



STRATFORD LANDING

Mount Vernon District, Fairfax County
February 2017 Newsletter

Happy New Year!



Letter from the President Why no Neighborhood Watch?

Last Spring I attended an introductory session for the Neighborhood Watch Program at the Mount Vernon Government Center led by Officer Robert Urps, FCPD. The meeting lasted for just under 2 hours. I found it to be informative and helpful. I had decided to attend the meeting due to a number of emails I had received about incidents that had occurred in our neighborhood. At the meeting Officer Urps strongly encouraged any neighborhood to put a watch in to place and offered his assistance with that task.

Recently, I was asked by one of our residents why no such watch was in place. Many of you may recall the requests placed in the past two newsletters for a coordinator to take on the job. As of this date no one has stepped forward.

Neighborhood Watch began in Fairfax County in 1979 and has grown to over 900 community programs. Its success is attributed to the cooperative involvement of police and citizens. The objective is

Upcoming Events & Announcements

Holiday Decoration Contest Winners!

Our neighborhood was a beautiful sight this holiday season. We are happy to share the winners of this year's home decorating contest:

First Place: 8424 Blakiston
Second Place: 8301 Brewster
Third Place: 8618 Yardley

Annual Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday, April 1st, 2PM
Stratford Landing Park

Little Hunting Creek Clean-Up
Saturday, April 8th, 9am - Noon

Celebrate Earth Day!
Saturday, April 22nd, Time: TBD

Spring Yard Sale
Saturday, May 6th, 8am - Noon
Rain Date: Sunday, May 7th

As you can see, we have a number of upcoming Spring events just around the corner. The Stratford Landing Website is the best resource for the latest details.

Find us on Nextdoor &
Like us on Facebook!



<http://www.stratfordlanding.org/>

Letter from the President (cont'd)

to organize communities where residents are trained to be alert to potential crime, keep a watchful eye on neighbors' homes and be alert to suspicious activity. One of the critical elements to a successful watch program is a coordinator who functions as a liaison between the community and the police department. Fairfax County has one of the largest Neighborhood Watch programs in the country and has received national and international recognition.

In doing some research, I came across an article entitled "U.S. Department of Justice: Does Neighborhood Watch reduce crime?" written by John Wihbey. In this article, it references a 2008 Department of Justice meta-analysis in which the findings include the following:

- Citizen policing programs were associated with a significant reduction in crime, on the average of 16%.
- Overall the data was not able to justify why other than the fact that such programs act as a deterrent for potential offenders.

This second statement brought to mind a comment that Officer Urps made during the training: criminals typically see the Neighborhood Watch signs at the entrances to communities and move on to a neighborhood where no such program is in place. For example, Riverside Gardens has Neighborhood Watch signs placed at their entrance but Stratford Landing does not.

The Fairfax County website clearly displays the steps for putting a program in place. Most importantly one simply needs to join and attend the introductory session. Police officers are also available to do free in-home security inspections. As a neighborhood, watch signs are placed at neighborhood entrances to inform those who may be interested in committing a crime that they are being watched and need to move on.

In general, Stratford Landing is a very safe community. Officer Urps has pointed out to me in the past that, in fact, overall crime is down. That being said we have had our share of vandalism, people rummaging through cars, and personal property being stolen. Would a Neighborhood

Watch Program help? The findings say yes. In any case, we as a community do have the tools and means available to implement such a program if we so choose.

- Kim Fairchild
SLCA President

Cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay

Have you seen or read about "TMDL" in the news and wondered what it is?

TMDL is the abbreviation of Total Maximum Daily Load, and it's a tool used by federal, state, and local governments to limit pollution flowing into the Bay. In order to receive a permit from the EPA to discharge stormwater into the Potomac River, Fairfax County (and other counties and jurisdictions in the five states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed) must reduce the amounts of sediment and nitrogen and phosphorous (there's a TMDL for each) carried by stormwater runoff into the Bay and its tributaries. Too much of each currently flows into the Bay, resulting in algae blooms that reduce oxygen and create "dead zones" where fish and other life cannot survive. The goal: reduce these pollutants enough so that the Bay meets water quality standards by 2025.

Fairfax County presented its draft plans to reduce these pollutants and contribute to restoring the Bay and the County's impaired streams at a Dec. 15 public meeting at the Mount Vernon Government Center.

Actually, Fairfax County is way ahead of the game, because it began developing watershed management plans in 2005 and implementing water quality improvement projects in 2009, before requirements were in place. The projects include stormwater retrofits, stream restorations, land use changes, septic conversions, nutrient management plans for athletic fields and other county land, and more. So far, restoration of streams has been by far the most effective tool for reducing pollution flowing into the Potomac River. According to county estimates, it has already achieved the required reduction in phosphorous, and is more than 60% of the way toward meeting required reductions in sediment and nitrogen loads.

Stratford Landing lies within the 11-square-mile Little Hunting Creek watershed. Little Hunting Creek was the very first watershed for which the county developed a watershed management plan, and 11 of the 68 projects planned for our watershed have been completed, at a cost of about \$1.5 million.

Soon, the county will submit its plans to the state for approval. There will be a mid-term assessment—are the county's estimates of the reductions it has achieved in sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorous confirmed by measurements of water quality actually flowing into the Potomac River? 2017 is a crucial year—stay tuned.

There are many actions homeowners can voluntarily take to reduce polluted stormwater runoff and help clean up the Chesapeake Bay and improve water quality in Little Hunting Creek. They include: plant trees; reduce use of fertilizer and other chemicals on your lawn; install a rain garden to intercept and absorb runoff from your downspout rather than sending it down the storm drain; install a rain barrel to collect water from your downspout, to use in watering your plants. You can even get financial assistance to help with your own personal watershed improvement project!

For more information, see the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District's website: <http://www.fairfax-county.gov/nvswcd/cap/cap-homeowner.htm>

Traffic Calming Update

At the request of numerous community members, the SLCA Board completed steps required by Fairfax County to request a traffic calming study. The process for this is clearly laid out on the Fairfax County website. The study has been completed and all four of the streets submitted have qualified for traffic calming measures. These include: Camden Street, Childs Lane, Londonderry Road and Cavendish Drive. To qualify, the following guidelines were met:

- (1) Average speed of 30mph or 85th percentile speed of 35mph
- (2) Volume between 600-6000 vehicles per day

The next step includes action by the appointed Neighborhood Task Force to meet with a County Traffic Official to review the findings and comprise a plan. All steps must be channeled through Supervisor Dan Stork's office. Upon completion of plan review, a public meeting will be held for all Stratford Landing residents at which the proposed plan will be presented. County officials will be present. SLCA will continue to report in the newsletter and on our website, the status and progress of this process.

Christmas Bird Count Results

The Christmas Bird Count is an annual tradition that began in 1900. Its purpose was to replace hunting with counting in an effort to monitor and encourage habitat and species growth.

Stratford Landing is in the Fort Hunt Sector of the Fort Belvoir Count Circle, which held its count on January 2, 2017. Over 150 participants counted 107 bird species. The Fort Hunt Sector had 21 participants who gave 27 hours of service. They collectively saw 54 species and 4,160 individual birds.

Do you need to be a bird expert to participate? NO! Beginners and people who don't know anything at all about birds are placed on a team with experienced birders who will share their knowledge.

Here are some of the primary species seen in and around our neighborhood: American Robins (762), Canada Geese (621), European Starlings (488), and American Crows (369) had the highest counts.

The Christmas Bird Count, along with other volunteer projects, are serious citizen science that contributes in positive and significant ways that enable scientists and policy makers to make rational and effective choices that save bird populations from extinction.

Did you know?

Northern Virginia roads are divided into 613 snow maps, which are updated yearly. Using VDOT's online snow plow tracker, you can check the status of your road and see what has been cleared. To learn more search "VDOT Snow Plow Tracker" online.

Stuff the Bus: Helping Fairfax Families

As the holiday decorations come down and the cold winter months settle in, many people continue to go hungry in our community. For many local, nonprofit food pantries, this is the time of year where donations drop to one of the lowest points.

To help address this need, Fairfax County is promoting its annual "Stuff the Bus: Helping Fairfax Families" program at 14 locations from Jan. 14 to Feb. 20, 2017. This collaborative program, now in its seventh year, is a partnership among Fairfax County Government, local grocery stores and nonprofits to restock the shelves.

Each week a Fastran bus staffed by MV Transportation personnel will park at a different location and collect food donations. The campaign kicks off Jan. 14, 2017, the weekend leading up to the Martin Luther King Day of Service, and will run each weekend until Presidents' Day, Feb. 20, 2017.

All donation hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Please see the County's website for locations: <http://www.fairfax-county.gov/living/food/stuffthebus/>.

Snow Shoveling Tips

As a resident of Fairfax County, did you know you're required to shovel your sidewalks after a major snow event? Listed below are seven important priority areas you should consider. The County needs your help so first responders can do their job quickly:

- (1) The sidewalk in front of your home
- (2) The sidewalk in front of vacant homes or homes where residents are unable to shovel
- (3) Fire hydrants
- (4) Bus stops (there are more than 4,000 in the county!)
- (5) Sidewalks/paths that lead to schools or community buildings where snow has been removed
- (6) Bike trails
- (7) Storm drains

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Neighborhood Events:

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