



# Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

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

## President's Message

Happy New Year! January/February 2010

### General Membership Meeting

Wednesday, January 13, 2009

#### Speaker

Jeff Todd,

President of the Mount Vernon-  
Lee Chamber of Commerce

#### Where and When

Washington Mill Elementary

7:00 Pizza and soda

7:30 PM program

#### Bonus!

All members attending our January meeting will be eligible to win a free DVD set of PBS' *Ken Burns: The National Parks*.

### Greetings Friends and Neighbors!

I hope that you and your families had a great Holiday Season and are enjoying this New Year 2010.

### 2009 in Review

2009 was another successful year for the Mount Vernon Civic Association. Your Association, through the Board and our wonderful members, provided community service and represented the interests of our community at the District and County level. We also came together as a community at our Third Annual MVCA Picnic in June, where a good time was had by all! Many thanks go to our selfless officers and directors, volunteers, sponsors, and members who are the heart of the MVCA and make our activities possible.

### Upcoming MVCA Elections

Hard as it is for me to believe, it is time again for our bi-annual elections. Elections will be held at our January 13, 2010 membership meeting. I am pleased to announce that our Nominations Committee, Ron Neitzke, Julie Owens, and John Hurley, have presented a full slate of nominees to serve as the elected leadership of Your Association. They are: 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. I am very grateful to these women and men for stepping forward.

If you or someone you know is interested in running for any of these positions, please contact me or one of our Nominations Committee members. As I have stressed repeatedly, we would love to have contested elections, but that is impossible without people who are willing to run and serve. The individuals who are on the current slate are such people. Are you?

I would also like to recognize and thank Sandy Polson for his years of dedicated service as a MVCA Director, and express my appreciation to our outgoing 2nd VP, Pat Stallings, for his service.

### Chamber President to Speak at MVCA

Jeff Todd, President of the Mount Vernon-Lee Chamber of Commerce, will be our guest speaker at our January 14 membership meeting at Washington Mill School. Jeff is a successful business man, generous benefactor to many in our local

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community, and passionate advocate for the continued revitalization of the Route 1 corridor. Please plan to join us for an informative and interactive session with one of our area’s business and community leaders.

**Door Prize at MVCA Meeting**

If the exercise of democracy and a dynamic speaker aren’t enough, all members attending our January meeting will be eligible to win a door prize! Thanks to the generosity of Ken Poortinga, we are giving a DVD set of PBS’ Ken Burns: The National Parks to one lucky member. All you have to do is come! Pizza at 7:00; meeting at 7:30; drawing for The National Parks after the elections. See you there!



This newsletter marks the end of my third year as MVCA President. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve you and I hope to continue. Please don’t hesitate to provide me your input and feedback on matters of interest to you, your neighborhood, our Association, and the Mount Vernon District. I will do my best to carry the message forward and fairly represent all of our interests.

I look forward to seeing you at our January 13th meeting,

Best wishes,

*John Skudlarek*  
*MVCA President*

**Mount Vernon Civic Association  
 2010-2011 Leadership Nominees**

- President..... John Skudlarek
- 1st Vice-President ..... Paul Schray
- 2nd Vice-President .... Pete Esser
- Secretary..... Karan Cerutti
- Treasurer ..... Dr. Tom Cleary
- Directors..... Mike Habib, Ron Neitzke,  
 Valerie Schalk

*Terms are two years. If you are interested in running for a position please contact a member of the Nominations Committee (Ron Neitzke, 703-360-3807; Julie Owens, 703-780-5218; or John Hurley, 703-799-9353) or offer your candidacy at the January 13 membership meeting.*

**Membership**

Happy New Year to all MVCA members and neighbors! It's that time of year again—yes, it's time to renew your annual membership! You will be receiving your membership renewal form in the mail later this month. You can also download the membership form at [www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](http://www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org). Membership is \$20 and we appreciate you sending in your completed membership form and check to MVCA, P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

For those who don't have the 2009-2010 directory, we will deliver your new directory when we receive your membership form. Also, if you are a block captain, please let us know when neighbors move in or out of the neighborhood. Thanks for your support and please don't hesitate to contact us with questions.

*Elizabeth Bancroft      Ken Poortinga*  
*703.360.4206              703.360.7740*

## Neighborhood Watch

Before the last spark has been struck from the metaphors generated by the holiday season, may I report that the security situation around here has been, if not holy, at least silent, and generally, well, stable.

I will shortly circulate our new schedule covering 2010: our fifty volunteers doing one week each. It means that on at least the weekend nights throughout the year, someone from our neighborhood drives slowly around our streets showing our Watch signs. We check to see that



everything is in order: no suspiciously parked vehicles, no unlikely pedestrians, no accumulations of newspapers or uncollected trash, and no invitations to illegal activities. Even though we rarely run into a serious problem, we at least remind one another to be informally vigilant.

During the months of October, November, and December, these volunteers took their turns (one week each): Randy Earley & Cindy Forelli, Rosemary Jellish, Pat

Stallings & Karan Cerutti, Mike Habib, Bart & Evelyn Hewitt, Ron & Joan Jones, Sean McCarthy, Royce & Chris Radeline, Phil Mongan, Kevin & Debbie O'Neill, Dennis Phillips, Rich & Pat Gilfillan, Joe & Carol Mattaino, and Barry Holland. Our thanks to each and every one.

One difficulty in our security shield has been overcome during the past few months. Our friends at Mansion House Yacht Club have installed a pair of heavy-duty gates which with a little encouragement roll firmly shut. Our patrols report a great improvement in this formerly worrisome invitation to misuse. On behalf of Neighborhood Watch and the Civic Association, a sincere thanks to the tennis, swim and sailing clubs for the substantial investment in this installation which discourages transients, loiterers, and trespassers.

Officer Clift keeps us posted on crime in and around our neighborhood. There have been a few serious incidents along the southern end of Route 1, though none closer than that. 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.

*Cóilin Owens, Coordinator  
Cowens7@gmu.edu*

## A Web Site for All of Us

Have you looked at the MVCA website lately? You can see photos from our annual picnics, newsletters, and other useful information.

We're always looking for new content, especially from residents like you! If you're interested in contributing, please send your inquiry or contribution to John Skudlarek, (703) 704-5213, or [president@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](mailto:president@MountVernonCivicAssociation.org).



## Planning and Zoning

Happy New Year Neighbors! The Planning and Zoning Committee met on December 1, 2009.

### Hotel Proposed for Property on Richmond Hwy

We heard improved plans from a developer who had made presentations to our committee a few months ago. The proposal is from the owners of 8850 Richmond Highway. The property is beside Roy Rogers and the IMP building is located upon it. The owner wants the property rezoned so he can put two hotels on the property. The IMP building would also remain.

The owner presented a similar proposal a few months ago and the committee members told him they could not support any rezoning unless one of the hotels he proposes contains a conference center or wedding/banquet facilities. Thus, the owner submitted new plans. He proposes a smaller hotel and a second larger hotel which includes a 5100 square foot banquet room capable of seating 400. The committee voted to NOT OPPOSE the project and sent it up to the President's committee for final approval. However, I recently read that the president's committee rejected the resolution and is sending the hotel proposal back to our committee for more review.

### Commercial Vehicle Parking

On December 7, 2009 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to ban most commercial vehicles, trailers, trucks and vans from parking on residential streets. This is a more severe law than the one passed back in the summer banning boats and trailers. I do not know the exact definition of a commercial vehicle but the details include vehicles that are more than 21 feet long, more than eight feet high, or have a width of 102 inches or more. Vehicles carrying commercial freight are prohibited. There are some exceptions for commercial vehicles such as if you own a taxi cab and it is registered in Virginia, you may park one taxi cab on the street. If you own a commercial vehicle or

you are not sure if your vehicle is considered a commercial vehicle, please check with the county so you will not get a ticket.

### Office Vacancies

Speaking of commercial vehicles, our businesses are not faring much better in finding friends at the county level. Fairfax Office vacancies are at a 16 year high. Currently, Fifty-one commercial office buildings with approximately 4 million square feet standing completely empty around our county. Commercial property often lags behind residential properties in realizing declining values and we are now seeing



commercial properties around the county lose their value while the real estate taxes on many commercial properties (especially those along Route One) **literally doubled** in the last two years. County staff predicts that commercial real estate values will continue to decline by 10% in 2011.

### National Library

Finally, most of you may have heard that Mount Vernon Estate is planning to construct a "National Library". A prominent Baltimore architect has been hired to design the building which is to be built near the Wessynton Neighborhood. Please do not think me a Mount Vernon dissident—however, however, I am still trying to figure out how our neighboring presidential estate gets all the projects approved without public hearings, etc. I will be watching to see if the proposed plans for this new "library in the woods" (which we all know will be accompanied by "more buses of people in the woods") will be brought before the planning and zoning committee for review. We shall see...

Until next time, keep warm!!

*JoJo Shifflett  
Planning and Zoning Chair*

## Transportation

The Washington region's traffic density is one of a just a very few things that occasionally make many of us question the wisdom of living near the nation's capitol. But as a small, yet ever increasing subset of area residents has learned, there is something to be said for the old adage of an ounce of prevention being worth a pound of cure. Specifically, those who avail themselves of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's Route 11Y Express Bus know that there is indeed a better way to commute to and from the District. The 11Y's several daily runs, commencing with an inbound morning bus originating near Washington's Grist Mill, contribute significantly to alleviating roadway congestion and pollution, and in a small yet nonetheless meaningful way do something to reduce our nation's dependence on imported sources of energy.

However, in a recent draft plan, Fairfax County planners proposed eliminating the 11Y bus route. The draft plan and the report upon which it was based were roundly criticized by riders as lacking a foundation in sound financial analysis. In addition, the proposed route cut completely ignored the many reasons that 11Y commuters, who represent a broad

cross section of our community, choose to leave their cars at home. In the spirit of letting despots know that we are not to be trod upon, a coalition of individual 11Y riders and neighborhood organizations voiced their concerns. The net outcome of the campaign was that the Fairfax County Department of Transportation and local elected officials managed to find a way to preserve the 11Y while not adding even one thin dime to the county's budget. And those who still haven't discovered the many good reasons to change over to the 11Y won't have to fight for space on our roads with an additional 50 to 100 extra vehicles per hour during peak commuting periods.

The Mount Vernon Civic Association will continue to serve the interests of our community with regard to improving area roadways and traffic, and we are appreciative of your input. For those of you who are considering giving your car a rest, the 11Y schedule is available at <http://www.wmata.com/bus/timetables/va/11y.pdf>.

*Peter J. Esser*  
Transportation Chair

## Public Safety

Winter is here! A few thoughts:

- Please consider wearing reflective bands or belts and carrying a flashlight, whistle and some sort of address or ID when walking in darkness or low-visibility conditions. Many of the streets in our neighborhoods do not have sidewalks and drivers need to be on the look-out for pedestrians, joggers, bicyclists, neighbors putting out trash roller bins, etc etc.
- There have been at least two reports of thieves entering residences (in the Belle Haven area) through an unlocked rear entry while residents were shoveling snow in the front.
- Keep garage doors closed.
- Consider use of motion-detector outside lights to deter burglars.
- Dispose of fireplace ashes SAFELY.
- Report suspicious vehicles particularly trucks, vans with ladders, etc if neighbors are away. If you need immediate Police response call 911.
- Let your neighbors know if you will be away.
- STOP at STOP signs.
- Stay clear of heavy snow-removal equipment.

Best wishes for a safe and Happy New Year!

*Your Neighbor,*  
*John Hurley*

## Education in Fairfax County

### FY 2011 Financial Forecast

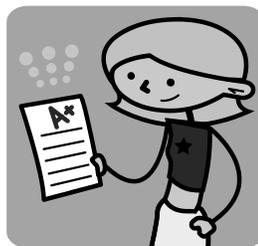
To balance the FY 2011 Budget in light of a projected \$315.6 million deficit, there will need to be significant cost reductions, so the Board discussed programmatic reductions and potential government restructuring. Partial programmatic reductions were discussed, rather than the elimination of whole programs. However, no definitive cuts were decided.

Board members stated that budget problems can't be solved by doing the same things every year. Some budget reductions, such as elimination of salary adjustments, can be done for a few years but they're not sustainable.

One budget option discussed was the diversification of revenue via a meals tax. Voters would need to approve this initiative; it could bring revenue of \$80 million to a future budget year. However, to put a meals tax referendum on the November ballot, the Board would have had to take action at the June 22, 2009, Board meeting, so it's too late for this year.

### Overview for FY2010

- \$2.2 billion budget
- 173,573 students projected at 197 schools and centers. FCPS is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest school district in the nation.
- Average cost per student for the 2009/2010 school year: \$12,898
- 100% of FCPS schools are fully accredited.
- FCPS students outpace state and national average scores on the SATs. FCPS students in the class of 2008 had an average combined score of 1654. This far exceeds the average combined scores of 1522 in Virginia and 1511 in the nation.
- 92.6 percent of high school graduates continue on to some form of postsecondary education.
- National Merit Semifinalists: 194 (Class of 2009)
- Over 150 languages are spoken by FCPS students
- 92.3% of FCPS employees work inside our schools



- FCPS transports more students every day than any school system in the United States with the exception of New York City

### Grading Policy Changes

The Fairfax County School Board has instituted a modified ten-point grading scale that uses pluses and minuses and increases the grade point weight (GPA) for Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), selected dual enrollment college, and honors courses.

The additional weighting of AP and IB courses and the additional weighting of honors courses is retroactive for all courses that appear on a student's high school transcript. For example, a student who is a junior during the 2009-10 school year who took an honors course as a freshman received an additional 0.5 weight for that course added to his or her transcript retroactively. Dual enrollment courses that are currently weighted will continue to be weighted.

Students at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) receive a weighting of 0.5 for all required math, science, English, and social studies courses. The weighting of 0.5 is awarded to all math courses above the level of AP courses that are not dual enrollment and to all science, math, and technology research and mentorship courses.

Transcripts for students no longer enrolled in FCPS and FCPS graduates will not be updated to reflect the new retroactive weights. Transcripts for students transferring into FCPS with AP, IB, selected dual enrollment and honors courses will be reviewed to determine the transfer status of course credits.

The new grading scale is effective September 2009.

A (93-100) = 4.0

A- (90-92) = 3.7

B+ (87-89) = 3.3

B (83-86) = 3.0

B- (80-82) = 2.7

C+ (77-79) = 2.3

C (73-76) = 2.0

C- (70-72) = 1.7

D+ (67-69) = 1.3

D (64-66) = 1.0

F (below 64) = 0.0

*Valerie Schalk-Day*  
Education Chair

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**MATT MATHES**

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membership meeting?  
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## Mount Vernon Civic Assn, Inc.

### Officers

**President: John Skudlarek**..... (703) 704-5213  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Paul Schray** ..... (703) 619-9377  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Pat Stallings** ..... (703) 778-4442  
**Secretary: Karan Cerutti**..... (703) 360-9559  
**Treasurer: Tom Cleary** ..... (703) 360-3903

### Directors

**Mike Habib:** ..... (703) 360-7742  
**Ron Neitzke:** ..... (703) 360-3807  
**Sandy Polson:** ..... (703) 360-2814

### 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) 360-9028  
**Planning & Zoning: JoJo Shiflett** ..... (703) 704-9222  
**Public Safety: John Hurley** ..... (703) 799-9353  
**Transportation: (Vacant)**..... (703) 619-9377

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

## Membership Meetings

Please plan to join other Mount Vernon Civic Association residents at our bi-monthly membership meetings.:

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Wednesday, May 12, 2010

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

