

FALL 2023

# Mount Vernon Civic Association



Belle Rive • Ferry Landing Estates • Ferry Landing Villa • Ferry Point Estates • Mount Vernon Forest  
Mount Vernon Grove • Mount Vernon Park • Oxford • Riverbend • Riverwood • Vernon Square • Washington Woods  
Westgate • Wycliffe on the Potomac • Yacht Haven Estates

## Fall Association Meeting

*Please join us on October 11, 2023, 7:30 PM at Washington Mill Elementary School Library for our MVCA Association meeting. We will host candidates for District Supervisor and hear their policy priorities ahead of the November election day. Bring your thoughtful questions and concerns to be discussed followed by a brief update from committee chairs.*

## Join us! Volunteer with the MVCA

Volunteering doesn't seem to have the allure it used to. But let me reassure you—working with the MVCA is engaging, brings our community closer, and is a low time commitment. Your Civic Association needs several volunteers for officer and standing committee chair positions.

**Treasurer:** Responsible for managing the association money, receiving dues, paying bills, and keeping accurate accounts of transactions. Provides an update of the finances at each meeting.

**Secretary:** Responsible for recording minutes of all meetings of the Association and Board of Directors, attending to the articles of incorporation and bylaws, providing a written record of meetings, and attending to correspondence of the Association.

**Block Captain Coordinator:** Responsible for managing our wonderful block captains, recruiting, and orienting new captains! These individuals assist in managing information flow to neighbors; routinely distribute materials for new neighbors and distribute directories.

*Block captains are also needed for: Allwood Ct, Fairfax St, Great Neck Ct, Mt Vernon Memorial Hwy, Presidential Dr, and Volunteer Dr between Cherrytree and Washington Mill Park. Email [mvblockcaptains@gmail.com](mailto:mvbblockcaptains@gmail.com) or contact Jorie O'Donnell at 703-765-6470 for more information.*

**Budget and Finance:** Responsible for tracking and disseminating local/county budgetary information. Encouraged to provide quarterly newsletter articles on timely topics such as property assessments and the county budget. Attends regular meetings of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association budget committee.

**Health and Welfare:** Responsible for advising on local health concerns. Encouraged to provide quarterly newsletter articles on health-related matters.

**Appearance and Maintenance:** Responsible for identification of community wide aesthetic and maintenance issues to be addressed by the MVCA.

**Youth Representative:** Late middle or high school student who participates in meetings and provides youthful insight into issues.

What's the time commitment? The board meets monthly for 1 hour during the academic year and board members attend the 4 annual association wide meetings. Most chairs provide article updates for the newsletter 2-3 times per year. The Association Bylaws published in the 2023-2024 MVCA Directory, page 84, has further information. To volunteer, reach out to any current chair (final page of this newsletter), President Alison Huffstetler at [alison.n.huffstetler@gmail.com](mailto:alison.n.huffstetler@gmail.com), or via the website, [mountvernoncivicassociation.org/volunteer](http://mountvernoncivicassociation.org/volunteer).

# W<sup>9</sup> CHRIS WHITE

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# Yacht Haven Garden Club Fashion Show and Luncheon

The Yacht Haven Garden Club presents their 39th annual Fashion Show and Luncheon “60 BEEutiful Years”, Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at the Mount Vernon Country Club in Alexandria. Fashions will be provided by **Sara Campbell**.

Founded in 1963, the Yacht Haven Garden Club works to further education in horticulture, floral design, and conservation among its members and surrounding communities. To achieve these goals, funds raised are divided among the following organizations and projects: the National Capital Area Garden Club (NCAGC) scholarship fund, Friendship Garden, Fern Valley, and the Washington Youth Garden at the National Arboretum. The Garden Club assists with the Honey Bee Project at the University of Maryland and we support foundation plantings at Mason Neck Wildlife Refuge. Locally, the club supports the American Horticulture Society (River Farm), beauties Sherwood Hall Regional Library with seasonal annuals and plant and maintain the Yacht Haven neighborhood entrances.



## YACHT HAVEN GARDEN CLUB 60 BEEUTIFUL YEARS

FASHION SHOW, LUNCHEON, SILENT  
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Featuring  
SARA CAMPBELL FASHIONS

Wednesday, November 8, 2023

Mount Vernon Country Club  
5111 Old Mill Road, Alexandria, Va.

10:00 a.m. Social Hour  
11:00 a.m. Fashion Show  
12:15 p.m. Luncheon  
\$60 per person

For more information contact Gail Sechrist at: [YHGC.2023@gmail.com](mailto:YHGC.2023@gmail.com)

Fashion show tickets are \$60, and the reservation deadline is November 1. **For details and reservations, contact: [YHGC.2023@gmail.com](mailto:YHGC.2023@gmail.com).**

## Environment and Recreation

*Chair, Christina Reitz*

It's almost tree planting season! Houses with shade trees that block the afternoon sun can save as much as 25% in energy costs as homes without. Plus, trees provide habitats for birds, pollinators, and animals, increase your property value, clean our air, and beautify our neighborhoods.

Changing weather and the age of our neighborhoods are affecting our older trees. Replacing the shade trees we've lost with hardy, long-lived trees like white oaks, tulip poplars and sycamores will ensure our area stays leafy and full of birds. But there are also lots of decorative trees native to Virginia that require less space and planning. Dogwoods, redbuds, and sweetbay magnolias are all native trees that can be planted in landscaping.

Looking for advice or free seedlings? Fairfax ReLeaf is a tree planting organization that houses many of their seedlings at Arcadia Farm. They give away seedlings in the fall and spring and are available for advice on types of trees that would be best for your yard or street and how to care for them. Their website is [fairfaxreleaf.com](http://fairfaxreleaf.com).



We have entered the season of earlier darkness, colder temperatures, and holiday excitement. It's a great time of year to stay safe and remember a few tips in the coming months:

- Follow fire prevention guidelines (especially those porch bonfires). Remember that burning of refuse is prohibited and burning leaves can only occur in cleared areas on owned lands at least 300 feet from any brush or trees.
- Replace batteries in smoke detectors.
- Ensure that fire extinguishers are fully charged and that flashlights have good batteries.
- Have a family escape and rendezvous plan that includes your pets.
- Familiarize all in household with how to responsibly use 911 for FIRE, POLICE, RESCUE, and AMBULANCE.
- Wear helmet and have adequate lights/reflectors when biking. At night, have both head and taillights.
- Reflective clothing and/or vests are particularly useful when outside in colder, darker weather.
- Motion-sensitive external lighting increases safety, as do cameras in access areas of your home.
- Keep car and garage doors locked.
- Use caution in school zones, near school buses, and crossings.
- Consider signing up for FREE [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts) re: weather, traffic and emergency alerts.

Encourage men and women to join the Fairfax County Public Safety agencies for a challenging and rewarding career! Review Volunteer Opportunities at [volunteerfairfaxcounty.gov](http://volunteerfairfaxcounty.gov)! Fairfax County Police are offering a \$15,000 hiring incentive currently: [joinfcpd.org](http://joinfcpd.org).

Welcome to the new Mt. Vernon FCPD Station Commander Capt. Marc H. Mitchell and Assistant Commander Lt. Veva Wallace-Spaulding.



**Marc Mitchell**



**Veva Wallace-Spaulding**

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## Air Traffic Noise Mitigation and the GW Parkway

**Air Traffic:** Annual air transportation operations have grown, increasing noise impact for the communities surrounding Reagan National Airport (DCA). While DCA is an important transportation asset for the region, flights into and out of DCA result in high levels of aircraft activity and aircraft noise impacting the quality of life for residents, particularly those in proximity to the Potomac River. This discussion focuses on the collaborative efforts of the DCA Community Working Group (CWG), community representatives (including Mt Vernon residents), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA).

VIANAIR Consulting was hired in 2020 by Montgomery County, Maryland, and Arlington County, Virginia to help identify strategies for reducing noise impact for the communities North and South of DCA. VIANAIR recommended changes to DCA airspace and DCA flight procedures. Some recommendations have been implemented and others are being reviewed/tested by the FAA. The result of initial changes will be to reduce noise exposure for the communities North of DCA; the models used in the North will be reviewed by the FAA to make changes to the **South of DCA**. It is important to note that any changes to mitigate noise exposure to our community will consider aircraft activity, flight paths, and time of noise generating aircraft overhead Mount Vernon communities. VIANAIR has provided data modeling on air traffic noise, sample engine noise, and atmospheric conditions – their findings can be challenged and discussed as done by the DCA CWG in the past. VIANAIR works with the MWAA and FAA to adapt proposals for mitigating noise.

To date, FAA has not responded to any CWG inquiries or recommendations focused on “South of DCA” complaints, but does recommend that you continue to file complaints, and responds to detailed reports. Complaint information and guidance for filling a complaint can be found at [noise.faa.gov](https://noise.faa.gov) or email [noisesupport@faa.gov](mailto:noisesupport@faa.gov). I have frequently used this service, can attest to FAA response to complaints, having recorded and reported significant aircraft noise from flight paths over my home in Mount Vernon.

The MWAA will conduct virtual CNWG meetings (I plan to be there). The next meeting is 26 October, 6-8 PM. At the January MVCA Association meeting, we plan to host an FAA Representative on Noise Mitigation Programs for a presentation on noise mitigation plans for us “South of DCA” residents.

**GW Memorial Parkway South:** Recent public comment period closed on the publicized GWMP South Section and Mount Vernon Trail Improvement Plan, which intended to focus on the historic nature of the Parkway and the properties along the road. NPS Chief of Staff, Dr. C. Hershey said there would be time later to address related issues such as the road diet, which is conceptual only at this point. (Road diet is defined as converting an existing four lane undivided roadway to a three-lane roadway with two through lanes and one center two-way turn lane).

**GW Memorial Parkway and Belle Haven Intersection Reconfiguration:** Commuters transiting the southern section, Northbound, on the GWMP will notice significant intersection changes and lane shifts around Belle Haven. The National Park Service has begun reconfiguring the intersection of the GWMP and Belle Haven Road to improve safety, and NPS plans to make similar changes at Belle View Boulevard immediately thereafter.

**National Park Service Reports:** NPS Police was involved in 20 incidents (mostly DWI, reckless driving, and speeding and accidents) in 2022. Thus far in 2023, that number has increased to 56. Our MVCCA Transportation Chair postulated that major reason for the road diet stemmed from a lack of enforcement in the Southern section of the Parkway; this concern was voiced at a recent MVCCA transportation meeting. An NPS Officer in attendance noted that traffic safety was the emphasis for Parkway Police however the organization is manpower challenged at the moment. We asked “how many Park Police patrol the Southern Section of the Parkway, NPP responded “...one on a 24/7 basis”.

30 YEARS

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## Back to School

Washington Mill's teachers are very pleased to be using the sets of phonics-specific reading books which our association donated at the end of last year. Although Fairfax Public Schools has always taught reading phonics to some extent, research has shown that explicit and systematic phonics instruction produces better reading proficiency. Thus, the system in recent years pivoted to employing principles of the "Science of Reading" --a highly intensive phonics and word structure approach and the books we purchased will align with that program.

Washington Mill's "Food for Thought" program will continue to provide some weekend food for students who are food insecure from the PTA's limited funds. Donations from our members are very appreciated and help not only provide food for needy kids but free up PTA funds for enrichment and other activities. We will collect cash and checks at each association meeting and checks can also be delivered/mailed to the school. Checks should be made out to "Washington Mill PTA" with "Food for Thought" in the memo line.

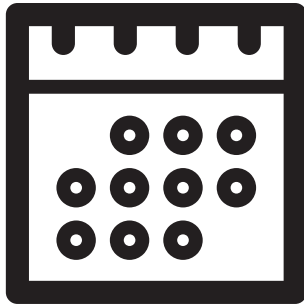
One issue to watch will be the Governor's announced intention to revamp and perhaps make path to accreditation more difficult, particularly for highly diverse schools. Shortly before the pandemic, Virginia had adopted a new accreditation system which, though somewhat complicated, many in education welcomed because it recognized progress and required all schools to perform and improve through all the demographic subgroups. As a result, schools with high numbers of advantaged students (financially stable, with educated parents and English-speaking) could no longer "skate" on overall results while some subgroups failed. Conversely, schools with high numbers of disadvantaged students would not be consistently labeled as poor-performing or lose accreditation even as they made substantial progress for all students including those who struggle no matter the school they attend. That accreditation program

essentially fell victim to the Pandemic before any meaningful effects could be determined. It remains to be seen what form the latest proposal will take but vigilance is needed to make the process fair and recognize difficulties and progress as well as proficiency.

In November, in addition to other local and state offices, we will also be voting for our Mount Vernon

District School Board member and for the 3 members at large. As you make your choice, it is my personal hope you will weigh each candidate's breadth of knowledge about all the issues in our schools and consider a history of involvement and interest in local education as important.





## Mark Your Calendar!

### Join Us For Association Meetings

All meetings will take place at Washington Mill Elementary School  
October 11, 2023 • January 10, 2024  
March 13, 2024 • May 8, 2024  
7:30 pm • Pizza and drinks served

### Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

#### **Officers**

President: Alison Huffstetler .....757-303-2254  
1st Vice President: Jason Leaver .....703-799-6739  
2nd Vice President: Karan Cerutti .....703-778-4442  
Secretary: Lisa Faustlin.....303-396-5164  
Treasurer: Jason Leaver .....703-799-6739

#### **Directors**

John Hurley .....703-799-9353  
Dan Rinzel .....703-360-4627  
Sean McCarthy .....703-360-0372

#### **Committee Chairs**

Appearance and Maintenance: Vacant  
Block Captain: Jorie O'Donnell.....703-765-6470  
Budget: Vacant  
Education: Judy Harbeck .....703-780-1883  
Environment & Recreation: Christina Reitz.....812-618-8524  
Health and Welfare: Vacant  
Membership/Directory: Marcelle Brown .....703-371-7552  
Neighborhood Watch: Ted Thompson .....703-780-1972  
Newsletter: Alison Huffstetler .....757-303-2254  
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  
Youth Representative: Vacant