



Mount Vernon Civic Association, Inc.

Fall 2020

www.MountVernonCivicAssociation.org

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Mount Vernon Civic Association Members:

In 2019, MVCA was asked to help refurbish aging entrance monuments in our community. At our March 11, 2020 MVCA meeting I presented a proposal to accomplish this and it was overwhelmingly approved. We also thank our past MVCA President, Sean McCarthy, who led this effort and many of you who contributed \$2,500 to start these projects.

The Project Process

Our first project was to remove the crumbling brick from the Yacht Haven monument at Ferry Landing and Forest Haven Roads, grind out the old mortar, replace it with new brick, power wash and repaint it. We also power washed and then repainted the Yacht Haven monument at Ferry Landing and Neptune.

The cost for both projects totaled \$1,922.41. We thank Dick and Suzanne Floyd and John Skudlarek, the property owners adjacent to the two monuments, for providing the upkeep to these monuments for many years and allowing us to use their water and electricity during the refurbishing. We also thank Denise Wight and the Yacht Haven Garden Club for their beautiful plantings and care and for Peter Esser's help painting.

Our next project was to refurbish the two Mount Vernon Forest monuments at Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Cherrytree Drive. Our original contract of \$2,110,00 paid for the removal of the extensive overgrowth and the cutting down of trees around the right monument and the power washing and replacing mortar on both monuments.

Once the vegetation was removed, we found that there was extensive damage to the right monument.

Andrea D'Ambrosia Dolan took the lead and contacted community residents. They came to a consensus to have a mason remove the broken parts of the right monument, repair it so that the brick matched and put a footing under the right side of the monument. This additional repair cost \$1,000. Community members contributed \$1,790 for this work plus funds for new plantings. Pam O'Meara also helped raise the necessary funds.

We thank Greg Dolan and Steve Ayers for doing the hard work of removing broken electrical poles and wiring and ground preparation. We are also grateful for the adjacent landowners, John and Eileen Hurley and Gianna Yurko, for providing the upkeep of the monuments for many years and allowing us to use their water. Andrea created a new planting design and Kevin Diana and Greg helped her with the replanting.

We just received an estimate of \$3,800 to replace the mortar and power wash the Westgate monument at Mount Vernon Memorial Highway and Old Mount Vernon Road, our final refurbishing project. We are grateful that Andrea has agreed to also lead the planning and fundraising of this project.

Go to **Page 3** of this newsletter to check out recent photos of the refurbished entrance monuments! If you have any questions or concerns about these projects, I look forward to hearing from you.

Tom Russell
MVCA President

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES



What's the Difference Between a Gaiter and a Mask?

As COVID-19 pandemic continues to create havoc in our daily lives, the face mask has become a hot commodity and at times a fashion statement. We've seen micro trends related to masks, most from luxury designer mask or perfectly matched mask and outfits. While we all (should be) wearing masks, a new trend appears to be emerging, gaiters.

My seven-year-old daughter came home from school with a note stating gaiters are required and face masks are not being used until further notice. My first reaction was complete bewilderment. I spent approximately \$100 on a face mask for her, and now I'm being told this is not effective? I immediately went on Center for Disease Control (CDC) website to find out what is the difference between a gaiter and a face mask? And do gaiters provide better protection than face masks?

To my surprise, I discovered two things: 1) the only differences between the face mask and gaiter is comfort, and 2) the gaiters are under tremendous scrutiny. Face masks have loops around the ears

and can be easily pulled up and down to cover and uncover the mouth and nose as desired. Whereas, gaiters are tubes of fabric that you slip over your head and pull up over the nostrils and mouth, avoiding your ears. Gaiters can be made of any fabric that is comfortable.

The controversy surrounding gaiters began with Duke University. Duke conducted a study and concluded in a report on August 7, 2020 that gaiters are not effective. Several researchers, not affiliated with Duke University, came forward and disputed the study. These researchers stated it is not the gaiter itself that is the issue, it is the type of fabric being used for the gaiter. Dr Jason Kessler from Morristown Medical Center in New Jersey says gaiters made of higher thread counts, made of cotton appear to block more respiratory droplets than those gaiters made with lower thread counts. He further stated there is not enough evidence at this time to conclude gaiters are more effective than face mask or vice versa.

Before I attempt to email my daughter's school to request a choice be given between a face mask and gaiter, I am going to wait for CDC's next report in November 2020. Rumor has it, this report will stop the gaiter and face mask debate. I hope that report says both are effective in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Danielle Thompson
Health & Human Services Chair

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NEIGHBORHOOD UPDATES

Block Captains

Mount Vernon Block Captains play an important role in making our neighborhoods a better place to live. Our special thanks to each of our current Block Captains. We still have a few Block Captain openings. If you live on one of the following streets and can volunteer a little time to help your neighbors and your neighborhood association, we would very much appreciate it.

Carriage House Court

Cherrytree Drive (9001-9010)

Ferry Landing Court

Ferry Landing Road (4100-4312)

Ferry Landing Road (4504-4600)

Forest Haven Drive (9199-9205)

Great Neck Court

Kimbrelee Court

Mt. Vernon Mem. Hwy (4329-4705)

Nellie Custis Court

Riverwood Court

Riverwood Rd

Volunteer Drive (9100-9112)

For more information please call, Jorie O'Donnell, 703-765-6470 or email mvblockcaptains@gmail.com

Refurbished Neighborhood Entrance Monuments!



BUDGET & FINANCE REPORT

Where is your money going? Two major funds were allocated this year that impact our neighborhoods.

First, we are looking at improvements to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. Over the summer, the U.S. Senate passed the Great American Outdoors Act, legislation that was co-sponsored by 60 senators including Senator Mark Warner. The GW Parkway has suffered from years of deferred maintenance to the tune of almost \$300 million. The Great American Outdoors Act will provide approximately \$6.5 billion over the next five years toward all national parks, which include GW Parkway. Specifically, GW Parkway can anticipate road type repairs, visitor centers improvements, and trail repairs.

Second, did you know that our gas taxes are increasing? The Virginia General Assembly voted this spring to increase the gas tax for all of Virginia. The gas tax will increase five cents over the next two years and is expected to yield a revenue to \$1 billion. The gas tax is expected to utilize the money to repair old roads and improve passenger and commuter rail service throughout Virginia. The ultimate goal is to improve the VA economy, reduce congestion, and utilize rail service at higher rates.

Please feel free to email me with any budget and finance related questions:

Kirsten.Quackenbush@gmail.com

Kirsten Quackenbush
Budget & Finance Chair

Upcoming MVCA Meetings:

Wednesday, October 14, 7 p.m.

Our next membership meeting speaker will be Judy Dority who will help us understand the issues of climate change and invasive species. She is a Virginia Master Naturalist, Audubon at Home Ambassador, a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park, and a member of the Virginia Native Plant Society. This will be a **virtual** meeting using Zoom. Our meeting number is 634-598-1220, password is 743225, and our call-in number if you would like to listen by phone is: 301-715-8594.

Wednesday, January 13, 7 p.m.

This will be our next membership meeting, the first of 2021. Details will be announced in late December.

Thank You & Please Help:

Thanks to all of you have contributed to United Community, Rising Hope, Alice's Kids, FACETS, Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, Mount Vernon at Home and New Hope Housing during this difficult time. There are many struggling in the Mount Vernon community that have benefited from our help.

Thanks to those who made our blood drive a success. The Red Cross reported that your donations where enough blood to save 168 individuals. Thanks also to those who put together 675 food packets that students can take home to eat during the weekends. Additional food was donated to three local pantries.

Please Help: We do not have plans finalized at the time of the printing of this letter on how we can continue to help others during the coming months. Please watch on **Next Door** for future postings on how to help. Families and individuals still need food. Children need help with school. And the Red Cross will be back in November when again we can help save lives. *Thank you for all you do. It matters.*

Public Safety

Fall brings the need for better attention to safety and fire/traffic accident/crime prevention in the darker hours both morning and late afternoon/early evening.

Some thoughts:

- LOCK parked vehicles.
- USE motion-sensitive outdoor lighting.
- KEEP garage doors locked.
- BE exceptionally careful when driving near school buses and school bus stops.
- SOME areas of Route 235 (Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway) are now 40 mph, others are 45 mph.
- NUMEROUS safety aids (helmets, reflective clothing, vests, improved fore and aft lights for bikes, bells, reflectors on bike tire sidewalls).
- AS leaves fall, be ready for slippery spots and children playing in or near leaf piles in the street.

-REMEMBER many of our blocks do not have sidewalks at all or only on one side.

-CARRY a cell-phone, whistle and flashlight on walks and runs particularly in hours of darkness. Consider wearing reflection vests.

-BE sure your home heating system, chimney(s) and fireplace(s) are ready and safe for fall and winter. Dispose of ashes with care.

-FRESH batteries in smoke, fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

-IDENTIFY an area in your home as a tornado shelter.

-HAVE an escape plan in the event of fire AND also a nearby agreed-upon meeting point.

Your Neighbor,

John Hurley
Public Safety Chair

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Chris.White@LNF.com | 703.283.9028

EDUCATION REPORT

Return to School Countdown

From Fairfax County Public Schools

The changing course of the COVID-19 pandemic with infection rates surging both nationally and regionally has required FCPS plans for school year 2020-21. We began the 2020-21 school year with virtual learning for all students. The online school year began September 8. Fairfax County has been working on Return to School Phase in Plans. The FCPS [Return to School News](#) has information on the metrics to be used for deciding when to return to in-person learning, TJHSST admissions changes, internet access assistance, and free meals for students.

Mount Vernon High School Update

From MVSA PTSA President

- August 29, Mount Vernon High School PTSA partnered with ICNA Relief, and provided 400 backpacks and school supplies to the Mount Vernon Pyramid schools. The backpack giveaway was so successful, we ran out of supplies within an hour!
- Local organization, Alice's Kids, will partner with Mount Vernon High School PTSA to provide headsets to multiple MVHS students in order to improve their virtual learning environment.
- On September 29, @ 7 PM, Mount Vernon High

School Principal Rogers will be featured with two other Mount Vernon Pyramid principals, for a live discussion on returning to school during this challenging time. The discussion is being sponsored and moderated by United Community (UC). The link is <https://BIT.LY/2FXK5AY>

Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Association Update

From MVCCA

In an ordinary school year FCPS would adjust preliminary staffing levels based on actual enrollment as of September 30. However, in this pandemic year this process may result in significant loss of teaching positions at many schools. Many schools' enrollments are down, and in the usual year would result in the loss of teaching positions. However, this is far from an ordinary year and, if FCPS is able to begin in-school instruction, more teachers, not fewer, will be needed. The Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations, in the interest of promoting the least disruptive educational experience for students in the Mount Vernon District, has indicated their support to the Fairfax County School Board to "hold harmless" schools which have suffered enrollment decreases.

Sarah Fidd
Education Chair

Join MVCA!

Every home in the Mount Vernon Civic Association community receives this newsletter but only 31% of those homes are paying members. Please consider joining MVCA – we need your help. Four of our volunteer Committee Chairs are concerned with your safety: John reminds us of public safety issues, Danielle monitors health and human service needs, Ted leads our Neighborhood Watch program and Jori coordinates our Block Captains. Sarah reports on school happenings and Kirsten reports on our community's financial health. Gale keeps us apprised of environmental issues, Poul monitors air traffic noise, John updates us on transportation concerns, and Karan focuses on Planning & Zoning issues. Sean, Karan and Tom are our advocates on the Mount Vernon Council of Civic Associations. As you can see, there is a lot to do! Annual dues are only \$25. Please send a check payable to MVCA and mail it to: MVCA, P.O. Box 61, Mount Vernon, VA 22121. Thank you for your support!



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.

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MVCA Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 14, 2020; 7 p.m.

Our speaker will be Judy Dority, Virginia Master Gardener and Audubon at Home Ambassador, who will speak to us about invasive plant management during a time of global climate change.

Please join us online via Zoom. Our meeting number is 634-598-1220, and the passcode (if asked for) is: 743225. You can also call 301-715-8594 to listen by phone.