about one percent less than last year's budget. The measure passed by an 8-2 vote.

Most notable, aside from the economic downturn that be-devils the current budget situation, are \$40 million in additional funds provided to schools near the end of the process and an additional 11-cent real estate tax on commercial and industrial property.

The Virginia General Assembly recently granted localities the ability to increase commercial tax rates to fund transportation spending. The new increase should render nearly \$52 million for existing and new projects.

The Board of Supervisors also instituted a three cent increase in residential tax rates, bringing the rate to 92 cents for each \$100 of assessed value. The county predicts most taxpayers will not pay more under the new budget because the average home assessment decreased from 542,409 to \$524,076.

An alternative, no-tax-increase budget was offered by Supervisors Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) and Michael Frey (R-Sully). But the board majority held out for more than the alternative plan's \$19 million school funding increase over the county executive's original proposal.

The approved budget for fiscal 2009 also went beyond the original plan by fully funding employee compensation increases, spending \$1 million on the code enforcement strike team, and restoring

some positions in the police department. But the county says those changes were funded by reductions in other areas.

There are a number of additional fee increases for emergency transportation, parking, taxi licenses, and other items.

Beset by decreasing property assessments and tax receipts, less income on county investments because of declining interest rates, and inflationary cost increases, the budget process was tough this year. But it promises to be the toughest in decades next year.



Facing a county and school budget shortfall of \$430 million for fiscal year 2010 (which begins next July), the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution on July 21 pledging a "detailed review of county lines of business and school programs to identify multi-year opportunities for cost reduction and savings to address the projected deficits that include program delivery options and possible service consolidations and eliminations...."

If you want to be part of this process, the county is holding 20 "community dialogue meetings". To participate in one of them, you must register at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/survey/fy10communitydialogue.htm>. The meetings closest to Mt. Vernon are on September 20 at the Sherwood Regional Library at 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane and on October 16 at the South County Government Center at 8350 Richmond Highway.

David Fish
202-515-2514

Thank you,

Our food sponsor



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Neighborhood Watch

The streets of our neighborhood are regularly patrolled, especially on weekends, by your Neighborhood Watch volunteers. You may occasionally see us—with our distinctive identifying sign—driving slowly along your street between sundown and midnight. Each of the 40 volunteers undertakes this patrol for one week, noting anything suspicious or unusual, asking discreet but firm questions, and in cases of highly suspicious behavior, loitering, or strangely parked vehicles, calling the police.

During these past couple of months, although things have been generally quiet, there have been a few instances of vehicular breaking and entering, vandalism, tire slashings, and trespass. The parking lots at the Methodist Church, Washington Mill School, and the Manson House lot sometimes have illegally parked cars. We take note of their registration numbers, and the times and places at which they were observed.

The police remind us that most property crime results from inattentive homeowners who leave their vehicles, or even homes, unsecured. The best Neighborhood Watch program is not what we, those on patrol accomplish actively, but what you do, “passively”: neighbors being aware of neighbors.

Officer Robert Clift of the Mount Vernon Station has been keeping us informed of current and potential safety issues in our neighborhood. Among his communications is the improved method of reporting litterers along our roads and streets. If any situation seems to warrant it, call (703) 324-3106 or check with www.cleanfairfaxcouncil.org.

If you would like to see what's on the Mount Vernon Police Ledger, you can do so electronically. The website that gives access to that information can be accessed thus: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/newsletter>.

The Fairfax section of the Friday Post carries a list of crimes in our area during the past week. You can get access to the Incident Report for our area through the Fairfax County Police Website via My Neighborhood.

Thanks to all our volunteers. We are staffed through June 2008, but can always avail of the help of new volunteers for occasional replacement duty.

*Cóilín Owens, Coordinator
Neighborhood Watch
cowens7@gmu.edu*

kind sponsors!

Il Paradiso Italian Restaurant is donating food for this year's picnic, and the local businesses on this page donated funds to make our picnic possible this year. Please patronize these businesses when you have the opportunity.

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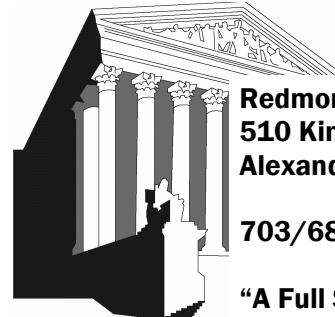
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Planning and Zoning

The next Planning and Zoning meeting is planned for September 8, 2008. Anyone interested in attending can get the time and place from the MVCCA website or e-mail me for definite meeting place and time as I do not yet have the exact location.

While there were no meetings last month, planning news effecting the Route One Corridor has been reported in the local paper and I will summarize for those who missed the article in *The Gazette*. The "Heights at Groveton," as it is called is now back in the planning stage. The parcel involved is 4.59 acres and is in the 6800 block of Richmond Highway beside Beacon Mall on the south side of Route One. It is the clear, grassy site at the corner of Memorial Street and Richmond Highway.

The article states that the plan includes a 360,000 square feet mixed-use development comprised of retail, office and luxury apartments. According to the article, the Southeastern Fairfax Development Corporation supports the plan. The plan calls for a five story office building with first floor retail and a separated six story residential building with first floor retail space.

The main number for us to know as a community I believe, is the number of living units – 290 apartments. The project will add 290 living spaces to the already congested roads and crowded infrastructure we know exists in our area. I applaud the addition of office and commercial space but am very concerned about the continued addition of such high numbers of additional housing to an area that already has stand-still traffic on weekends. If locals have a difficult time getting in and out of Beacon Mall on the weekends currently, I am concerned what traffic will be like with 290 additional residents.

Some may recall this parcel has an interesting history which I have tried to present correctly as I understand it. The parcel at issue was acquired as part of a deal with Fairfax County some years ago (around 2000). It was swapped with the developer of the South County Center. The original deal was the developer would receive the site that was then zoned C-3 (office space) for development of class-A office space on Route One.

Around 2004-05, the developer applied for a rezoning of the property to a PRM (Planned Residential/Mixed Development) to allow for construction of retail and residential condominiums. The rezoning was controversial but eventually the rezoning was approved. I do not know what caused the delay in the construction of the project for some years but I am assuming the downturn in the economy and slowing of the incredibly high prices developers were able to get for residential units were factors that slowed actual construction.

Whatever the reason, it appears the developers are now set to go forward and with the rezoning in place, they will now add 290 residential units with the office building. Some concerns I found in an older article discussing this project I found to still be applicable:

- 290 units adds four thousand daily vehicle trips to the streets.
- Office use will not crowd our streets on nights and weekends
- Office use provides critical daytime patronage of local restaurants

The units are still described as "luxury" units almost assuring each will have a car and may not be as inclined to use the public bus or metro available.

Some may say my listing concerns about the development is now a moot issue as the rezoning went through years ago but I included them because I think the concerns are still valid and applicable to future development on the Route One Corridor.

What do we want to see built? What makes sense to us and what does not? I ask you all to consider any rezonings carefully and weigh in with your voices when land in your neighborhood or "a few streets over" or even on the highway comes up for a rezoning. We must let our elected officials and leader know what is and is not making sense to us.

Jo-Jo Shifflett,
Planning/Zoning Chair



Membership

I'd like to introduce myself as the new Directory & Membership chair. I have lived in the Mount Vernon area since 2001 and reside on Ferry Landing Road. Elizabeth Bancroft (a co-worker at PBS) will be serving with me as the co-chair. She has been in the Mount Vernon area since 2000 and resides on Allwood Court.

We are both looking forward to assuming the responsibilities of this new position and welcome the chance to meet many of the wonderful people in this great neighborhood. Big thanks to Kristin Matheis as the outgoing chair for explaining our duties and providing us with the detailed membership records. We will be introducing ourselves to the block captains in the future and we hope to meet you all at the upcoming community picnic.

As we review the membership records, there are several blocks that currently don't have an assigned block captain. The duties are easy; just let the MVCA know about new or departing neighbors and distribute the new MVCA directory every other year. We plan on contacting members to sign up needed block captains for those areas.

Our new MVCA directory is planned for distribution for early Spring of 2009; we would welcome any input for the next edition.

*Directory & Membership
Ken Poortinga 703-360-7760
Elizabeth Bancroft 703-360-4206*

Environment and Recreation

A Big Thank You to the young fellows of Cub Scout Troop 1503 from Washington Mill School and to their parents for pitching in to help with the Clean Sweep of our neighborhoods in The Annual MVCA Spring clean up. Their enthusiasm to pick up litter is contagious! Thank You also to the honor students of MVHS who participated in our clean up to meet their community requirements. And a big Thank You to all the families and adults who joined in to make it another success. These clean ups really raise the self esteem of our neighborhoods. Let's all pitch in and continue to keep our area litter free and green.

*Bette Zaletel
E&R Chairman*

Chiasmus

Chi-as-mus (ky-AZ-mus) n. A reversal in the order of words in two otherwise parallel phrases.

"I don't suffer fools, and I like to see fools suffer." — Florence King

"In what other language do people play at a recital and recite at a play?" —Richard Lederer on "Crazy English"

"A politician wouldn't dream of being allowed to call a columnist the things a columnist is allowed to call a politician." —Max Lerner

"It begins when you sink in his arms. It ends with your arms in his sink." —Anonymous, on marriage

"If you talk to God, you are praying; if God talks to you, you have schizophrenia." —Thomas Szasz

"Those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind." —Bernard Baruch

From *Never Let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You* by Dr. Mardy Grothe (Viking Press)

Public Safety

Back to school! Please use extreme care driving as we have a number of FCPS school buses servicing Grist Mill ES throughout the day as well as METRO Route 11-Y express buses (to/from Old Town and D.C.), Fairfax Connector Route 151/152 (to/from Huntington METRO) and tour buses on Mount Vernon Memorial Highway (Route 235). In addition there are walkers, joggers, runners, bicyclists, infant carriages and small gasoline-powered vehicles. Please heed the STOP signs, speed limit signs and other traffic signs.

If you are on foot in the early morning and evening please consider carrying a flashlight and cell phone, possibly a whistle and some reflective clothing or armband.

Fall and early winter bring increased use of fireplaces and thus a good time to check fireplaces and chimneys and also to replace batteries in smoke detectors and refill fire-extinguishers if necessary.

Remember to call 911 if there is a need for on-scene Police, Fire and/or Rescue/EMS Ambulance.

The FCPD has very recently released the Mid-Year 2008 Crime Report. There is sobering news and also some good news. Overall crime in Fairfax County increased 12.1 percent during the first 6 months of 2008 over the comparable first-half of 2007 but violent crimes did drop 9.6 %. Property crimes increased 13.4 %. Be alert, support the fine work done by the MVCA Neighborhood Watch and the FCPD and telephone immediately to 911 if you see suspicious persons and/or vehicles particularly if the residents are away.

Best for a Safe and Happy Fall season.

Your Neighbor,
John Hurley
703 799 9353



Mount Vernon Civic Assn, Inc.

Officer, Directors, and Chairpersons 2008 – 2009

Officers

President: John Skudlarek 703-704-5213
president@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org
 1st Vice President: Paul Schray 703-619-9377
 2nd Vice President: Pat Stallings 703-778-4442
 Secretary: Karan Cerutti 703-778-4442
 Treasurer: Tom Cleary 703-360-3903

Directors

Mike Habib 703-360-7742
 Ron Neitzke 703-360-3807
 Sandy Polson 703-360-2814

Committee Chairpersons

Budget and Finance: David Fish 703-360-9559
 Consumer Affairs: Vacant
 Education: Valerie Schalk 703-619-6312
 Environment and Recreation:
 Bette Zaletel 703-780-9355
 Block Party: Vacant
 Health/Human Services: Babe Loughridge 703-780-3845
 Maintenance: Vacant
 Membership/Directory:
 Ken Poortinga 703-360-7740
 Elizabeth Bancroft 703-360-4206
membership@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Neighborhood Watch:

Ceilin and Julie Owens 703-780-5218
cownes7@gmu.edu

Newsletter Advertising: JoJo Shifflett 703-704-9222
 Planning and Zoning: JoJo Shifflett 703-704-9222
 Public Safety: John Hurley 703-799-9353
 Transportation: Paul Schray 703-619-9377
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It's Picnic Time!

Our "Second Annual" Mount Vernon Civic Association Community Picnic is this weekend!

Sunday, September 21, 2-6 PM
Picnic Grove A at Fort Hunt Park

Featuring
Hot food from Il Paradiso Italian Restaurant, cold drinks, and music with Clarence "Blues Man" Turner

Please RSVP at the Civic Association website, so we can plan for enough food for all!
www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, Virginia 22121