



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

May 2023

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

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Mount Vernon Grove • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverbend • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Washington Woods
• Westgate • Wycliffe on the Potomac • Yacht Haven Estates



THE MOUNT VERNON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
INVITES YOU TO THE 2023
ANNUAL PICNIC

MAY 13, 2023

1:00-5:00 PM

ST JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
5614 OLD MILL ROAD, ALEXANDRIA, VA 22309

Free for any resident to attend! Please drop in anytime for food, friends, and games. This year's picnic will feature live music, pickle ball, cornhole, a bounce house, kid's games, lunch, and soft drinks.

Pick up your MVCA 2023-2024 community directory.

The picnic will happen rain or shine. If it rains, activities will be moved inside the church.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: MARY JO MALIK – MARYJOMALIK@YAHOO.COM

MVCA UPDATES

Dear MVCA Residents and Members:

I am resigning as President of MVCA due to health challenges from Parkinson's Disease.

Dr. Alison Huffstetler, MD, will be our next president and will be a great leader.

I am so grateful to have been, over the last three years, able to work with you to keep our community safe, welcoming and supportive.

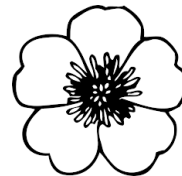
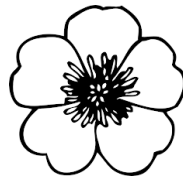
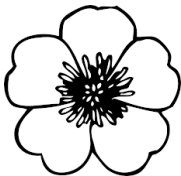
It has been a real privilege to serve with talented, devoted volunteers in our association and it has been

a special pleasure for me to meet and get to know all of you better -- my wonderful neighbors in Mount Vernon.

I will continue to support MVCA as much as I can in the future and as my health permits.

Thank you for your support during my time as MVCA President.

Sincerely,
Tom Russell



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We will miss Tom Russell as the leader of the MVCA and I am grateful for his efforts to keep our community a safe place. I'm looking forward to working with you, learning what your priorities are as we move forward, and ensuring that Mount Vernon is safe, economically stable, educationally sound, healthy and welcoming.

This weekend, we will have our annual picnic. I hope that you'll drop by for a few minutes and share a meal with us, let your kids bop around on the bounce house, and introduce yourself to neighbors (and to me, please!) We've extended invitations to local leaders, fire, police and school staff to build community and trust. Please swing by for 10 minutes or a few hours.

At our March Membership meeting, members voted to provide a modest gift to Washington Mill Elementary School; we will provide third grade reading phonic-based workbooks for the school. Thank you to all those who participated and keep schools at the center of civic engagement. Come hear what's new at the next Membership meeting, May 10 from 7-8:30 p.m. at Washington Mill Elementary. All are welcome.

Feel free to reach out!

Alison Huffstetler
(NEW) MVCA President

TRANSPORTATION

Some highlights and progress to report on Transportation Projects across our Mt. Vernon and Fairfax County:

- The superintendent of the National Park Service reported that **repairs at Wayne Wood Boulevard between March 14-26** included emergency concrete pavement repairs on the southern section of the George Washington Memorial Parkway near Wayne Wood Boulevard. Repairs should have eliminated the “bump” in pavement elevations.
- The **Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Trail Project is nearing the end of the construction phase**, consisting of a 10-foot shared use path within the missing segments. There is now a pedestrian bridge adjacent to the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway bridge crossing Dogue Creek (near the Fort Belvoir Walker Gate entrance). In addition, this project will improve pedestrian crossings by providing marked crosswalks and curb ramps approved by the American with Disabilities Act regulations and standards. In accordance with the Countywide Trails Plan, Fairfax County Department of Transportation’s Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Trail Project completes missing segments of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail between Richmond Highway (Route 1) and Southwood Drive for a length of approximately two miles. Once complete, the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail will provide a continuous facility for pedestrians and cyclists along Mount Vernon Memorial Highway from Route 1 to the Mount Vernon Estate. The construction is expected to be completed by Spring of 2023. (Hey, that’s like, real soon!)



- **Public Safety and Traffic Behaviors on Cherrytree Drive.** Our MVCA member Kevin Diana provided some insight into the survey that he and Chris Marbaker initiated to gain Fairfax County attention to the traffic problems in Mount Vernon Forest. Kevin and Chris garnered signatures in survey by many residents willing to attest to need for traffic enforcement measures. Working with guidance and assistance from Supervisor Dan Storck’s office, this MVCA team included block captain Steve Ayers. Supervisor Storck’s office indicated that endorsement from MVCA was welcomed and appreciated, but not required to get the speed survey started. Their work began to explore public safety measures that violated the Mount Vernon Forest neighborhood, identified general speeding on Cherrytree Drive, and a lack of signage for the school. Fairfax County should have signage nearly 600 yards out from the Washington Mill School entrance indicating it is a school zone. There is only one “drug-free school zone” sign about 100 feet from the entrance.
- The MVCA President presented this public safety and traffic survey effort at the March MVCA meeting and Kevin and Chris’s efforts received endorsement by the MVCA for a letter of support addressed to Supervisor Storck’s office. Now with this MVCA interest, and demonstrated neighborhood team action, this Transportation Chair would also endorse an MVCA effort to support any other neighborhood interest in addressing similar public safety and traffic safety measures. If accepted, I recommend MVCA initiate a survey of our neighborhood Block Captains, to learn of their neighborhood’s interest in traffic control measures.

Mark Yonchak

EDUCATION

MVCA members are continuing to support Washington Mill Elementary School in helping students read and reach milestones. Members donated gently used books for use in free reading and to support students who have few or no books at home. Contributions for “Food for Thought” are much appreciated and will be needed through the end of the school year. We will collect donations at the next meeting on May 10, 2023. These funds help students directly and reduce the drain on the PTA’s relatively limited resources for enrichment and community activities. MVCA members who have special expertise in grant writing and applications might be able to help locate other sources for food program support and that help would also be welcomed and beneficial.

Fairfax County Public Schools have adopted the “science of reading” approach which is a very structured phonics-based approach supported by research on how children learn and the best practices to facilitate literacy acquisition. At the last general meeting we voted to provide funds for the purchase of phonics-related books. As it is critically important that all children be fluent readers by third grade it was decided to look at series providing that “final push” as students move to the upper grades. Third grade teachers and staff participated in choosing the best series for Washington Mill’s needs and are excited to use them in classrooms as soon as possible and particularly integrating them next year. The books will soon be on the way!

Washington Mill’s renovation is done, and the grounds are now available for community use after school hours and weekends. The construction company by contract restored some grass and landscaping but some additional plantings would enhance and beautify the grounds and help the general appearance of our community. There are two internal courtyards (one with a small pond) which need some TLC. The Yacht Haven Garden Club needs landscaping help. If you can help, please let me know (sharbeck@aol.com). Your support

could be monetary, donating some excess plants or getting your hands dirty! Principal Bennink is on board with, of course, the caution that continuing maintenance will need to be a consideration.

The Education Committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) has had ongoing meetings on the School and County Budgets to assure that schools get adequate funding from the County (since Commonwealth funding provides only about 20% of school needs). In-school staff compensation represents 85% of the school budget and it is essential that FCPS try to provide market-competitive salaries to attract and retain excellent staff amid a nationwide teacher shortage.

Pandemic learning loss recovery and the time-limited ESSR funds have also been in the forefront in terms of tracking expenditures, evaluating school results and identifying and replicating successes. As a system, FCPS has basically recovered in literacy/reading and is close to recovering in math but this does not fully extend to all schools especially those with high poverty and related challenges. In those schools, targeted strategies are being applied and progress is being made. Special pandemic funds will be fully expended and end this year.

The Education Committee of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations has recently focused on teacher retention and hiring and will soon meet with representatives of the two Fairfax County teachers’ unions. Legislation at the Commonwealth level has now permitted collective bargaining on salaries, benefits and working conditions where the “unions” previously acted more as advisors to the School Board.

Judy Harbeck
Education Chair

PUBLIC SAFETY

Dear Neighbors:

There are several community updates regarding public safety including new speed cameras and license plate readers.

- Speed Cameras - In general, Virginia jurisdictions have not historically used speed cameras except for traffic signal enforcement. Several schools in Fairfax County now have speed cameras and they are operational – as are cameras on Fairfax County school buses which document and deter motorists from passing stopped school buses with special red lights flashing.
- License Plate Readers – The Fairfax County Police Department is now using license plate readers for law enforcement and public service (ie: Amber Alerts, etc)
- Pedestrian Safety - Please remember to use marked crosswalks whenever possible. Consider walking/ jogging/biking with reflective and/or "high viz" vests, hats, etc. Often, our streets are our sidewalks, so please drive cautiously.
- Bike Safety- Consider adding reflectors, bike lights, bells, etc to bicycles. Carry a cell-phone and ID.
- Cars and Garages- Keep LOCKED when not in use. Consider installing cameras and motion-sensitive outdoor lighting.
- Fire Safety - This is your friendly quarterly reminder to check smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms and replace batteries and check readiness gauges on fire extinguishers. If it's been more than a year since you changed your batteries, do it with spring cleaning!



- Draw up a family escape plan and designate a nearby yard for household members to gather.

Enjoy the summer and keep a good lookout for joggers, bicyclists, runners and walkers, and please remember that many of our streets do not have sidewalks. Enjoy the MVCA PICNIC and meet our firefighters, rescue personnel and police there.


John Hurley
Public Safety Chair

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MVCA thanks you for your membership and support!

We have a current membership roster of 297 households in our communities. If you haven't paid your dues, you are welcome to in person at the picnic or using the form at www.mountvernoncivicasociation.com.

If you've paid your 2023 dues, the biennial Membership Directory will be available next week! Stop by the MVCA picnic to pick yours up. If you aren't able to come by, directories will be distributed by block captains in the coming weeks.

We have openings for treasurer, block captain, and health and human services positions on our MVCA board.

Please contact Alison Huffstetler, alison.n.huffstetler@gmail.com, if you're interested in joining us!

Mount Vernon Travel, Inc.

2023 Discounted Park Tickets

King Dominion \$40 * Busch Gardens \$40

*** Hershey Park \$40**

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Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.
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Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

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Web: The Hollandswww.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

Please join us for our MVCA Membership Meeting!

With our **Wednesday, May 10, 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