



# Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

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[www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](http://www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org)

## President's Message

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

I am pleased to announce that the following individuals were elected to serve on the Board of the Mount Vernon Civic Association at the January 13, 2010 MVCA Membership meeting: John Skudlarek, President; Paul Schray, 1st Vice-President; Pete Esser, 2nd Vice-President; Karan Cerutti, Secretary; Dr. Tom Cleary, Treasurer; Mike Habib, Ron Neitzke, and Valerie Schalk, Directors. Pete Esser will also serve as Transportation Committee Chair. Thank you all for your service to our community!

Thanks to Jeff Todd for speaking at our January meeting. Jeff provided a great overview of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce and his perspectives as a businessman and community supporter in Mount Vernon. You can read more about the MVLCC at their web site: <http://mtvernon-leechamber.org/Index.html>.

Jim Rees, Executive Director of Mount Vernon, will be the guest speaker at our next MVCA Membership meeting on March 10, 2010. Mr. Rees will inform our Association about Mount Vernon's plans to build a Presidential Library for George Washington. The \$38 million, 45,000 square

foot facility, including a research library with our first President's official papers, staff offices, and conference center, is proposed to be sited in the woods near the intersection where 235 South and 235 North meet. A site diagram is on page 2. Ground-breaking is expected next year. I attended Mr. Rees' presentation of this project to members of the Wessynton Community on March 1<sup>st</sup> and I know that this is a meeting you won't want to miss. Please plan to join us to learn more about Mount Vernon's plans and to take advantage of this opportunity provide your personal input to Mr. Rees. Pizza at 7:00 pm, meeting at 7:30 pm.

As an added incentive, we will have a drawing for \$50 gift certificate to the Il Paradiso Restaurant on Cooper Road for all MVCA members present. If our great pizza and program weren't enough, come on out on March 10<sup>th</sup> for a chance to have a great meal at one of our local restaurants on us. See you there!

Save the dates! Our MVCA Community Clean-up is scheduled for May 8th. See Mike Habib's article on page 5 for more information. Our 4th Annual MVCA Picnic will be held on June 12th on the grounds of the

## March/April 2010

### General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, March 10, 2009

### Speaker

Jim Rees, Executive Director of Mount Vernon



### Where and When

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

St. James Episcopal Church on Old Mill Road. More details to follow. If you would like to participate or volunteer, please contact Jeanine Simmons.

Please contact me if I can be of assistance at [president@mountvernoncivicassociation.org](mailto:president@mountvernoncivicassociation.org).

Best wishes,

*John P. Skudlarek  
President, MVCA*

## Neighborhood Watch

With the approach of warm weather and school vacations, we will need increased alertness to keep our neighborhood safe and quiet.

During the recent heavy snows, we have not been able to get patrols out. Coincidentally or not, there was a serious break-in at the Mount Vernon Yacht Club. Several boats were broken into and valuable navigational and electronic equipment stolen. The perpetrators evidently gained access with a vehicle through the automatic gate which had been left open to accommodate the snow ploughs. The Yacht Club—Jack O'Malley is the Security Officer—is taking new measures to protect the area.

It is in everyone's interest to keep our neighborhood, park, club, school and church property safe. The best insurance we all have is what's known in the business as "eyes and ears": alertness to what's passing up and down our streets. Neighborhood Watch does occasionally come upon something suspicious. It reminds us to remain alert and report any violations of decorum or the law: speeding cars, persistently barking dogs, strange vehicles, late-night or early-morning

noise, unlicensed vendors, after-hours loiterers in parks, lots, or clubs.

It is not our business to intervene or interrogate anyone, but to note the license plate, the time and place of the offense, and call the police. Officer Clift tells us that the main complaint he has at the Mount Vernon station is the silence of his phone. We are not doing enough calling when we see something suspicious. A pro-active neighborhood is a safe one.

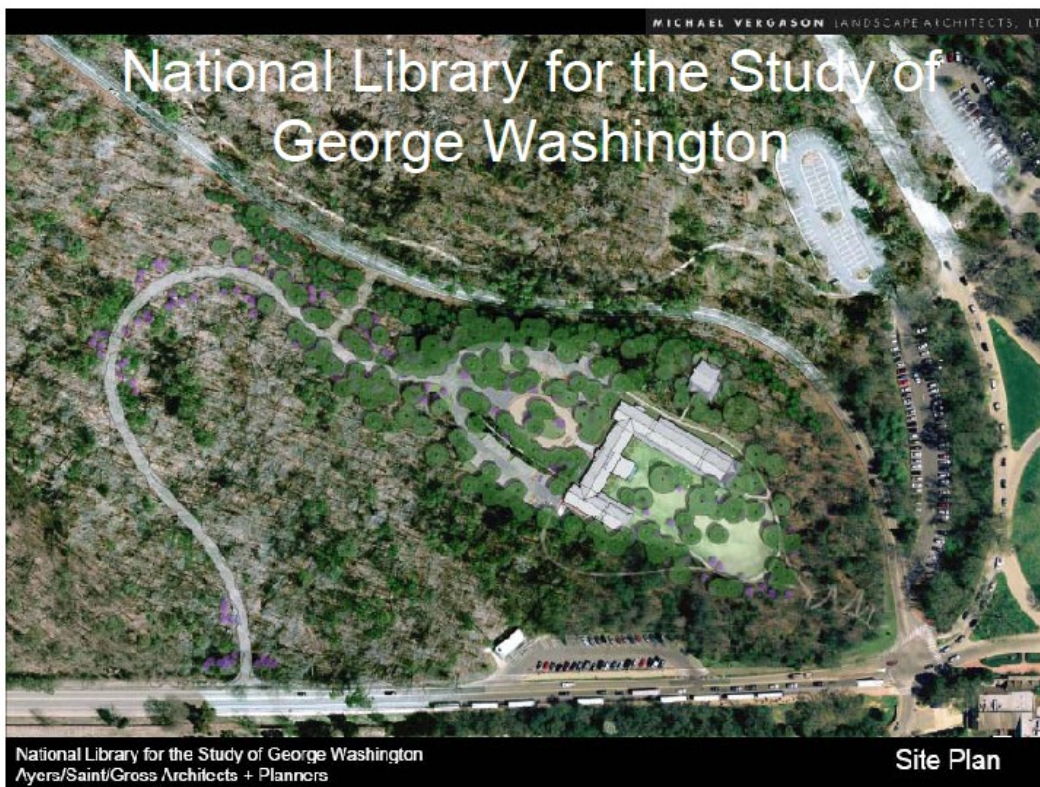
With our fifty volunteers, we are moving to a new scheduling arrangement. The entire Mount Vernon Civic Association area includes 800 households in the ten neighborhoods between Mount Vernon Highway and the river. To patrol the entire area takes 60 to 90 minutes. If this area were divided into northern and southern halves, each patrol would require much less investment of time. Volunteers would find themselves more engaged—being called upon approximately every 5 rather than 10 months.

Neighborhood Watch volunteers who are members of the MVYC will be assigned the southern half of the neighborhood because they will have access keys to the Club's property. It would be helpful to have more volunteers who are Yacht Club members to help keep it safe.

Officer Clift keeps us posted on crime in and around our neighborhood. If you would like to be included on his regular e-mail postings, contact him at [Robert.Clift@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Robert.Clift@fairfaxcounty.gov). Telephone: (703) 360-8400 X2259.

*Cóilín Owens,  
Coordinator*

[Cowens7@gmu.edu](mailto:Cowens7@gmu.edu)



## Transportation

### The Life You Save May Be Your Own

With apologies to Flannery Connor, please make note of the fact that the life you save may be your own. And while in the words of T.S. Eliot April is the cruelest month, February and March are in general not very favorably disposed to wild animals or drivers. Wildlife in general and deer in particular are out on the town, so keep a weather eye out for four-footed hazards and a careful eye on your speedometer, allowing for adequate reaction time and braking distance. Also look out for hazardous windfall on our roadways as the March winds do their part to bring down the shattered remains of Old Man Winter's recent achievements.

While on the topic of automotive safety, please also keep an eye out for pedestrians. Now that the glaciers have largely receded, bikers, joggers, and jaywalkers can be expected to pop up at unexpected times and places. And since we're on the topic of jaywalkers, ever wonder what a couple of extra dollars can get you these days? For a reported \$235,000, you can have a South-County-style experiment: the shiny new overhead signs warning of random pedestrians that recently popped up on a nearby stretch of Route 1 which is considered a pilot project for more of the same in other parts of Fairfax, my fellow lab rats. No matter what you think of the concept and execution (our local *Gazette* has reported that documentation on the successful usage of overhead pedestrian warning signs with continuously flashing beacons at unmarked crossings is lacking), please be aware of your surroundings, and keep a sharp eye out for pedestrians. FYI, \$38 million will buy a new research library, to appear some time in the near future in the forest across from the Mount Vernon Estate with traffic patterns and impact to be determined.

### I'm From the Government and I'm Here to Help!

I observed that the manner in which local and state government dealt with the aftermath of the recent storms was, at best, inadequate. If your street was not plowed or you also witnessed plowing and spreading sand and salt on roads that were already cleared, please send me an e-mail. I promise I will share the most colorful of the stories. We'll probably also send a collection of them to the elected officials who represent us. In any event, if your street is

plagued by potholes, ruts, or valleys (some snowplow operators that made the rounds after February 15 being seemingly obsessed with obliterating asphalt), call the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) Northern Virginia District Office at 703-383-8368, TTY 711, to request maintenance.

### I Love the Smell of Asphalt in the Morning

Yes, it's a stretch in terms of a literary reference, but the movie was after all based on *Heart of Darkness*. Anyway, be aware of the fact that one of the key transportation projects impacting our immediate area is the impending widening of Route 1. The esteemed Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved several million dollars for the design of an expanded section of *L'Autoroute de Richmond*. While it's highly unlikely that we'll be on the receiving end of Autobahn-quality road, much less any reductions in visual blight, what awaits us are six gleaming lanes of asphalt, a median, and turnaround lanes for a two mile section of Route 1 beginning at Route 235 south to the Fairfax County Parkway. The point of all this is to address the surge in traffic associated with increased staffing and new patients at Fort Belvoir. Two miles. Wow! Does anyone remember a story about a little Dutch boy, his finger, and a leaky dike? You should know that our delegate in Richmond continues to advocate for revitalization and spurring [of] economic growth in our corridor. So take a look at his website and give him some feedback. I expect our elected officials to take note of our opinions, whether they are pro or con.

*Pete Esser, Transportation Chair*

## Neighborhood Events

- March 10 Membership Meeting (See page 1.)
- Ongoing Membership renewals (See page 4.)
- May 19 Membership Meeting
- May 8 Neighborhood Clean-Up (See page 5.)
- June 12 Neighborhood Picnic

Membership meetings are held at Washington Mill Elementary School. They begin at 7:00 PM with pizza and soda; programs begin at 7:30.

## Membership and Directory

We're pleased that we have received many members' MVCA annual renewal forms with their membership dues. Thank You for your continued support of the Mount Vernon Civic Association!

We would encourage those who have not yet returned their annual membership to do so very soon. Your membership is needed to help the MVCA provide support to the community and to represent the interests of our community at the District and County level.

If you haven't returned your membership renewal for this year or have misplaced it, please use the form below. You can also download the membership form

from the MVCA website at [www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](http://www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org). Just fill out the required information, enclose your check for \$20 made payable to MVCA and mail to: MVCA, P.O.Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

For those you don't have the 2009-2010 directory, we will deliver your copy when we receive your membership form. Thanks for your support; please contact us with any questions.

*Elizabeth Bancroft*  
703.360.4206

*Ken Poortinga*  
703.360.7740

### Information for Publication in the MVCA Directory Use This Form to Renew Your Membership

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

New Resident since \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

*Listing Example:*

Jones, Jr. Mr. & Mrs.    Richard T.                      Elizabeth C.                      Dick and Betty

<i>Last name</i>	<i>His formal first name</i>	<i>Her formal first name</i>	<i>Names known to friends as (familiar names/nicknames)</i>
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\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Address*

*unlisted*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Telephone*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Email address*

Your email address will not be published nor will it be sold or shared. It is only to provide your Board a way to communicate with you about matters of importance in our community.

- Block Captain     Neighborhood Watch     Social Activities     Welcoming Newcomers
- Education Matters     Public Safety     Recreation and Environment     Community Beautification
- Newsletter     Consumer Affairs     Area Health and Human Services     Area Traffic and Transportation
- Planning and Zoning Matters     Local Government, Including Budget & Finance

**Advertise with your Mount Vernon Civic Association:**  Would you like us to contact you about placing an ad in the quarterly newsletter or the membership directory?

## Environment and Recreation

### Join the 7th Annual MVCA Spring Clean-up

We are planning to hold our annual neighborhood clean-up on Saturday, May 8 from 9AM to noon. This is an opportunity for residents to clean up trash along our streets and help beautify our community. Please volunteer to join your friends and neighbors and members of Washington Mill Cub Scout Troop 1503. We will meet at 9AM at the Mansion House parking lot. There will be free supplies of hats, safety vests, garbage bags and gloves. We will also provide water and cookies. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Habib at 703-360-7742 or [GodiHabib@verizon.net](mailto:GodiHabib@verizon.net).

### Invasive Species

Many have noted with concern the proliferation of invasive vines/plants along the bike trail and in Ft. Hunt Park. These are slowly destroying our tree canopy. Now is your chance to do something about it! The National Park Service, which has jurisdiction over both the bike trail and the park, has a program to remove invasives from Theodore Roosevelt Island and the Dyke Marsh Wildlife area. Volunteers meet in the parking lot of Roosevelt Island every Thursday and Saturday and work from 10AM-2:30PM. They meet at the Belle Haven picnic area parking lot every Friday to work in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife area from

10AM to 2:30PM. If you are interested in volunteering to work on either of these projects contact Kevin Hull at [KevinHull@nps.gov](mailto:KevinHull@nps.gov).

Heretofore, there has been no program to remove invasives from our end of the bike trail. Now the National Park Service will train volunteers to work on their own to remove invasives, including on the southern end of the bike trail and Ft. Hunt Park – our neck of the woods. Volunteers must attend a one-day training program on Saturday, May 15.

*Note:* without this training, residents are prohibited from removing invasives in the National Park area. The training will likely take place at the National Park Service office at Turkey Run, run most of the day, and also include a field trip. Further details will be provided in April. The Park Service stresses that this training program is not an educational venture. Those who attend must be committed to actually working in the field to remove invasives. If you are interested in joining this effort to maintain the beauty of the bike trail and Ft. Hunt Park, please contact Mike Habib at 703-360-7742 or [GodiHabib@verizon.net](mailto:GodiHabib@verizon.net). Mike will register you for the training program and provide additional info.

*Mike Habib, Environment and Recreation Chair*

## Planning and Zoning

In response to citizen concern about new houses being built taller and having a "looming" effect in older neighborhoods, a task force was created. The Residential Compatibility Task Force was comprised of citizens as well as builders and members of the planning commission. Numerous county staffers attended meetings as needed to provide their expertise regarding the current regulations and what they do and do not allow. They met for about two years and were not able to reach any definite solutions for how to solve the problem of newer houses "looming" over older, smaller homes.

While the task force considered many approaches for how to achieve compatibility of newer houses with older, existing homes, in the end they decided to try one new rule. In determining how tall a house is, all new houses will be measured from either pre-grade

or post-grade dirt level, *whichever is higher*. The maximum any house can be is a mean of 35 feet from grade. The thoughts behind only going this far with new rules and laws is the complexity of the problem and trying to balance the concern of property rights of all—existing neighbors as well as new property owners who want to build new homes. It was decided to try this approach for a few years and see if it solves the problem.

Since that decision, the P&Z committee chairman has recently drafted compatibility guidelines and presented them to the committee for review. I thought the first draft was a bit overbroad in scope but he is going to present a new draft. I approach any new regulations with caution and will let you know what the proposed new solution is.

*JoJo Shifflett, Planning and Zoning Chair*

## Education

### Budget Update

The Fairfax County School Board has voted to adopt the Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) FY 2011 advertised budget of \$2.3 billion, restoring some programs previously identified for elimination in the proposed budget. Restoration of these programs depends on whether or not FCPS receives adequate funding from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the state.

The good news is the local composite index (LCI) would not be frozen, allowing FCPS to receive additional funding that the index entitles our school system to. The updated LCI calculation amounts to \$61.9 million in funding. However, the combination of Governor Kaine's budget and the house and senate proposed amendments reduce state funding in other ways. Continued monitoring of the budget is needed to determine the actual FCPS' revenue for next year.

### Support Our Schools Through Fund Raisers

Given the budget cuts this year, it is even more important to our children that we support school fund raising activities. Mount Vernon High School will conduct their annual mulch sale this Spring as well as host several theater events. I also encourage you to support our young athletes who ask for a donation for football, crew, the school band, and such. These events are part of growing up and will create lasting memories for our children.

Washington Mill Elementary School (WMES) participates year round in the Box Tops 4 School program. Box Tops can be found on a variety of home products such as cereal



boxes, Kleenex boxes, packaged cake mixes, etc. Box Tops are worth 10 cents each and add up surprisingly fast.

In addition to the Box Tops 4 School program, WMES is collecting and recycling printer ink cartridges. Box Tops and cartridges can be dropped off in the school's front office or brought to the Mount Vernon Community Council Meeting.

Another way for our schools to receive funds is to shop through the Box Top Marketplace. Up to 8% of your purchase will be automatically donated back to our school, up to \$20,000 each year, with no additional cost to you.

It is very simple to sign up online. Sign up at the Box Tops website ([btfe.com](http://btfe.com)) to shop at over 70 retail stores who help support our schools! Choose from quality stores such as JCPenney, Nordstrom, Lands' End, Smith & Hawken, Flowers.com, Best Buy, Office Max and many others.

*Valerie Schalk, Education Chair*



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## Public Safety

Spring is around the corner! This is probably a good time to review what went well or not-so-well in our personal and household emergency planning during the recent storms, blizzards, road closures and (for some) power outages. For at least a few hours and in some cases a few days, most MVCA residents were on their own. "Lessons Learned" included the need for:

- Spare sets of batteries of all types for flashlights/radios/lanterns/detectors, etc,
- Hand-cranked flashlights,
- Hand-cranked radios with weather channels,
- Battery-powered small 2-way radios (\$20-30 for a set of 2) ,
- One-time use chemical light sticks,
- Fully charged and operable fire extinguishers,
- Phone lists of neighbors,
- Battery-powered smoke detectors,
- NOT using candles, etc indoors for light or heat,
- Ensuring ventilation if using gasoline-powered generators,
- Keeping interior stairs and halls clear to avoid falls during power outages,
- Keeping adequate supplies of prescription and OTC drugs, bottled water, and food that does not require refrigeration nor cooking,
- Garbage bags,
- First-aid kits,
- NOT using ovens or stove-tops for house heating,
- Having a summary of medical records available in the event of need for EMS/ambulance pickup.

Consider signing up for CERT (Community Emergency Response Training). More info on that valuable program and the CERT training syllabus is on the MVCCA web site.

*Your Neighbor, John A. Hurley, Sr*



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## Mount Vernon Civic Assn, Inc.

### Officers

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**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:** (Vacant)  
**Community Picnic:** Jeannine Simmons ..... (703) 360-3613  
**Education:** Valerie Schalk ..... (703) 619-6312  
**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:** JoJo Shiflett ..... (703) 704-9222  
**Public Safety:** John Hurley..... (703) 799-9353  
**Transportation:** Pete Esser..... (703) 799-5150

[webmaster@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](mailto:webmaster@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org)

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