



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Winter 2014

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

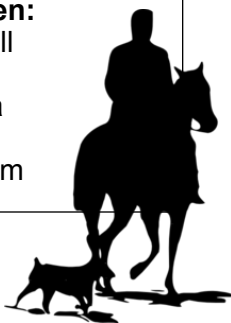
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Mount Vernon Civic Association General Membership Meeting

Wednesday,
January 8, 2013

Speaker:
Arcadia Farm at
Woodlawn Estate

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



Holiday greetings to all and I hope that you experienced a wonderful holiday season. As we move into the new year, I offer our invitation to have you join us at the MVCA Annual General Membership Meeting which will be held Wednesday, January 8 at Washington Mill Elementary School. Our guest speaker for the evening will be a representative from Arcadia Farm at Woodlawn Estate to share with us their future plans for the use of the horse pasture land and stable areas soon to be impacted by the Route 1 widening project. Please join us at 7:30pm for the start of the meeting or stop by at 7:00pm for pizza and beverages.

President's Message

One of the agenda items that we will be addressing at the meeting will be the election of MVCA officers and directors to serve for the next two years. The board of directors recently approved a slate of nominations which include: President – Paul Schray, 1st Vice President – Bruce Kitchen, 2nd Vice President – Sean McCarthy, Secretary-Karan Cerutti, Treasurer-Tom Cleary, and three Directors-Dan Rinzel, Ken Poortinga and John Skudlarek. Additional nominations for these positions will remain open until the election. Please contact me if anyone is interested in serving or feel free to nominate candidates at the meeting.

Long-time board Director and committee chair Mike Habib has left the board. We all thank him for his dedication to our neighborhood over the past several years and will miss his leadership. We wish Mike all the best. I am pleased to announce that new MVCA neighbors Cindy Brown and Jim Brown have volunteered to provide leadership to two committees that are important to our representation with the Mount Vernon Council of

Citizens' Associations. Cindy has agreed to chair the Consumer Affairs Committee and Jim will chair the Health & Human Services Committee. Thank you to both for your contributions.

Planning for the next MVCA Community Picnic has begun. Because of last year's successful increased attendance due to the earlier picnic date, we have again scheduled this year's picnic to be held in mid-May. If you would like to help with the planning of this event please contact Ken Poortinga or me. Ken will be discussing the picnic at the meeting.

As always I invite all to spend some of your time reviewing this newsletter as it contains important information occurring within our community that will be of interest to you. Please do not hesitate to contact me, our directors or committee chairs if we can be of assistance to you.

*Paul Schray, President
Mount Vernon Civic
Association*

Education

Meals tax discussion

The idea of a tax on restaurant meals is being floated again in Fairfax County. Those in favor of the tax say it would bring extra, needed revenue to the county. The effort is championed by Gerry Hyland as a way to diversify and increase county revenue. He advocates having a portion of the tax dedicated to essential services, such as public safety and education

The County Board of supervisors can't vote for or against the meals tax, only whether or not to put it up for a vote. Voter approval is required in order for a meal tax to actually take effect. Fairfax residents rejected a meals tax in a 1992 referendum.

Budget and staffing comparisons

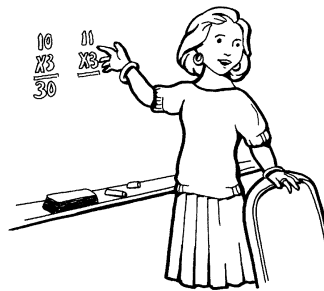
The Washington Area Boards of Education (WABE) was established as a way for people to compare, apples to apples, various budget and staffing parameters between the school systems in our region. The school systems in WABE are Alexandria City Public Schools, Arlington County Public Schools, Fairfax City Public Schools, Fairfax County Public Schools, Falls Church City Public Schools, Loudoun County

Public Schools, Manassas City Public Schools, Manassas Park City Public Schools, Montgomery County Public Schools, Prince George's County Public Schools, Prince William County Public Schools.

The FCPS school board has a policy of keeping salaries and overall expenditures within the median range for our area. People often suggest to me that we should reduce the number of Non-school based staff as a way of reducing the funding shortfall in our school budget. This is a valid point of discussion but I think it's important to note that we have one of the lowest percentages of non –School based staff to school –based staff in the region.

You can review the WABE report for 2014 at <http://www.fcps.edu/fs/budget/wabe/2014.pdf>.

*Bruce Kitchen
MVCA Education Chair*



A Few Facts About George Washington

Other than General, what job did George Washington's hold before he was president?

Farmer. Washington, who believed that America should become a "granary to the world", sought to improve many aspects of farming. His advanced crop rotations, use of fertilizers, experimentation with crops, and innovative farm equipment made him one of the "pioneers" of modern agriculture.

How many votes did George Washington get in the first presidential election?

Only 69. At that time, there was no popular vote for president, only the votes of the electoral college, which was made up of representatives from each state. The 69 votes Washington received, however, represented one vote from each elector - thereby making George Washington the only

president in history to have been unanimously elected.

Did George Washington wear a wig?

No. Even though wigs were fashionable, Washington kept his own hair, which he wore long and tied back in a queue, or ponytail. He did, however, powder his hair as was the custom of the time.

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mountvernon.org.*

Budget and Finance

I hope everyone had a Happy New Year. May your 2014 resolutions be within your grasp.

The 2015 budget discussions are under way. But the powers that be continue to analyze how 2014 comes to a close and the health of the local economy. We still face many challenges here in Fairfax County (FC) with the effects of the Sequester still lingering and school populations rising. The local economy is a mix of positives and negatives.

On the positive side, we still have low unemployment at 4.1%, more jobs than last year and an improving housing market. On the negative side, we have declining retail sales and a 2.1% slide in sales tax receipts. The declining retail sales numbers are being attributed to the ripple effect of the sequestration and federal shutdown furloughs.

FC general fund revenue is expected to increase just under 3% in 2015 and 2016. Much of this increase is due to projected rising home values of about 4 to 4.5%, which is how FC raises the bulk of its revenue. An interesting statistic: residential home values, on average, are still 8.4% under 2008 peak values. At current tax rates, this is a \$161 million revenue loss for the County.

However, the rising revenues are not keeping up with rising costs. FC is projecting budget shortfalls in 2014 and 2015 of \$169 million and \$274 million, respectively. These shortfalls are due to a number of increased expenses, which include an increase in the school transfer, employee pay and benefit increases including the costs of required health insurance and retirement savings, and debt service and capital requirements.

Difficult decisions will have to be made on how to cover these shortfalls. Do we raise taxes or do we cut services and investment? Supervisor Highland is proposing a 5% meals tax. He further advises that the Board of Supervisors can word the resolutions to earmark the money specifically for education. Many supporters of the meals tax note that most of our surrounding counties have a meals tax and a strong school system is a benefit to our business community.

As your humble Budget and Finance Chair, I think it's too soon to advocate for tax increases until we have more transparency and discussion on the costs that are driving our budgets. I would also like more discussion on the costs associated with our significant school demographic changes. Why are the school demographics changing and why are there added costs? Can FC do a cost benefit analysis covering both the short and long term effects of these school demographic changes?

As residents of FC, we can vote in a number of different ways. We can vote at the ballot box, we can vote with our pocket books through reduced/increased spending and some may chose to vote by looking at opportunities outside of the County. Our leaders should continue to support FC's long tradition of growth and prosperity by committing itself to informed and responsible fiscal behavior.

My resolution for 2014 is to help fight for greater transparency in our finances and continued education of our voters so that our choices are sustainable over the long run. As always, please feel free to email me at mclucid@verizon.net. The 2015 budget discussion documents can be found online at fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/.

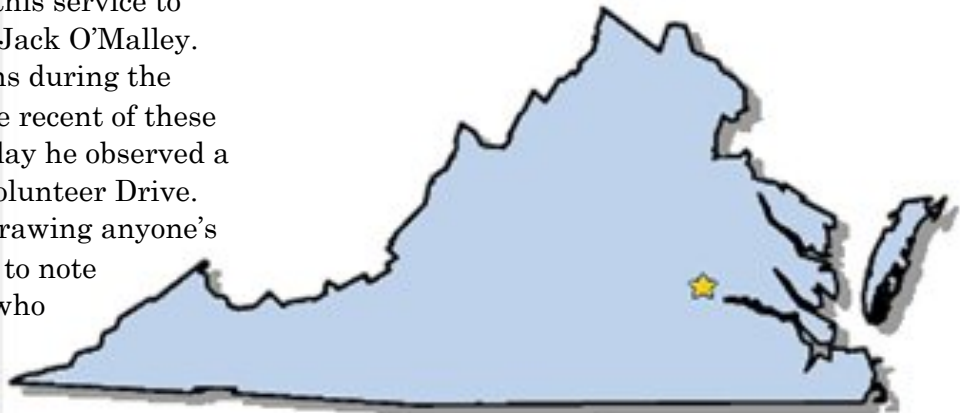
Sean McCarthy
MVCA Budget and Finance Chair

Neighborhood Watch

If we had an award program for this service to our neighborhood, it would go to Jack O'Malley. His alertness has on two occasions during the past year led to arrests. The more recent of these arose when in the middle of the day he observed a suspiciously parked vehicle on Volunteer Drive. He did the right thing: without drawing anyone's attention, he used his binoculars to note the number plate. A neighbor—who was away at work at the time—returned to find a back window forced open and some valuable items missing from her home. The police detective, Officer Davis, had a firm lead in pursuing the case. When some of the items subsequently showed up at a pawn shop, were identified and linked with the owner of the car and finger prints on the window, an arrest was made. The case is pending.

This instance exemplifies how the spirit of Neighborhood Watch helps keep us safe from burglary and other offenses. Alertness to unusual and suspicious persons, vehicles, and activities helps prevent crime. Zero tolerance of breaches of propriety and good citizenship—trash in the swales, speeding, and illegally parked vehicles—prevents more serious violations. Watching out for neighbors who are away on vacation or at work discourages mischief. Our quiet nightly patrols—for which we are grateful—help remind everyone to do as Jack did: no more, but no less.

Cóilín Owens
MVCA Neighborhood Watch Coordinator



Membership

Happy 2014 to all our MVCA neighbors!
Whether you are an owner or a renter, we welcome you to our civic association.

This is a friendly reminder!

The MVCA annual membership drive begins this month. Please submit your \$20 annual dues after receiving the membership renewal form in the mail. Membership forms can also be downloaded at www.mountvernoncivicassociation.org and mailed to MVCA, PO Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121.

Please remember to fill out your membership form completely.

Thank You!

Elizabeth Bancroft
MVCA Membership and Directory Co-Chair
703.360.4206

Ken Poortinga
MVCA Membership and Directory Co-Chair
703.360.7740

Public Safety

Fairfax County CERT Training

We have an unusually fine opportunity to participate in CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training in February and March at the Mount Vernon Government Center, 2511 Parkers Lane (the building which houses Supervisor Hyland's office and the Police Station between the Firehouse and INOVA/Mount Vernon Hospital and across the street from Sherwood Hall Library.) Classes will be held Monday evenings from 7 to 9:30 pm beginning on February 3 and ending with the 8th session on March 31. (NO session on February 17.) There is ample free parking. "Slots" may go quickly as all MVCCA member associations such as our MVCA have been informed.

Mr. James Sobecke will be the Lead Instructor (jsobecke@verizon.net) MVCCA Public Safety Committee Chair Dean Sherick (dean.sherick@gmail.com) has arranged for this set (CERT Basic Class 81) of sessions to be held in our neighborhood to eliminate the need to travel to the County Fire and Rescue Training Center. If you are interested and/or wish to register please e-mail Dean with a copy to me (hurleyja@aol.com). If you prefer that such a

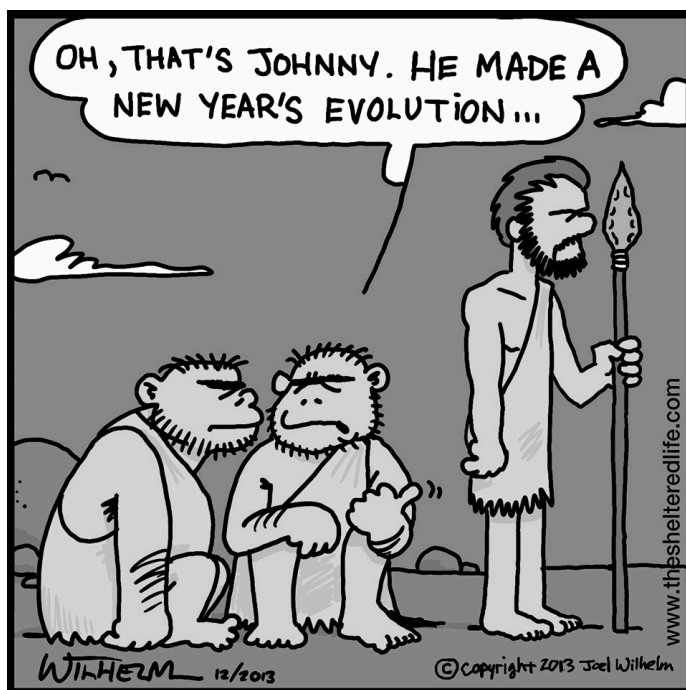
program be held in the afternoon in the future please let Dean and me know..

Winter Reminders

- ✓ Traffic Safety — watch for pedestrians, school buses
- ✓ Pedestrians should have reflective gear
- ✓ Allow additional time and space for stopping on ice and snow
- ✓ Car Lights On when Wipers are ON
- ✓ Keep car windows clear of ice and snow
- ✓ Be FIRE-SAFE with trees, candles, fireplaces, ash disposal, wrapping paper disposal, etc
- ✓ Keep cars locked — do not leave car motors running at convenience stores
- ✓ Utilize external lighting such as motion-sensitive lights

Season's Greetings and Best wishes for a Safe and Happy 2014.

*Your Neighbor. John Hurley
Chair, MVCA Public Safety Committee*



Cartoon thanks to *The Sheltered Life* by Joel Wilhelm. Find him on Facebook.

Mount Vernon Estate

Be a Part of History in Your Own Back Yard!

Join the fun and festivities at the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Friends 67th Annual Birthnight Supper and Ball, February 16, 2014.

**67th Annual Birthnight
Supper and Ball
February 16, 2014**

Don't miss out on the hottest ticket in the neighborhood! Mark your calendars for the Neighborhood Friends of Mount Vernon's Annual Birthnight Supper and Ball. This year's 67th Annual Birthnight Supper and Ball will be held on Sunday, February 16, 2014 at the Mount Vernon Estate. Although this special, black tie event is organized by the Neighborhood Friends of Mount Vernon, you do not need to be a member to attend this unique and festive evening which offers you an opportunity to be a part of Mount Vernon's history!

This popular event celebrates George Washington's Birthday and is steeped in tradition as it was founded in 1947 by the late Miss Mayme C. Partker and the late Bernice Carter Davis, under the auspice of the "Mount Vernon Citizens' Association" — a group of Mount Vernon area citizens whose sole organizational purpose was to sponsor this annual event to honor our first President.

This event has grown and matured since its inception. In 2013 over 200 guests attended the Ball, with 20 sponsors, a silent auction, raffle, dinner, and dancing. The 2013 ball was the most successful to date, netting over \$61,000 for the Neighborhood Friends sponsored project.

A Worthwhile Cause

The Ball is not only a very special, one of a kind experience, but it also supports a very worthwhile cause. This year's 2013-2014 Neighborhood Friends Sponsored Project is the restoration of the Mount Vernon Mansion Staircases. All net

proceeds from the Supper and Ball go to this important restoration project. Mount Vernon's beautiful grand staircase in the central passage needs to be restored and is showing the effects of more than two million feet per year climbing these iconic stairs. Similar restoration is needed with the other two primary staircases in the Mansion. With the support of the Neighborhood Friends, Mount Vernon will research, document, and undertake the engineering needs to restore these historical stairs so that future generations to come can walk in the footsteps of General Washington.

How Do You Become a Part of the Birthnight Supper and Ball History?

There are several ways to support the Ball and the Mansion Staircase Restoration Project.

Sponsorship: Individuals, corporations and businesses can give support through various sponsorship levels. Not only does this give businesses exposure and a marketing opportunity, but it also supports a worthwhile cause.



Tickets: Tickets for the event will go on sale on January 4, 2014. Tickets are \$175 per person and include reception, entertainment, dinner, and dancing. Space is limited.

Donations: If you are unable to attend and would still like to support the Mansion Staircase restoration project, donations are also welcomed and accepted.

For more information, on sponsoring, tickets or donations please contact Tammy Eddy, Mount Vernon's Membership Manager at (703) 799-5075 or teddy@mountvernon.org.

*Tammy Eddy
Mount Vernon Estate Membership Manager*



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**Upcoming Events in
Mount Vernon**

- January 8MVCA general membership meeting
- February 16....Neighborhood Friends of Mount Vernon Birthnight Supper and Ball
- March 12MVCA general membership meeting

Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Officers

- President: Paul Schray(703) 619-9377
- 1st Vice President: Pete Esser.....(703) 799-5150
- 2nd Vice President: John Skudlarek(703) 704-5213
- Secretary: Karan Cerutti(703) 778-4442
- Treasurer: Tom Cleary(703) 360-3903

Directors

- Ken Poortinga(703) 360-7740
- Dan Rinzel(703) 360-4627

Committee Chairs

- Budget and Finance: Sean McCarthy.....(703) 360-0372
- Consumer Affairs: Cindy Brown.....(703) 348-7175
- Education: Bruce Kitchen(703) 799-6473
- Environment & Recreation: Vacant
- Health & Human Services: Jim Brown(703) 348-7175
- 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) 778-4442
- Public Safety: John Hurley.....(703) 799-9353
- Transportation: Pete Esser(703) 799-5150