



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



September/October 2013 Newsletter

**Next SFCCA Meeting: Monday, September 9th - 7:00 p.m.
at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road**

September Meeting Agenda



Siena School Update - *Clay Kaufman*
National Night Out - *Marie Giradot/Marty Maher*
Treasury Report - *Dick Messalle*
Ice Cream Social - *Jeanne Berman/Betty Batty*
Halloween Parade—*Betty Batty*
Community Day—*David Meininger*
Community Issues/Updates—*All*

National Night Out

Marty Maher, Lorain Avenue

On Tuesday, August 6, the South Four Corners Citizens Association (SFCCA) celebrated our 13th National Night Out at South Four Corners Park. Although cloudy, the rain held off and approximately 90 neighbors enjoyed the evening. Uniformed officers from both the Montgomery County Police Department and the Maryland-National Capital Park Police were in attendance.



SFCCA Membership Chair Eileen Broderick, Montgomery County Police Chief Thomas Manger and State's Attorney John McCarthy.

Surprise guests this year included Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett, State's Attorney John McCarthy and Montgomery County Police Chief Thomas Manger.

Complimentary popsicles and water were provided by SFCCA.



Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett (l) and former SFCCA President Dave Nettleton (r)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

September 9, 2013, 7 p.m.—SFCCA Meeting, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd.
September 14, 2013, 10 a.m.—Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd (meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)
October 19, 2013—Community Day, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd.
October 27, 2013, 4-5 p.m.—Halloween Parade, South Four Corners Park
November 3, 2013—Daylight Saving Time Ends—change your smoke detector batteries!
November 11, 2013, 7 p.m.—SFCCA Meeting, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd.

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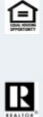
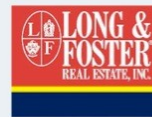
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Calling all ghouls and boo-ys! - 2013 Halloween Parade at South Four Corners Park October 27, 4p.m.

Betty Batty, Dallas Avenue

We hope to see you on Sunday,
October 27th for yet another great
community event.

The parade will leave a few minutes
after 4p.m. from the South Four
Corners Park (Dallas and Forest
Glen) walk up Portland Road make a
right at Lanark Way and back down
Dallas Avenue

After the parade we'll return to the
park and enjoy some sweet treats.
We had such a great turn out last
year.

We hope to see lots of ghosts,
pirates, princesses, witches and super heroes again this year.



Volunteer's Needed for Community Day

In the past, SFCCA has had a Community Day in the fall where neighbors get together for a pot luck meal, games, music, and fun. We would like to continue that tradition this year. on October 19, 2013 from 4:00 to 6:30. We have rented the Margaret Schweinhaut Center for the time.

The key for this event is volunteers. We cannot hold Community Day unless we get volunteers for the following activities. SFCCA will have up until to September 11th to make a decision to continue or not with this event.

1. Community Day Manager - Jeanne Berman 202-359-1739 or jzberman8@gmail.com
2. Advertising manager - vacant
3. Setup manager and helpers - Manager filled by Ruth Hornickel. 301-593-7112 or rhornickel@hotmail.com
4. Music manager and helpers - vacant (Seek out local community talent to perform and help with the P.A. system to amplify sound.)
5. Children activities and helpers - vacant (Organize games/art activities/sports activities for children)
6. Solicit donations from local businesses - vacant (Donations of snacks, beverages, prizes would be appreciated)
7. Prizes - vacant (Prizes are needed for children's games and for a raffle)

If you have skills such as face painting, making balloon animals, performing magic tricks, or other skills that would be fun for Community Day, please consider volunteering to help with the children activities. Please contact David Meininger at jdavidm@juno.com to volunteer.



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Betty Batty reported that nearly 150 people attended the June 16. The event featured a great ice cream vendor with a wide variety of frozen treats. The cost for the event was \$489.

Other event announcements included the Halloween Parade on October 27 at 4 p.m. and Tree Lighting on December 5 at 5 p.m.

Other ideas for community activities are always welcome.

Marty Maher reminded the association of National Night Out to be held on August 6 from 7-8 p.m. The Montgomery County Police always come by for a visit, which thrills the children. Water is provided for the adults, popsicles for the children. The national organization asks that even if people do not attend the gathering, that they turn on porch lights from 7-10 p.m. in support of the idea.

Eileen Broderick, Membership Chairperson, reported that the number of members is a little ahead of past years. She hopes that a Community Day event will interest new people in the association.

Marty offered thanks to Betty Batty and Glen Richardson for the inclusion of information about SFCCA in the welcome bags which are handed out to new residents in our area. When asked about the supply of actual bags, Betty reported that there is sufficient supply, and that The 4 Corners Pub has offered to donate a supply of reusable bags.

Richard Messalle, Treasurer, gave a report of the SFCCA finances. The income is not quite where it was expected to be, but the expanded number of advertisements in the newsletter, while they increase the cost of printing, should help the situation. Some of the association's expenses, in addition to printing the newsletter, include meeting room rentals, web site fee and Post Office box rental.

Larry Dickter, who has closely tracked the issue for SFCCA, reported that the new standards and procedures for constructing accessory apartments in neighborhoods such as ours have been finalized. They may be viewed on the web page of the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, after first going to <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/>. Once there, applicants may see what permits and inspections they will need, as well as what they must do to comply with all zoning ordinances and housing code standards.

While much of the County civic community opposed "fixing" something it felt wasn't broken, Larry said that the changes the County Council eventually approved represented a significant improvement over what might have passed had it not been for the large scale opposition and active intervention of neighborhood groups (such as ours) and individual citizens. Some protections for surrounding neighbors have been incorporated, and the potential for a whole host of negative impacts from what was originally proposed was at least partially addressed.

John Holden is the association's representative to the Montgomery County Civic Federation, which is an umbrella group of local civic associations. The Federation meets monthly. On June 10 one subject was a discussion of a county bill (41-12) which pertains to trees.

The county wants to tighten the regulations concerning the tree canopy of the county.

The main part of the program on June 10 dealt with the new zoning coordinate proposal/amendment which will be voted on in the early fall by the County Council. The proposed changes are significant, especially since they seem to eliminate the Master Plan approach to zoning. (Note from Note Taker: South Four Corners Citizens' Association has relied on its Master Plan to protect the community from incursion into the neighborhood by commercial ventures or businesses.) Digital maps of development codes, which are now easier to use, are available at the web site www.zoningmontgomery.org. John Holden urges the neighbors to look at the web site and contact the County Council with opinions before the fall.

John Holden corrected the spelling of the names of two new people listed in the last newsletter: Mary Pat Spon and Donna Webster Velt.

The subject of trees was discussed again. The county is arranging to plant trees in the public right of way in front of private property this fall or next spring. A request must be made by July 15th. The person to contact is Andrew.Driscoll@montgomerycountymd.gov.

David Meininger closed the meeting with a discussion about the idea of reinstating Community Day. He asked the members to talk to their neighbors to see if the idea is a good one. If it is to happen, one or two coordinators, one crew for set-up and one crew for clean-up are needed. He suggested streamlining the event to make it more fun for everyone involved. The proposed date is Saturday, October 19. David also mentioned that the Advisory Board meets the last Thursday of the odd months from 7-8:30 p.m.

JUST A SAMPLE OF HAPPY CLIENTS! CALL BETTY

Betty Batty is an excellent realtor. She is smart, knowledgeable, hard-working and incredibly responsive. Aside from that, she really listened to what we wanted and responded, which is such a rare skill. She responded immediately to calls, emails, etc., and best of all, when things were complicated during the sale, she gave regular updates even before I expected them. She is a great negotiator. She is a fabulous realtor. You should clone her. – Sarah Oates

Betty was a dream come true! This was our first time selling a house, and I'm not afraid to say we were pretty clueless. We totally put our trust in Betty with EVERYTHING and she did not disappoint! We ended up with closing at \$16k over list! She even negotiated free rent back for two months so that we could finish the school year out before our move. Needless to say, we'd highly recommend Betty!! – The Severino's



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The Gardening Guru

Jeanne Berman, Horticulturalist

Preparing for the End of Summer and the beginning of Fall:\

As August passes us by, remember that cool season lawns are going dormant and no longer need to be watered. (not that they had to be this summer).

If you harvest herbs from your garden harvest them early in the morning for the best flavor.

Begin your planting of cool-season vegetables; turnips, beets, carrots, spinach, Chinese cabbage, brussel sprouts, kale (and garlic can be planted through the end of October)

This is a good time to have your soil tested to see if it needs any amending. Vegetable soil testing can be done through October.


The BEST time to re-rejuvenate; fertilize and seed your lawn is NOW through October. Apply fertilizer and lime to turf grass **based on your soil test. Our neighbor Erin Boyd, found that A&L Eastern Laboratories' basic test with recommendations (\$10) was the best deal if you weren't interested in a lead test.** <http://www.al-labs-eastern.com/Default.aspx>

She did want a lead test for the garden though. That was an additional \$15 at A&L. Erin found the best deal the UMass Extension Office. Their routine soil analysis includes testing for extracted and total estimated lead. Their test did not include organic matter which A&L did and which She wanted, but that was only \$5 extra. <http://soiltest.umass.edu/services>

Remove all fallen and diseased leaves from your bed and mulch the garden beds with healthy leaves or compost and continue to repeat this as leaves continue to fall throughout the season. (a mulcher-mower makes this easier and a bit more 'manicured' but is not necessary. Healthy broken down leaves is the best mulch you can give your planting beds. Remember to always discard the diseased leaves and pesticide laden grass clippings.

Harvest most of your fruits before frost. (usually for our area around October 7th.)

From mid-October through Thanksgiving plant spring bulbs. Try to buy them early (now) so that you will have the opportunity to see what's new and not what is just left on the shelves. Visit specialty garden centers to see all the new variety of bulbs and the biggest selection available to you. Every year there is more to choose from. To me it is the adult version of getting a new box of crayons when school begins. Just be sure to store them in a dry cool place and remember that you bought them and plant them on the appropriate dates. If you mark your calendar this will help you to remember to find them and plant them. Try to do it before the craziness of the holidays comes rolling through your schedule.



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The Gardening Guru (cont.)

Trees and shrubs can be planted until the ground freezes. You can even purchase them now, keep them alive until you are ready to plant. Many nurseries and box stores are having sales so this is a good time to try and find trees and shrubs you may want to purchase for a lower price. Also look at Stadler's Nursery for their free fall planting when you purchase a tree of approximately \$200.00 or more.

After mums bloom cut them back to approx. 6" above ground.

DIG A HOLE NOW if you plan on planting a live Christmas tree.

Clean and sharpen your tools so that you are ready for next season.

Learning about pumpkin growing by *Jeanne Berman* ,novice pumpkin grower

As a former teacher and now teacher of horticulture where my specialty is perennials, I love to learn. Last year I learned a little bit about growing a pumpkin from seed that was given to me.

Last summer I tried to grow a pumpkin in my perennial garden for the first time. I did EVERYTHING WRONG!!!! I plopped the seed in the ground and let it grow. Didn't pay attention to it's nutrient needs or watering needs.

The leaves were massive and started taking over my beautiful flowers so I started cutting the leaves off and all the rest of the pumpkin flowers off hoping that all the energy would go into the vine and into my one and only pumpkin that was growing. Later I found out that every leaf I cut off to make my perennial flowers stand out was taking pounds away from my pumpkin. The only hint I received was to put a piece of Styrofoam under the pumpkin for protection from bugs and possible bottom rot.

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The Gardening Guru (cont.)

Last year I was very proud not knowing that I did anything wrong while many beautiful flowers grew all summer and fall. I finally had to cut my pumpkin which had taken up residence right on our curb, it grew to 39.8 pounds!! I was pleased until I began reading.....

I read a book about the 2009 World Champion Pumpkin Growers in Rhode Island. Oh my goodness, these guys are fanatics. Just like Sunday football fanatics. They test the soil, they records days until flowers appear, record the number of days after pollination, they measure the pumpkin by circumference, and top to bottom to see how much weight it should be putting on, They measure all the water it is getting and how often they add organic nutrients to their vines. They even keep pumpkin lineage to see where your pumpkin stock came from!!! Just like all the stats for athletes, amazing!!!! Fanatic pumpkin growers even put wool blankets on their pumpkins at night and white t-shirts with a tarp covering them during the heat of the day. That is a lot of work – YES, to wear the coveted ORANGE jacket, if you have become the Pumpkin World Record Holder for that year.

This year my brother-in-law (a pumpkin grower who lives in Illinois) told me I should try to beat my personal best with the seeds from my pumpkin that I saved. So I began the ordeal again this summer hoping to get a head start, I started some plants indoors and when ready planted them outside. we had the cold spell, then the rain and when the flowers finally appeared, they were ALL male flowers I was going crazy. The second hint I received was to add an amendment of 0-5-0, that is nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. So by only adding phosphorus the female flowers began to bloom. Finally a chance. The week they opened was our hottest week of the summer. It takes 10 days after pollination to 'set' the pumpkin. Thinking they were correctly pollinated I thought I was on my way. I read on Big-Pumpkin.com that some of these Champs put fans out to keep the temperatures at a cool but warm 85 degrees, apparently perfect for pollinating. So 2 weeks go by and yes all my "pumpkins" that I though were set, sadly self aborted, 4 pumpkins gone!



When the temperatures finally cooled I was hoping to have something "take" - nope, too cool. I almost threw in the towel when low and behold I finally spotted not ONE but 3 "magic pumpkins" on the vines in my perennial bed. So to beat my personal best I have a great deal of catching up to do. I must cut back all my perennials for now. Water properly and continue to monitor my pumpkins daily, adding the proper amendments (organic of course) daily. Did you know that pumpkins can add 10-50 pounds a day in the month of August? It's true.

As September approaches and the weather cools pumpkins will grow at a much slower rate. My Brother-in-law thinks I could actually get my pumpkin to weigh in at 100 pounds by the time I harvest it. But for now I am just hoping to beat my gratifying little pumpkin of 39.8 pounds from last summer. I think not knowing anything was so much easier. But now I know. I love to learn but in this case...I wonder do I know too much? Sometimes you just have to ask the question, Do I really want to know?

Stay tuned. I will keep you posted on what actually happens. I am not a fanatic yet, I just don't have the garden space but I do plan to attend a pumpkin growers weigh off in Altoona, PA in October. I want to meet some of the Champs who can actually wear the Orange jacket.

SFCCA HONORED BY MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

Larry Dickter, Lanark Way

The Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) is a countywide umbrella group of neighborhood associations such as the South Four Corners Citizens Association (SFCCA). Its mission is to preserve and improve the quality of life for all current and future residents of Montgomery County by helping to provide an effective citizen voice to government policy makers.

Several times a year, MCCF designates an organization and/or individual to receive its "Community Hero" award, in recognition of their time and hard work devoted to making Montgomery County a better place for all of us.

Earlier this year, South Four Corners Citizens Association and Harriet Quinn, one of our neighbors in Woodmoor, were recognized as Community Heroes for their successful fight against a special exception application that would have permitted a developer to build a large 150 child day care facility in our single family, residentially zoned neighborhood. The developer sought to build this facility in spite of Maryland state regulations for facilities of this size and type, and in spite of the guidance set out in the Four Corners Master Plan.

After several years, and following a separate fund raising effort, public testimony, and letter writing campaign organized and lead by our neighbor Glen Richardson and the SFCCA spin off he named Keep South Four Corners Residential, the special exception was finally denied and the Four Corners Master Plan recommendation against such a commercial development in that location was upheld.

In the Civic Federation News of March 2013, North Four Corners activist Jim Zepp wrote:

"This outcome was due to the tireless and persistent efforts by SFCCA residents and their attorney to actively monitor the special exception process throughout its various steps; to investigate and Intervene to correct information in various submissions by the developer and actions by public officials; and to thoroughly research the relevant regulations, procedures, and circumstances for the proposed project."

According to Mr. Zepp, the developer ran up a tab of hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal and consulting fees during his ultimately unsuccessful quest. At the same time, thanks to Ms. Quinn and to our attorney (and former neighbor) Louis Leibowitz, expenses on the neighborhood side were kept to a bare minimum.

As someone who was privileged to work with Glen Richardson, Harriet Quinn, and Louis Leibowitz in particular throughout this long ordeal, I cannot say how much I admire their commitment, intelligence and mastery of a process seemingly designed to discourage full and effective citizen participation. This was a true David vs. Goliath struggle, with scores of supporting players throughout our neighborhood doing their part as well.

As a long-time resident of South Four Corners, I am especially proud that our civic association was selected to receive this honor. The back story behind many of these awards are truly inspirational, as many of the Civic Federation's "Community Heroes" are simply "ordinary" citizens, just like us, who have successfully fought, often against great odds and far superior resources, to either preserve the quality of life in and around their neighborhoods against excessive and/or incompatible development, environmental degradation, intolerable traffic congestion and other threats, or to gain amenities and other improvements (like South Four Corners Park) that would enhance community life for all.

Community Activism: The Story Behind South Four Corners Park

David Meininger, Greenock Road

The idea of improving the Forest Glen-Dallas Ave. Park grew from the frustration that many SFC parents had with the lack of facilities at the park. There were only a couple pieces of dilapidated play equipment in the entire park and it was terribly under utilized in mid 2002. This Park is now named South Four Corners Park.

The founding group of volunteers for the FG-DA Park included: Chairperson Kathy Bittinger (formerly of Rogart), Klare Ehrenberg (Markham), Gillian Hay (Stirling), Morgan Theriot (formerly of Tenbrook), Kim Trebel (formerly of Rogart), Michelle Winter (formerly of Lorain), Monica Janossy (formerly of Dallas), Dina Peterson (formerly of Greenock), Jori Ellis (Hereford) and Lucia Novak (formerly of Forest Glen).

Other helping hands were: Stephen Boeckman, Sandy Carin West, David West, Linda Donaldson, Mara Glenshaw, Susan Kidd and Cindy Shay



The model for this project came for the Evans Parkway Park in Silver Spring. The guidelines came from the Montgomery Parks Foundation guidelines for Friends Groups and Special Projects dated March 7, 2000.

This group encountered many obstacles before achieving their goal of a better park for all of South Four Corners. Some of those issues were: Working with SFCCA and MNCPPC, funding for a goal of \$12,000.00, equipment choices and selection as well as delivery and installation

Initially the SFCCA wasn't a big supporter of the project, but ultimately donated \$500.

Kathy Bittinger approached M-NCPPC about the possibility of upgrading the equipment and met with their landscaping department. They were not receptive, citing that our park was not due for an upgrade for another decade. In the meantime, The Gazette had run a couple of articles about neighborhoods in Kensington and Potomac that had raised money or created private partnerships to upgrade their park areas. She went back to M-NCPPC with this information and asked whether we could have the option of doing the same.

The idea was met with great resistance, saying that they had to provide the labor, landscaping, and upkeep of the equipment and that it was a bad precedent to set that wealthier neighborhoods could afford it, less wealthy neighborhoods could not. She showed them their own map of playground areas in the county. It showed that SFC was actually one of the few neighborhoods of our size that lacked equipment for children over age 5 (the age designation on the slide that was present) within walking distance. Eventually, it was agreed that if we could raise the money, they would provide the installation and any needed landscaping, but would remove us from the schedule for additional updates in a decade. She was also given a list of county approved equipment vendors. The committee agreed that this was the best outcome they could hope for.



The committee set about developing a strategy for fundraising and Kathy contacted the playground equipment vendors to get their catalogs. After looking at the catalogs, the committee determined that they would need a minimum of \$10,000 to outfit a new playground. The committee decided that they would describe the proposed project in the neighborhood newsletter and then directly solicit homes in the neighborhood for donations.

Everyone on the committee agreed to start with themselves and each put in \$100 toward the cause. They planned an ice cream social at the park, where they sold ice cream cones and talked to neighbors about the plans. The committee also decided that hosting a Silent Auction at the Schweinhaut Center, in conjunction with the annual neighborhood party, would be another way to raise funds. Each committee member took a list of area businesses to solicit for donations of goods, services or money. The committee also advertised the auction at the SFCCA meetings and in the newsletter, asking for further donations.



The auction was a lot of work, but was a great success. About \$8,000 was raised there. Through the private monetary donations of our neighbors, and the money raised at the ice cream social and the auction, we were able to fund the playground equipment. The Ice Cream socials were on July 13 and August 6 in 2002. The Silent Auction was on October 19, 2002. Fundraising was completed in December 2002. The goal achievement was announced at the SFCCA meeting in January 2003.

The committee then met to choose the equipment and settle on a vendor. We attempted to provide equipment that offered things for a variety of ages and skill levels, as well as different types of activities. We were pleasantly surprised with the support we received. Only three neighbors publicly disagreed with the proposed upgrade, citing a concern for increased traffic and lack of parking. The committee attempted to quell these concerns by showing the type of equipment and the approximate size of the proposed changes, ensuring that the playground would be a draw for walkers, yet not large or exciting enough to cause those from other areas to visit.

The M-NCPPC put in the final order and we waited. A funny event occurred on the day the equipment was to be delivered. I received a call on my cell phone from the delivery driver, saying that he wasn't sure he could get down my street (Rogart Road) for the delivery! I quickly re-routed him to M-NCPPC. Apparently, they had given my home address as the delivery site. I was thankful that I had not arrived home to discover a pile of un-assembled playground equipment sitting on my front lawn! But, unfortunately, when the driver delivered the equipment to the M-NCPPC storage facility, it sat there for many months. After numerous phone calls and runaround, spanning at least one year, they eventually installed the equipment minus a couple of items M-NCPPC claimed they no longer had in storage. Apparently they had been mistakenly installed elsewhere. The committee never received a refund for those items, nor did they receive any replacements. Kathy believes the installation was completed in 2004.

Overall, South Four Corners residents were happy with the new equipment, which also included a message board, and happy to have a place where community children could play and families could gather for future events.

Sources for this story include emails from Klare Ehernberg and Kathy Bittinger; SFCCA archivist David Nettleton and Marty Maher.

Officers of the South Four Corners Citizens Association

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Pat Wills, Recording Secretary

Glen Richardson, Vice President
Richard Messalle, Treasurer

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