



# Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

March 2023

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

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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Please join us Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at our next MVCA Membership Meeting at Washington Mill Elementary School, 9100 Cherrytree Drive. At 7 p.m. we will enjoy pizza and drinks. At 7:30 p.m. our meeting will start. We will continue to focus our efforts on how we can find local solutions to climate change and helping children learn.

Christina Reitz, MVCA Environment Committee Chair will lead us in a discussion on climate change. Many of you are concerned about this issue and have already explored solutions. Please come ready to share your insights. Then, Judy Harbeck, MVCA Education Chair, will describe what MVCA is currently doing to help children learn at Washington Mill Elementary Schools. Below are their articles:

## Food Waste and Composting

*By Christina Reitz, Environment Committee Chair*

As we focus on environmental issues, several neighbors have asked about food waste and composting resources. Food waste is a huge environmental stressor because growing, shipping, and storing food all use resources that damage the environment, from pesticides and fertilizers to single use plastics to fuel to ship and store food. Called 'food systems emissions' by the UN, they make up 1/3 of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

Luckily, there's an easy way to reduce your food

waste – meal plan! By carefully planning a week's worth of meals you can reduce both your grocery bill and the amount of food you throw away. Make an inventory of food you already have, look up recipes, and then shop carefully for fresh foods to be consumed this week. It can be fun to try new recipes that incorporate many of the local farmers' markets and reduce plastics and travel resources!

A harder, but extremely rewarding option is composting and gardening in your yard! Growing your own organic herbs, fruits and vegetables reduces the amount of strain on the environment and is good for your physical and mental health. The biggest drawback in our area is the need for a fence – a 6' high fence with a door will keep deer out of your vegetables. Hedges work well as fences, too! An alternative to



fencing is keeping herbs and smaller vegetables, like potatoes and tomatoes, in pots on your deck. Food scraps can be collected in your kitchen and added to a rotating composter in your yard, which can produce dirt in as little as five weeks. So, start now for spring planting!

There are two local companies that collect residential compost and drop off dirt in the spring, but neither one is currently servicing Mount Vernon. Let me know if you're interested in such a service (prices look to be around \$35 a month) and I'll see if I can get us added to their service area!

*Front Cover Articles Continued on Page 8*

# HEALTH

## Dementia: Tips & Tricks to Consider

Whether it is early in the path or further down the progression of dementia, it can be challenging to understand what to expect, what helps, and what medications do. In this newsletter, I'll review types of dementia, what helps, what doesn't help, and what medicines make an impact.

In the U.S., about 6.5% of adults over 60 years old have dementia. Age is the strongest predictor, but having vascular disease, diabetes, and smoking also put people at higher risk. Importantly, social isolation is correlated with increased risk of dementia. Here is a good reason to spend time with one another! Alzheimer dementia, vascular dementia, and "mixed" dementia are the most common types, but Fronto-temporal, Lewy Body, and others exist as well.

Your clinician may suspect dementia for several reasons, but frequently, early dementia is brought to light when a family member raises a concern. This can be a mild decline like difficulty recalling new information or trouble making dinner. Sometimes, people that are "brainy" hide dementia well. They use laughter or avoidance as work-arounds and are diagnosed later in the progression. Word finding difficulties are common - this is likely normal aging, not dementia. It's also normal to walk into the kitchen and forget why. I do this all the time!

We have a hard time predicting the course of dementia, which is why clinicians are sometimes bad at talking about what to expect! Forgetfulness progresses to getting lost or difficulty performing one's job. Up to this point, dementia may go undiagnosed, and people may be in denial. Next, concentration and ability to do complex tasks decline. Later, individuals may have difficulty orienting to time and place and remembering distant memories. Later progression includes forgetting

faces or names of family members, flip flopping sleep patterns, or becoming agitated and anxious. What's the time course? Over the course of months to years for Alzheimer and vascular dementia but very quickly for Lewy Body.

For these types of dementia, there are no available medications that reverse progression. Medications aim to slow progression and preserve function.

**Lifestyle changes are the single most beneficial element of dementia management.** The most successful interventions are exercise, occupational therapy, and reducing unnecessary medicines. Medications such as donepezil (Aricept) and rivastigmine have a small effect on cognition – but are not the panacea of medicines. After progression, memantine may also have a small impact on cognition, but hasn't been shown to impact daily function.

What's the deal with the new drugs? It's been full time drama in the medical world. The FDA approved Aduhelm, but this is after the review panel specifically recommended against approval. In fact, committee members quit due to concern over the process the FDA took to accelerate approval without evidence of improved dementia outcomes. As of today, I advise my patients to wait for more data before starting Aduhelm and its cousin medications.

Dementia is an emotional disease- for the people experiencing it and for family members. Don't forget to take care of all the family – give permission to take "vacation days" from caring for a loved one, accept help from our community or your church, talk to your own doctor about it. Let your team help. I often remind people – helping is not a burden, we are here to share in struggles and be your support.

**Alison Huffstetler, M.D.**  
*Health Committee Chair*

## EDUCATION

### Fairfax County Schools Budget

The FCPS Superintendent released the Proposed FY 2023-24 School Budget on January 12, 2023, which will be finally determined by the School Board in its Advertised Budget to be released February 23, 2023. The Advertised Budget historically does not vary greatly from the Proposed, allowing comments to be made at this time. Overall, for full funding, the Proposed Budget is about 7% over the approved County Transfer for FY2022-23 (see [www.fcps.edu/budget](http://www.fcps.edu/budget) for further information).

The largest component of school funding is teacher and in-school staff salaries, representing about 85% of the total budget. For years, FCPS salaries have not been competitive with surrounding jurisdictions leading to brain drain, especially at the most experienced levels of teachers and local school administrators.

The Proposed Budget provides a 3% Market Scale Adjustment for all employees, and a 2.2% step increase for eligible employees, for a total of 5.2%, which is less than inflation. The budget also proposes a 1% retention bonus for 2023 teachers who reup for 2024 so the increase for many teachers will be 6.2%, still probably below what competitors will offer.

Some small, but new or expanded items, include

expanded Pre-K so more eligible kids can attend, a toe-in-the-water for Middle School sports, and a start to adding “steps” to the salary ladder so very experienced teachers are not cut-off from salary increases, thus encouraging retirement or transfer to other jurisdictions. The budget does expect some enrollment increase as well, though not to pre-pandemic levels. Central office costs remain the lowest in the area at about 5% of spending.



The County Transfer provides about 69% of the School Budget, with Virginia contributing about 20%, Sales tax about 7%, and Federal contributions providing only about 1% despite the high level of federal mandates. The rest of the budget is primarily funded with carry-over balances.

Although a top-ten state in terms of income, Virginia ranks about 41<sup>st</sup> in terms of school funding. Virginia particularly underfunds Fairfax and other Northern Virginia jurisdictions due to the operation of the Local Composite Index (LCI) or the “wealth index” in common parlance, leaving local taxpayers to pick up the slack through property taxes. Additionally, Fairfax stands to lose about \$13M due to a Commonwealth accounting error. Whether Virginia will make good on that error, or what funding will be available, will not be known until the Commonwealth’s budget is adopted later in 2023.

**Judy Harbeck**  
*Education Committee Chair*

## TRANSPORTATION

**Richmond Highway BRT (Bus Rapid Transit)** is a high-quality public transportation system designed to be fast, reliable, and more convenient than rail service, with a dedicated transit way, but uses bus vehicles. The proposed Richmond Highway BRT system will have nine stations, constructed in two sections, and will connect to major employment centers, shopping centers, and residential communities along the Richmond Highway corridor, from Huntington Metrorail Station to Fort Belvoir. The project will include pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as other amenities to support the proposed system. The goal of the BRT system is to increase transit ridership along the corridor and ultimately lead to the future Metrorail extension to Hybla Valley.

The January FCDOT meeting reported BRT design progress. They are currently working towards an 80% design level and are refining easements and right-of-way lines, stormwater management and landscaping, retaining walls, construction phasing, and maintenance of traffic. Coordination with all utilities is underway. With regard to BRT station design (includes #5Gum Springs Station, #6Hybla Valley Station, and #7HylandStation), the focus is materials, furnishings, framing, electrical, pedestrian access, and safety. Constructions for utilities and right of ways begin in 2023 and extend through 2030, for an estimated completion. Timeframes and durations for design, utilities, right of way, vehicle procurement, and construction will vary.

**DC3 Mount Vernon-Potomac Park Line Bus Service** information can be conveniently found at the link below, appearing in PDF format for easy reading and viewing. I have received several messages of interest about this bus route. You may also find this bus route “the ticket” to go from here in Mt Vernon (with nearby access to most in Mt Vernon) to 18th and 19th Streets, Bureau of Engraving, Farragut Square, Potomac Park in Washington DC. The bus runs North and

Southbound, from the Grist Mill Woods Way terminal. I plan to check this out, as it looks quite the scenic route to my yet-to-be-discovered social spot in Washington DC.

**The Speed Camera Pilot Program** begins February 10, 2023, following the six-month, 10-camera pilot. County-wide photo speed enforcement will be implemented in two phases:

**PHASE 1, IN FY 2024, WOULD INCLUDE 50 PHOTO SPEED ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN SCHOOL AND WORK ZONES.**

**PHASE 2, IN FY 2025, WOULD ADD 30 CAMERAS FOR SCHOOL ZONES.**

**CURRENT SPEED CAMERA LOCATIONS INCLUDE:**

- Chesterbrook Elementary School: Kirby Road near the school (Dranesville District)
- Irving Middle School: Old Keene Mill Road near the school (Braddock District)
- Key Middle School: Franconia Road near the school (Franconia District)
- London Towne Elementary School: Stone Road near the school (Sully District)
- Sleepy Hollow Elementary School: Sleepy Hollow Road near the school (Mason District)
- South County Middle School: Silverbrook Road near the school (Mt. Vernon District)
- Terraset Elementary School: Soapstone Drive near the school (Hunter Mill District)
- West Springfield High School: Rolling Road near the school (Springfield District)

For the first 30 days, motorists will receive a warning if the speed camera captures them speeding. There are no points or insurance impacts resulting from a citation. An escalating fine structure, starting at 10 mph over the limit, maxes out at \$100.

**Mark Yonchak**  
*Transportation Committee Chair*

# MOUNT VERNON HISTORY

## A History of the Sherwood Hall Medical Center, Part 2

*(Part 1 appeared in our October 2022 Newsletter)*

The Sherwood Hall Medical Center was built nearly 50 years ago in 1976 across the street from the Mount Vernon Hospital. The purpose was to provide a prime location with easy access to the hospital, so that I and the other physicians who have been fortunate to locate our offices in this historic medical facility can just cross the street to make our hospital rounds.

The Center is distinguished for its legion of excellent physicians and other specialists who have practiced there over the years, including Dr. Gorman Redding, who many have considered the leader and father of the building. I was encouraged to open my office in the Center by Dr. James Mills, the founder of the Association of Emergency Room Physicians, and by a wonderful cardiologist-internist, Dr. Frank Talbot, who has since passed away along with many of the original physicians in the building. Other physicians who have come and gone include surgeons, gastroenterologists, dermatologists, pediatricians, rheumatologists, ophthalmologists, audiologists, orthodontists, dentists, family practice, radiology and internal medicine groups. We had a pharmacy for many years run by David Martin, who did a fine job and was always pleasant and happy to assist our patients.

The Sherwood Hall Medical Center currently is home to Neighborhood Health, which has seven specialties that including dermatology, family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, adolescent medicine, allergy, and immunology. The building also houses Capitol Sleep Centers, which functions seven days a week, day and night. Two primary care physicians, Dr. Bejjenki Chary and Dr. Aladdin Bolad, have offices in the building and we have a physical therapy office.



Psychiatrists who have occupied the building have been well known, well respected, and senior doctors in the community. These include Dr. Paul Luisada, Dr. Richard Palmer and Dr. Paul Peckar. Dr. Peckar was the unfortunate victim of a bomb explosion in 1990. He was about to treat a patient when he apparently opened a gift, which was a box and it exploded in his hand. Sixty percent of his body was burned. He spent many months in the Washington Hospital Center and then many months in recovery. The explosion managed to destroy face, facial features, ears, hands, chest, and almost killed him when one of the pipe bomb particles landed next to his heart.

I apologize that I may have left out some of the very important physicians, health care providers who participated in making the Sherwood Hall Medical Center the great success it is. I would like to add that the building has been very successfully managed over the years by directors, executives and building managers. One I especially remember from 40 years ago was a distinguished manager, General Forsher, who had been in World War II as a tank commander. I recall that he was very helpful in the early management of the building, as have so many others been over the years, including the current management. I look forward to another 50 years of success for Sherwood Hall Medical Center.

**Peter Bernad, MD**  
*Historian*

# PUBLIC SAFETY

Dear Neighbors:

Last week I was at the intersection of Ferry Landing Rd and Forest Haven when a school bus stopped to let off students.

To my dismay, I watched four cars quickly move on through the intersection, rather than waiting until the students were across the street and on the roadside path, thereby putting the students at risk.

PLEASE REMEMBER, OUR ROADS ARE OUR SIDEWALKS. Our community does not have sidewalks, curbs and gutters that our students can use to better keep themselves safe. When you see students gathering, either to board or get off a bus, please stop and wait until they are safely along the side of the road. Thank you.


**Tom Russell**  
*MVCA President*

## It's That Time of Year Again!



Please pay your 2023 MVCA Membership dues! It's easy! Just fill out the MVCA application and mail in both! Only those residents who pay their dues will receive the MVCA 2023-2024 Membership Directory.

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# FAIRFAX COUNTY BUDGET UPDATE

## Fairfax County 2024 Proposed Budget Summary

County Executive, Bryan Hill, presented the proposed Fairfax County 2024 budget on February 21st. Below I touch on a few matters that I believe are important to our Mount Vernon Community. For the full FY 2024 proposal, please visit: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2024-advertised-budget-plan>

As the time of publication of this newsletter, many have already received their 2023 real estate assessments. The FY 2024 proposed budget indicates that assuming no change in the current Real Estate Tax rate of \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value, the average tax bill will increase by about \$520.40. Residential equalization changes (market-driven value increases or decreases) reflect an average residential value increase of 6.97%, with the average assessment for all homes at \$719,522. With these assessed valuations, the proposed budget indicates a projected \$364.46 million in increased revenue over 2022 real estate assessment levels.

I've heard from some in the community that this real estate assessment is surprising—I like to point out the proposed budget has a balance of \$90.22 million for the Board to consider, which Hill suggests can be used to provide real estate tax relief, among other suggestions.

The largest increase in the proposed budget is for Fairfax County public schools. For more specifics on the proposed budget with respect to FCPS, please see Judy's article, also in this newsletter.

County employee retention and recruitment remain a priority and the proposed budget allocates \$92.37 million toward employee pay and benefits. Some of the various recommendations for employee

compensation are: 2% Market Rate Adjustment increase for all employees; regrade job classes found to be out of market, specifically maintenance workers, custodians, programmers, trade supervisors, and plant operators; and \$24.93 million employer contribution increase to pension plans.

EMS transport rates are recommended to be adjusted in FY 2024. The current rates have not been adjusted since

FY 2015 and have not kept pace with Medicare reimbursement rates. The recommendation is to increase the \$12 charge per mile transported to \$18 per mile transported. This increase is estimated to generate an additional \$1.99 million in FY 2024.

Budget public hearings are scheduled for April 11-13. Changes to the proposed budget take place May 2nd. The Board of Supervisors adopts the FY 2024 Budget on May 9. If you would like to participate in the budget public hearings, whether in writing or by phone or video, go to: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form>

**Kirsten Quackenbush**  
*Budget Chair*



## MVCA UPDATES

*Continued From Page 1*

### **Tutoring Students, Food for Thought & Landscaping at Washington Mill Elementary School**

*Judy Harbeck, Education Committee Chair*

The response of our community to requests for volunteers to help Washington Mill students with reading has been rewarding and confirmation of our interest in education for all students. More than a dozen community members have already volunteered but if you are interested, more volunteers are always needed.

At Washington Mill, a Title 1 school with over 50% of students living at or below poverty level as defined by eligibility for free and reduced lunch vouchers, the “Food for Thought” program tries to address the likelihood that many students face food insecurity at home over weekends and holidays.

This program, initiated and run by the PTA, provides sacks of easy to prepare non-perishable food each Friday to about 60 students, who are identified anonymously by school counselors and social workers. PTA volunteers do the purchasing and the sacks are packed on a monthly or bimonthly basis by volunteers including students after school.

At present the program costs about \$1100 per month, and uses up about half of the entire PTA budget for the year, leaving fewer funds for enrichment activities (the PTA pays all fees for club participation), field trips, or special assembly programs.

So, what can we do? While other possible funding sources are explored, the immediate need is for funds. While food donations are accepted and appreciated, buying in bulk makes determining what goes in each bag as well as packing the bags much easier.

If you are interested, checks made out to “Washington Mill PTA” with “Food for Thought” on the memo line will be collected at our next meeting or can be brought or mailed directly to school.

Also, now that interior renovation is done, the grounds will be landscaped. The construction company is required to do some tree replacement but our community would benefit by more extensive planting, native trees and perhaps a pollinator garden. We are looking into partnering with the Yacht Haven Garden Club in this endeavor and more information will be available later.

At the next meeting there will be a sign-up sheet for members interested in possible one-off PTA assistance such as special events, helping financially and/or hands-on with planting, perhaps forming an MVCA education committee.

For some general information on Washington Mill and its PTA, visit:

[https://schoolprofiles.fcps.edu/schlprfl/f?p=108:50:::::P0\\_CURRENT\\_SCHOOL\\_ID,P0\\_EDSL:222,0](https://schoolprofiles.fcps.edu/schlprfl/f?p=108:50:::::P0_CURRENT_SCHOOL_ID,P0_EDSL:222,0) and <https://Washingtonmill.memberhub.com>

**Landscaping:** Also, now that interior renovation is done, the grounds will be landscaped. The renovation budget does include some funds for plantings, but our community would benefit by more extensive planting, native trees and perhaps a pollinator garden. We are looking into partnering with the Yacht Haven Garden Club in this endeavor and more information will be available later.

At the next meeting there will be a sign up sheet for members interested in possible one-off assistance such as special events, helping financially and/or hands-on with planting, perhaps forming an MVCA Education Committee.



## VIRGINIA TORNADO DRILL 2023



Every school, business, workplace and family in Fairfax County (and across the Commonwealth of Virginia) is **strongly encouraged to participate in the statewide tornado drill, Tuesday, March 7, at 9:45 a.m.**, a part of [Virginia's Severe Weather Awareness Week](#) (March 6-10).

The drill will be broadcast on NOAA Weather Radio and the Emergency Alert System via the required monthly test (RMT). An actual Tornado Warning will not be issued.

According to the [Virginia Department of Emergency Management](#), "most NOAA Weather Radio receivers (including the Midland WR-100 that many schools have) do not sound an audible alert for the RMT product, but instead, may have a blinking light on the display to indicate that an RMT was

received. As such, when the RMT for the statewide tornado drill is initiated at 9:45 a.m. on Tuesday, March 7, there's a good chance that your NOAA Weather Radio will not automatically sound an alarm."

Since your NOAA Weather Radio may not sound an alarm at the time the RMT is issued:

- Turn your radio on to listen to the broadcast by 9:40 a.m. When you hear the alert, simply start your tornado drill.

\* If you do not have a NOAA Weather Radio, start your drill and enact your safety plan at 9:45 a.m.

During the drill, you are encouraged to follow these guidelines:

- Secure or bring inside any outdoor objects that could blow away or cause damage.
- Go immediately to the lowest level of your building, to an interior room or hallway.
- Stay away from windows and doorways.

There will be no follow-up statements issued by the National Weather Service to mark the end of the statewide tornado drill. It will simply be over when your group, school, business, organization or family feels that you have adequately practiced your tornado shelter procedures.

If there is actual severe weather occurring on the morning of March 7, the statewide tornado drill will be postponed. The alternate date for the drill is Thursday, March 9, at 9:45 a.m.

## MVCA CASH BALANCE (FEBRUARY 2023)

MVCA Balance Sheet		
	January	Febuary
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>	\$10,171.42	\$8,907.49
<b>Cash Inflows (Income):</b>		
Dues (checks)		\$3,153.00
Dues (PayPal)	\$123.00	\$574.38
Advertising	\$150.00	\$350.00
Interest	\$0.23	\$0.22
Monument		
Other		\$121.00
<b>Total Cash Inflows</b>	\$273.23	\$4,198.60
<b>Available Cash Balance</b>	\$10,444.65	\$13,106.09
<b>Cash Outflows (Expenses):</b>		
Picnic		
Association Dues		
Appearance & Maintenance		
Contributions		
Meetings (WMES)	\$200.97	
Directory		
Membership Billing		\$1,590.81
Newsletter(Print+edit)	\$1,336.19	
Utilities		
Postage and Box		
Supplies		\$3.17
Miscellaneous		
Go Daddy		
Insurance		
Monument expenses		
VA State Filings		
Bank Fee/Correction		
<b>TOTAL CASH OUTFLOWS</b>	\$1,537.16	\$1,593.98
<b>Ending Cash Balance</b>	\$8,907.49	\$11,512.11



We love the Mount Vernon community and have appreciated the support now and through the years. We hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. We hope to reopen our doors soon and look forward to seeing you all again. In the meantime, we are open for carryout Tuesday through Sunday. See our website for full hours and menus.

[www.cedarknollva.com](http://www.cedarknollva.com)



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

## Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

### Officers

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Environment & Recreation: Christina Reitz.....812-618-8524  
Health: Alison Huffstetler .....757-303-2254  
Membership/Directory: Marcelle Brown .....703-371-7552  
Neighborhood Watch: Ted Thompson .....703-780-1972  
Picnic: Mary Jo Jensen .....248-245-7224  
Planning & Zoning: Karan Cerutti .....703-778-4442  
Public Safety: John Hurley .....703-799-9353  
Transportation: Mark Yonchak .....703-283-7224  
Web: The Hollands .....[www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org](http://www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org)

### Please join us for our MVCA Membership Meeting!

With our **Wednesday, March 8, 2023**,  
MVCA Membership Meeting, we will  
resume meeting again at  
Washington Mill Elementary School  
(9100 Cherrytree Drive)

7 p.m.: pizza and drinks

7:30 p.m.: meeting starts