



STRATFORD LANDING

Mount Vernon District · Fairfax County · 22308

December 2017 Newsletter



President's Letter

Happy and healthy holiday season to you!

I am writing this letter several days before Thanksgiving, and like many of you, am busy planning for the holidays. As often happens, I realize how quickly another year has passed.

In October we held our annual neighborhood meeting, at which time we heard two very informative and excellent presentations. The first was by PFC Monica Meeks, a newly hired member of the Mount Vernon Police Department, and the second by Lt. John Dillon, who is Chief of District 2 National Park Police. Officer Meeks, a seasoned police officer, joined the Mount Vernon force as a Community Liaison Officer to assist in community relations. She has been out and about speaking with neighborhoods and schools to improve communication between residents, students and police officers. Lt. Dillon spoke about the challenges the park police face with the George Washington Parkway. The park police are very aware of the concerns that many of our community members have expressed and are doing their best with their limited resources to

News & Events

'Santa on a Firetruck'

Saturday, December 16th @ 3pm

On Saturday, December 16th starting at 3pm, Santa will ride on a firetruck throughout Stratford Landing, passing out candy to everyone who comes out to watch! Set-up your tables, lay out your blankets and gather with neighbors as we continue this wonderful tradition!

Santa's route will start at the corner of Londonderry Road and Riverside Road at 3pm. Please refer to the route map under the 'News & Events' section of the website [HERE](#).

HOLIDAY HOME

DECORATING CONTEST

Sunday, December 17th @ 5pm

Get out your lights and garland and get on that roof! It's time to think about how you will decorate your home for the holidays! SLCA will once again support the holiday decorating contest, with judging by the owner of [Top it Off](#), Karena Rasser on December 17th. Karena will be driving around the neighborhood and handing out cash prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place at 5pm. So, make sure you're home in case she makes a visit! We will post winners with photos to the website!

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www.stratfordlanding.org

try and address these concerns. Officer Dillon has also met with Congressman Don Beyer to try and get some assistance. He encouraged residents to reach out to our public officials as well.

We had a nice turn out and a fun afternoon at our annual Halloween Parade and Party. I really enjoyed Halloween as I looked up and down our street and saw children and parents visiting homes. Several bonfires were made in front yards for groups of neighbors to enjoy.

We are looking forward to SLCA December events. Check the front page of this newsletter for the dates of our annual 'Santa on the Firetruck' and 'Decorating Contest.' We are happy to announce that Karena Rasser, the owner and President of Top it off, and the manager of the Hollin Hall store have agreed to be our judges this year. Many thanks to them and to Santa for agreeing to share in our holiday festivities.

As I work on my lists for food shopping and gift giving I can't help but think about the meaning of the holidays. Of course, the obvious things come to mind like my family, friends and three crazy pets for which I am deeply grateful, but I also am thankful to live in a neighborhood where people still take a stroll, walk their dogs and stop and chat with friends on the street. I am also grateful to have wonderful neighbors who are willing to step up at times of need. There is still a sense of hometown in Stratford Landing. I see kids on bikes and basketball hoops and I feel lucky to live here. I wish you all the very best this holiday season. Thanks to all of you who have volunteered to help make our community an even better place to live.

- Kim Fairchild, SLCA President

Year in Review Milestones & Reminders for 2018

This time of year brings a great deal of reflection, as we gather with family and friends for holiday parties and large dinner meals. It's hard to believe that 2017 has almost come and gone, begging for a reminder of the great work and milestones that SLCA has accomplished:

(1) 2016-2017 SLCA membership was higher than it has been in recent years with 506 households renewing or joining. This was largely due to the coordinat-

ed efforts of Block Captains, online membership sales, advertising and the long time frame for joining (which started in July 2016). We continue to improve our membership process while considering the needs of community members. In 2016-2017 we opened online membership sales, which helped immensely, but it is a process we continue to craft and appreciate your patience and ideas as we work through this. As a reminder to anyone interested in helping with our membership drive:

- We are always in need of help from Block Captains. We communicate this in our mailings during the membership drive, but want to emphasize the importance of this role. **What's a Block Captain?** It's a designated individual on your block or nearby that assists with communications. In recent years the role has largely involved follow-up directly with households to be sure they plan to renew their membership, and collect membership monies as applicable. We provide Block Captains with a list of households from which they can plan their communications and visits. Block Captains provide an opportunity for face-to-face communication between SLCA and members, which has been particularly important in such a large community (over 700 households) with numerous and diversified needs. If ever you're interested in becoming a Block Captain, please email Jody Nyalko (jnyalko@gmail.com) or Celia Boertlein (cboertlein@aol.com) for details.
- **Household membership costs have never changed. It is still \$10 to join SLCA for the year,** which is why we can't emphasize enough the importance of membership. We have drastically improved our operating costs through: (1) conversion and investment in primarily online communications, (2) new ways for offering paid advertising in our publications, and (3) exploring new ways for raising funds that benefit the community (food trucks, matching-gift events, etc.). However, membership is the key factor that makes us successful. In the future, we plan to test membership incentives as a way to say thank you, and entice continued support, which we will share with you in the new year.

(2) We completed the update of the SLCA neighborhood directory! Our old directly had reached its 10-year mark, and this year we were able to complete an update

for your benefit. Every SLCA member should have a received a directory. New members who join automatically get one. We are working through the logistics of providing updates, and will update you on that process in the new year. If you haven't opened your directory, we suggest you do. There are great resources and listings by local small businesses - food, retail, day care, and other services - that will be of interest to you. We are fortunate to have the support of our community at-large, who enjoy having you as patrons! We hope you enjoy the benefits of our new directory and are proud of reaching that milestone this year for our members.

(3) Our events continue to draw community-wide support, and we are so glad more individuals continue to volunteer their time. Planning and advertising for community events take time, which is why we're so pleased when community members come forward to help. We tried new events this year like the 'plant-drive' that was coordinated with Holly, Woods & Vines, as well as Food Truck Fridays on Camden Street. Other events continue to be well attended, like the Easter Egg Hunt, Halloween Parade and the 'Santa on a Fire Truck' that is upcoming. We will continue to support these engagements, but do have some requests:

- **If you're attending an SLCA-sponsored event and not a member, please consider joining.** We do not restrict our events to members-only, but do rely on membership dollars to support the event. The more members we have, the better the events, and the more attendance. Membership remains open online almost year-round, and during upcoming events in 2018, we will be working to find ways to remind people.

(4) Our website (www.stratfordlanding.org) and Facebook page are excellent resources for current, community-wide information. We have spent a great deal of time working to keep these resources comprehensive and up-to-date. So, we encourage you to utilize them, since the newsletter is only published every other month.

- As a reminder, Nextdoor is NOT SLCA. Nextdoor is a 3rd-party website where anyone from the community can post information, just like Facebook. SLCA does not police Nextdoor for information, nor do we have any authority on what is posted there. While a great resource for everyone, it is not the best way to communicate with SLCA regarding ideas or concerns.



**IMPORTANT REMINDER:
Final call for 2017-18 SLCA membership!**

Thank you to all who have renewed their SLCA membership for 2017-2018. Membership is the best way you can support SLCA. The best way to renew or join SLCA this year is to do so online. Our membership will soon be closed, and this message serves as a final notice.

If you have not renewed your membership for the 2017-2018 FY, please do so immediately. Active membership is the ONLY way you will continue to receive notifications, updates, newsletters, etc. from SLCA moving forward.

Education MVCCA End of Year Update

FCPS Superintendent Dr. Steve Braband, who was appointed this summer, hosted a "Community Conversation" for Region 3 at Hayfield Secondary School on November 8th. SLCA Education Liaison, Matt Dunne, attended and asked Dr. Braband to share his plan for rectifying the overcrowding at West Potomac High School. Dr. Braband stated his intention to raise all FCPS schools to a similar level of excellence. Once that is accomplished, he intends to adjust school boundaries, which have not been adjusted in decades. He was asked whether there might be alternate options that would remedy the problem in the near term, and he committed to study the problem.

The Fairfax County School Board is considering multiple options for the 2018-2019 school year calendar: Links to [Option A](#), [Option B](#) & [Option C](#).

Some of the options propose an earlier start date along with an earlier end date. It is recommended that you contact the following School Board members to express your opinion: Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon District) at kcorbettsan@fcps.edu, Karen Keys Gamara (At Large) at kakeysgamarr@fcps.edu, Ilryung Moon (At Large) at ilryong.moon@fcps.edu, and Ryan McElveen (At Large) at Ryan.McElveen@fcps.edu.

Environment & Recreation MVCCA End of Year Update

In late October, a resolution was passed supporting restoration of Dyke Marsh, in advance of the Wetlands Board hearing of the National Park Service's application for a permit to proceed with the restoration. A resolution supporting redevelopment of Riverside Apartments to increase density, create over 5 acres of public park, and contribute to a trail network was also passed. In November, E&R passed a resolution in support of a Comprehensive Plan amendment to allow redevelopment of Huntington Club to go forward. The redevelopment would increase housing density near Huntington Metro, control storm water runoff, and create open space and amenities for residents. Finally, E&R also passed a resolution in support of environmentally sensitive redevelopment at 2650 Huntington Ave that would ease the current restriction requiring consolidation with adjacent parcels 45 and 45A.

Friends of Little Hunting Creek Invasive Species Removal Workdays

Join the Friends of Little Hunting Creek for two workdays to remove invasive vines and plants on the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust land adjacent to the Little Hunting Creek pump station, at the intersection of Londonderry Rd and Stockton Parkway. Join us--working in the woods in the winter is good, invigorating work. When?

9 am - Noon, Saturday, December 16
9 am - Noon, Saturday, March 31

Contact Betsy Martin for updates, particularly change due to inclement weather at betsy@folhc.org

Planning & Zoning MVCCA End of Year Update

The MVCCA Planning and Zoning Committee met on November 16, 2017 and heard from the representatives of the Fairfax County Planning Staff and developers regarding redevelopment proposals. The Committee voted unanimously to support the planning for amendment for Hunting Club redevelopment and voted unanimously to support a plan amendment to allow development of a parcel of land at intersection of Huntington Avenue & Telegraph Road. The county planning staff proposed a plan amendment to allow owners/ developer of vacant office buildings to request rezoning to facilitate the re-purposing of vacant office building in the County. Currently there are 18 million square feet of vacant office spaces. Public hearings will be held on January 23, 2018.

Thank you to our December Newsletter Sponsor - [King's Jewelry, Old Town!](#)

A big thank you to our December Newsletter sponsor, King's Jewelry. Please see their advertisement on the back of this issue. King's Jewelry has been family owned and operated for over 60 years, and very supportive of SLCA initiatives. The owner of King's Jewelry is a proud SLCA member and lives in our neighborhood. We are very grateful for their continued support!

If you are a small business and would like to sponsor an upcoming newsletter, please contact Sarah Linden at sarah.artuso@gmail.com.

Around the County this Winter

Christmas at Mount Vernon November 24th - January 6th

The holidays are full of delight at George Washington's estate. During the day, tour the Mansion, watch historic chocolate-making demonstrations, and meet Aladdin the Camel.

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon December 15th & 16th, 5:30pm - 9pm

Kick off your holiday season with sparkling fireworks overlooking the Potomac River! COST: \$34 adult/\$24 youth with Mansion tour. \$30 adult/\$20 youth without Mansion tour

Christmas Lights on Collingwood Road December 1st - January 3rd

A fun and free night for the whole family! Pull-up in your car or get out and watch. Tune into 88.1 FM to enjoy the musical light display from the house on Collingwood Road. It's a tradition worth making!

Waterskiing Santa Claus, Old Town December 24th @ 1pm

New in Alexandria this year! Gather at the waterfront for a spectacular show by the Waterskiing Santa and his wakeboarding reindeer, plus flying elves, the Grinch and his friends, Frosty the Snowman, and Jack Frost. This year's show will feature a new, never-seen-before act in the Washington, DC area.

Ice at Gaylord National November 18th - January 1st

ICE!® featuring Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer ICE!—a signature holiday attraction—is back with a new theme in 2017! Experience favorite scenes from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer brought to life in this walk-through winter wonderland carved from more than two million pounds of ice.

13th Downtown Holiday Market (DC) November 24th - December 23rd 8am - Noon Daily

The Downtown Holiday Market is located on the F Street sidewalk in front of the Smithsonian American Art Museum & National Portrait Gallery between 7th & 9th Streets, NW. Bringing a unique and festive shopping "village" to the heart of Downtown DC, the market features more than 150 regional artisans.

Executive Committee

President: Kim Fairchild
SLCAnewpres2015@gmail.com

Vice President: Jody Nyalko
jnyalko@gmail.com

Treasurer: Celia Boertlein
cboertlein@aol.com

Secretary: Claire Kluskens
birdlady2011@icloud.com

Parliamentarian: Keith Kettell
KWK2325@aol.com

Immediate Past President: Rob Maher
rob@mortgagefool.com

Delegates to MVCCA:

General Council: Jody Nyalko
jnyalko@gmail.com

Education: Matthew Dunne
mdunne@gmail.com

Environment/Recreation: Betsy Martin
betsy@folhc.org

Finance: Scott Kopple
skopple@verizon.net

Planning/Zoning: Leah Chapla
leah.chapla@longandfoster.com

Public Safety: Cole Smith
stratfordlandingnw@gmail.com

Transportation: John Horn
john.horn3@gmail.com

Membership:

Leah Chapla (leah.chapla@longandfoster.com)

Terri Maloney (T2maloney@aol.com)

Jody Nyalko (jnyalko@gmail.com)

Mary Lou Hoffman (703) 360-7267

Recreation/Social:

Nicole Gerow (reccommitteechair@gmail.com)

Neighborhood Watch:

Cole Smith (stratfordlandingnw@gmail.com)

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