



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



September/October 2014 Newsletter

Next SFCCA Meeting: Monday, September 8th - 7:00 p.m.
at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road

Sept 8 Meeting to Feature Speakers on Environmental Improvements

The September 8 SFCCA meeting will feature two speakers from the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). **Jenny St. John** is a Watershed planner who works with engineers, consultants, and communities to control and treat polluted runoff. "Green Streets" are part of a County initiative to capture such runoff in neighborhoods that have minimal storm water controls and not enough open space for larger storm water practices.



Jenny plans to showcase the **recently completed improvements** along Dennis Avenue and other SFC neighborhood right-of-way areas, and will have pictures and video of the rain gardens, bioswales, curb extensions, tree boxes, and permeable parking pads in action during the **August 12 rain event**. She is very interested to receive **feedback from the community** and to answer any questions residents may have.

Carla Ellern is a RainScapes planner and licensed landscape architect who works with homeowners, institutions, and commercial properties to reduce storm water runoff going into the Chesapeake Bay. The RainScapes Rewards Initiative Program gives rebates to private property owners who implement RainScapes techniques to create beautiful environmental site design (ESD) projects to infiltrate water on their property. Carla will briefly describe the various **RainScapes rebate incentives** that are available.

Other important topics will also be discussed at the Sept. 8 meeting.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

September 8, 2014—7p.m.—Community Meeting, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road

September 13, 2014—10 a.m.—Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd (meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

September 27, 2014—3-4:30 p.m.—Ice Cream Social, Location TBD—please check website (Rain Date: September 28, 2014, 3-4:30 p.m.)

October 26, 2014—4 p.m.—Halloween Parade, South Four Corners Park

November 10, 2014—7p.m.—Community Meeting, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road

Annual South Four Corners Halloween Parade

By Betty Batty

Calling all Superheroes, Princesses, Ghouls, Goblins and Monsters! Mark your calendars for the Annual South Four Corners Halloween Parade.



The parade will be held on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 4p.m.

We will leave a few minutes after 4p.m. from the South Four Corners Park and we'll return to the park for sweet treats. We walk from the park up Portland Road, cross over the new path on Lanark Way and down Dallas Ave. to the park.

If you would like to volunteer to assist with signs or donate cupcakes/ cookies please contact Betty Batty at battyrealestate@gmail.com



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SOLD!!

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Good Neighbors—Good Health

According to newly published research by psychologists at the University of Michigan, people who know and trust their neighbors are less likely to have heart attacks. While neighborhood social cohesion has long been associated with good mental health, as well as some aspects of physical health, this is the first study that links social connection at the neighborhood level specifically with good cardiac health.

According to lead researcher Eric Kim, there may be more than a few explanations for this correlation. If you want to read the study for yourself, you can find it in the September 2014 *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. Go to www.jech.bmj.com/content/current to either read an abstract of the study or to purchase it in its entirety.

Better yet, why not go out and introduce yourself to your neighbors across the street who moved in recently? And since there is no better way to get to know other neighbors than participating in groups like SFCCA, don't forget to put the September 8 community meeting on your calendar. We hope to see you there!

Fall Home Maintenance Checklist

Betty Batty

Fall is a great time to check a few things off your home maintenance list. Here are a few suggested items that can make a big difference.

- ⇒ Replace batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and check fire extinguishers
- ⇒ Repair or replace weather stripping around doors and windows
- ⇒ Clean Gutters and downspouts
- ⇒ Regrade the area around your home
- ⇒ Clean out your the dryer vent
- ⇒ Schedule a chimney sweep
- ⇒ Trim tree branches
- ⇒ Turn off outdoor faucets
- ⇒ Schedule your annual furnace service appointment

Important Phone Numbers




Montgomery County General Information & Service Request, Call 311
Outside of Montgomery County, call [240-777-0311](tel:240-777-0311)
The TTY (for the hearing impaired) number is [240-773-3556](tel:240-773-3556)



Police & Fire Emergency, 911
Fire Non-Emergency, [240-683-6520](tel:240-683-6520)
Police Non-Emergency, [301-279-8000](tel:301-279-8000)



24-Hour Emergency Preparedness Hotline, [240-777-4200](tel:240-777-4200)

 **pepco** Electric power outages or downed wires, [1-877-737-2662](tel:1-877-737-2662)

Highlights from the July 14, 2014 SFCCA Meeting Provided by Pat Wills

This was an incredibly informative meeting that was attended by approximately 45 people. Speakers from Washington Gas and the Montgomery County Police gave vital information about our community.

Jason Rich is the Washington Gas Construction Supervisor responsible for the ongoing project of replacing our gas mains and service lines. His cell phone number is **703-408-2086**, and his email address is **JRich@washgas.com**. He is the primary contact for issues related to the project. In his presentation, he described that approximately 29,035 feet of existing medium pressure bare/wrapped steel gas main will be replaced with medium pressure plastic gas main.

He provided an updated schedule of work, and walked us through the customer experience, explaining how homeowners will be notified when individual homes will be hooked into the replaced main. Phase 2 is about to start in August. Interruption of gas supply should be only a few hours of one day. Washington Gas will restore lawns if needed. Other Washington Gas employees who attended the meeting and helped to answer questions were Brendan Gamble (Construction Manager) and Kelly Gibson Caplan (Community Outreach Manager). The presentation slides are available on www.southfourcorners.com.

Montgomery County Officer **Joy Patil** also spoke. She has been with the police department for 22 years, and is currently a Community Services Officer and our neighborhood's primary contact. She is available during the week to do a home security survey of your home. Call the 3rd district police station (240-773-6800) to schedule. It will take about 45 minutes to complete.

Officer Patil emphasized that if you see a suspicious activity you should call the **police non-emergency number 301-279-8000** to report it. If you see a crime taking place (e.g., a robbery or a deliberate act of someone breaking into a home), call 911. She told us how valuable setting up a watch with your neighbors can be in preventing crime in our neighborhood.

It was mentioned that drivers are not obeying the 4-way stop signs in our community. In response to the desire for enforcement, the police will enforce the 4-way stop sign laws. For the sake of safety, and to avoid being ticketed, neighbors should obey the stop signs.

John Holden, SFCCA President, noted that the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF), of which SFCCA is a member, holds its meetings on the second Monday of the month. The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board also holds its full meetings on the second Monday of the month. Since these are the same dates as our SFCCA meetings, this interferes with our having representation at those other meetings, and from inviting representatives from those groups come to speak to us. There was discussion about changing the date of the bi-monthly SFCCA meetings to another night. **SFCCA expects to move its meetings to the third Monday of odd-numbered months (January, March, May, etc.), starting in 2015.**

Larry Dickter, SFCCA Vice President, gave an update on the White Oak Science Gateway (WOSG) Master Plan. The plan would greatly increase development in the White Oak area, without addressing the needs for appropriate transportation and other infrastructure. Following discussion, a motion was unanimously approved for SFCCA leadership to send a letter to the County Council expressing the concerns that were discussed. (See the listserv and elsewhere in the newsletter for more details.)

White Oak Master Plan: SFCCA position, and County Council action

by John Holden and Larry Dickter



The additional development recently approved for White Oak would create an area twice the size of downtown Silver Spring, and be equivalent in size to Tysons Corner.

At the July 2014 community meeting, a motion was unanimously approved for SFCCA leadership to write to the County Council expressing a number of serious concerns about the White Oak Science Gateway (WOSG) Master Plan then under consideration. A letter was sent on behalf of SFCCA to all members of the Montgomery County Council plus the County Executive. Leaders of almost every civic association in our part of the county signed on to other letters expressing similar concerns -- about the proposed density for the Master Plan area, the proposed emphasis given to residential housing (as opposed to employment), the lack of appropriate traffic analysis, the lack of

effective environmental protections, and the removal of "staging," which is an essential element to ensure community input and adequate public facilities to support proposed development. While this project may bring additional jobs and amenities just to the north of us, it does not relieve the Council of its responsibility to make sure that master plans for areas with major environmental and transportation challenges such as ours, contain staging to ensure that infrastructure (roads, schools and other public services) keeps up with development. Unfortunately, despite the many concerns expressed, and more sustainable options that were proposed by community and environmental leaders, the Council approved the WOSG Master Plan without modification on July 29 by a vote of 8-0, with At-large Councilmember Marc Elrich abstaining. The County Council's failure to take prudent action -- e.g., lack of staging, total disregard for environmental considerations -- will likely have unprecedented negative impacts on traffic conditions, the environment, and public infrastructure for many years.

It will be essential that all of us speak up, in partnership with other citizens and civic organizations, to ensure that future development proposals for the White Oak Master Plan area make sense for our communities.

Let's Take the First Step, Together!

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The following are excerpts from the SFCCA letter to the County Council before its vote:

A motion was passed with unanimous consent to communicate [...] the following position of our Association:

- Staging as described in the September 2013 Planning Board approved draft of the Master Plan must be reinstated. Phased staging with hard stops and strict, well-defined milestones -- as Incorporated in other recently adopted master plans -- are needed in order to guarantee that new development will be supported by adequate infrastructure (transit, schools, etc.).
- Existing traffic standards must be used until necessary transit improvements are fully funded and implemented. Whatever zoning density is approved needs to reflect realistic transportation capacity, and therefore should not be predicated upon implementation of the aspirational, unfunded Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service that may be more than a decade away, if it is ever built at all. We also believe that designating US 29 north of MD 650 as a freeway, to allow for greater development, is only a prescription for greater traffic congestion gridlock further south.
- If high quality job creation for East County residents is one of the primary goals of the Plan, and we believe it should be, then allowable residential units need to be scaled back significantly by rezoning the area from commercial/residential (CR) to employment zones. The proposed CR zoning allows the developers to decide what is most profitable for them to build, regardless of what is in the best interests of County residents and their employment needs.
- There needs to be a greater focus on the revitalization of the Hillandale and White Oak shopping centers, as opposed to the more remote sites in the Plan that will only draw business away from the area's long standing retail and transportation centers along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.

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Summer's end in the Garden

Jeanne Berman, Horticulturalist

A Gardener's To Do List:

Trees and Shrubs Water deeply not frequently for established plants, *don't* water for brief periods every day or every other day – doing so can encourage fungal growth on the constantly wet surface and still keep deeper roots dry, since the water doesn't soak in- the best way to water is to soak thoroughly. Make sure the root area is well soaked and that the water seeps into the soil at least 4-6 inches deep.

A guideline is to put down at least an inch of water, if you use a sprinkler, measure how long it takes to fill a shallow can or dish about one inch deep. Checking the soil down to about five inches will give you a better idea of how moist the roots are getting. Now is the time to finish the last of your pruning done, or wait until early winter to resume shaping your trees and shrubs.

Fall pruning can lead to a flush of tender growth that can easily be killed by frost damage. The stress of drought increases trees' susceptibility to diseases and insect attack, especially street trees; take pity on them and soak the 'strip' between the sidewalk and the curb with water at least once every couple of weeks. (In SFCCA, we have many trees that we could help here, not just the ones that were damaged this winter, the older more established trees everyone worries about falling in a storm)

Your grass can go brown and come back, but trees...even 'native trees,' are much healthier with water in the summer. Don't fertilize trees or shrubs. Feeding in August will stimulate new growth at a time when plants are beginning to enter dormancy, and could result in excessive winter damage.

Annuals and Perennials Don't forget that you can have flowers from now until fall. Some shrubs such as Caryopteris (aka: Bluebeard) bloom early in August as do some beautiful perennials. Asters, Boneset, Goldenrod and Ironweed are late-season butterfly magnets.

Japanese Anemone blooms late August throughout September. Camellias, start showing off as early as October (and throughout the winter and spring) Start planning now so you can grow what you want this fall.

Hostas: Hostas are the most popular low maintenance shade tolerant plant that has over 8,000 varieties. The blooming flower stems should be cut off close to the base of the plant. *Hosta plantaginea* and some white-flowered hosta cultivars such as 'Royal Standard' flower in August.

They have fragrant flowers and are showier than the ones that have bloomed earlier this summer. Even gardeners who don't care for hosta flowers may want to let these bloom and attract bees. "Austin Dickinson" a variegated hosta with a purple blooming flower is also fragrant and used in some floral displays. Do you know how many different Hostas do you have in your shade garden? Yes, there are some hostas that actually like more sun than shade. The plant world continues to change. Lucky for us.



Deadhead (remove faded flowers) from perennials unless they have showy seedheads, and/or seedheads that feed the birds (like the goldfinch favorite, *Echinacea* aka: purple coneflower). Keep feeding flowering annuals in containers for more blooms until frost.

Lawn: Mid September through October is the best time to plant a new lawn, rejuvenate you tired lawn, overseed a thin barely existing lawn or to fill bare spots. Now is the best time to reduce the weeds in your lawn, in preparation for the seeding you'll be doing for your lawn. (University of Maryland Cooperative extension has more lawn care information on their Master Gardener website)

Vegetables and Herbs: Now is the time to clean up the old vegetables in your garden and get ready for the new ones you are waiting to grow. Start thinking about planting your fall vegetables. Some fall vegetables you should look for at the garden centers; broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, kale, cauliflower, collards, mustards, turnips lettuce. When harvesting **white potatoes** dig the plants and let the foliage begin to die back, then let them lie on the ground for a few hours before bringing them inside. Don't wash them, that can cause them to rot in storage. Store potatoes in a dark, cool location (35°- 40°F.) **Peppers** that are allowed to ripen on the plant may suffer from fungal disease, so pick them before fully ripe. Picking peppers while they're still green also encourages plants to produce more fruit.

Pests: Fall webworm is often seen in your trees. It is a 1-2 inch long hairy caterpillar that creates large tent like nests on the ends of branches of trees and some shrubs. It looks awful but causes little damage. They can be left alone or knocked out of the tree with a stick/broom, a hard water spray will work , or pruning them out and disposing of them in the trash. If your periwinkle is wilting and turning brown from the fungal disease Phomopsis blight, simply prune away the infected plants.

Look out for Blossom End Rot on your tomatoes, cucumbers and melons. (the opposite end from the stem will turn mushy and blackish brown). This is a calcium deficiency problem that can be treated with a spray of calcium concentrate. Then next year when planting, apply an appropriate amount of lime (calcium carbonate) to your planting. Use a special tomato fertilizer with 5% Calcium.

Before you dig, call Miss Utility "It's the LAW!!!" 1-800-257-7777



Call 311 to replace a street tree (especially the new ones that have died in our recent plantings)



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Pat Wills, Recording Secretary

Larry Dickter, Vice President
Richard Messalle, Treasurer

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