



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



Building a stronger community, one neighbor at a time

May/June 2020

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

May 16 – 10 am

Adopt a Road, Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

May 18 – CANCELLED

SFCCA Community Meeting

June – POSTPONED

Ice Cream Social

July 18 – 10 am

Adopt a Road, Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

July 20 – 7 pm

SFCCA Community Meeting
Schweinhaut Senior Center

NOTE: this meeting may be cancelled

Fall 2020 – date TBD

Community Yard Sale
(to be rescheduled from April)

Welcome to a special edition of the SFCCA newsletter. This issue takes a look at the coronavirus pandemic – how it is affecting our neighborhood, what may lie ahead, and the many ways we have rallied as a community.

An example of community spirit? South Four Corners adorns its homes with **rainbows!** Placing rainbows in windows and on lawns is an idea that started in Italy, spreading to other countries from there. It sends a message of hope and gratitude during these challenging times: *Andra tutto bene ~ Everything will be all right.* Here are two rainbows from our neighborhood.





RESTAURANT GUIDE

All Set

www.allsetrestaurant.com; (301) 495-8800
Delivery: DoorDash, UberEats, Grubhub
Details: Full menu available; subject to change

La Cusita Pupuseria

www.lacasitapupusas.com; (301) 523-5033
Delivery: DoorDash, Grubhub, UberEats.
Pickup, Curbside dropoff.
Details: Pupusas, tamales, soups, sandwiches, smoothies. Latin market food items for pickup.
Lunch free for kids, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday to Friday

El Golfo Restaurant

www.elgolforestaurant.com; (301) 608-2121
Delivery: Takeout, no contact pickup, restaurant delivery, Postmates
Details: Latin American favorites. Beer, wine, spirits

Kao Thai

www.kaothairestaurant.com; (323) 252-6811
Delivery: UberEats, Grubhub
Details: Thai food; most items on menu available

Krazy Steve's

www.krazysteves.com; (301) 920-0073
Delivery: By restaurant; DoorDash, UberEats, Grubhub
Details: Deep-dish and thin-crust artisan pizza, barbecue, burgers, macaroni and cheese, craft beer and wine, and more

Los Chorros

www.loschorrosrestaurant.com; (301) 933-1066
Delivery: UberEats, DoorDash, Grubhub, Postmates
Details: Full menu, including Tex-Mex and Salvadoran options. Beer, wine, margaritas, mixed drinks to go

Hollywood East Cafe

www.hollywoodeastcafe.com; (240) 290-9988
Delivery: restaurant delivery, UberEats
Details: Hong Kong style cuisine and dim sum

PLNT Burger

www.plntburger.com; (240) 685-6286
Delivery: Postmates, Grubhub and UberEats.
You can also order for pickup directly with us at www.toasttab.com/plnt-burger/v3
Details: Offering 100% plant-based burgers, links, fries, snacks and soft serve; Kosher and vegan

*Eat in, take out.
Support small
businesses.*

For a complete list: <https://www.silverpringdowntown.com/support-local-merchants>

It feels like the real estate industry has been flipped on its head and all of the old rules have flown out the window. For consumers, what is real estate if not open houses, tours, and inspections? In the wake of social distancing and economic fragility, the way we do business has been utterly transformed. But there are always two sides to every coin, and it turns out that the way we do business is changing in a positive way.

To read more visit:
tamara4homes.com/post/real-estate-essentials

Or Scan Here:



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President's Corner

WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!!

Dear Neighbors,

Sitting safe-at-home through April has certainly sharpened my awareness of how lucky I am. I keep expecting to turn on the faucet to find that we have no water, to turn on the light switch and discover that the electricity is out. I remember one winter when three feet of snow fell over a weekend and our sewer line collapsed, leaving us with a useless sewer line. Those happenings are common enough storm happenings, and this crisis calls those situations to mind. I am grateful we have water and electricity and flushing toilets. And good neighbors.

Stay-at-home? I can do that. I am so aware of the people who do not have a safe place, enough food in their place of living, money to buy the needed food—perhaps even here in South Four Corners.

I have never seen so many neighbors out walking, smiling at me as we pass at least six feet apart. Spring is a beautiful time to be out walking, and walking in South Four Corners is a colorful experience, watching gardens move into spring with bright and joyful colors, smelling the good smell of grass being cut. The gardens are receiving a lot of attention with

people at home, and we are rewarded by the displays.

On our block I see children burst forth from their houses after lessons are finished, run around or jump on bicycles or scooters or skate boards, and move as fast as they can up and down the street. Joy is in their faces at being outside. Basketball hoops at the side of the streets are being used by children and their parents. Children are walking with their families, talking together. I have even heard them singing together. Dogs and their owners pass by, smiling or calling a greeting to me working in my garden. People are friendly, reaching out in our limited ways. It is a grand neighborhood to live in.

I hope that we can hold on to this feeling of strong community when we are finally released to return to our other lives. South Four Corners has always been a place where neighbors know each other and care about the neighborhood. Let's hold on to this new understanding of our place and our freedom.

Karen Michels

SFCCA President, resident of Four Corners for 51 years

Important Phone Numbers:

Montgomery County General Info & Service: 311
Outside of Montgomery County: 240-777-0311
TTY (for hearing impaired): 240-773-3556
Police & fire emergency: 911
Police non-emergency: 301-279-8000
Fire non-emergency: 240-776-4700
24-Hour Emergency Preparedness Hotline:
240-777-4200 Power outages, downed wires:
Pepco 877-737-2662
Website: <http://www.pepco.com/outage-center/>

Announcements:

- The **May SFCCA meeting** is cancelled.
- New **SFCCA Officers** are elected each year at the May meeting. Given the current situation, our 2019-20 officers have agreed to stay on for the upcoming year. Many thanks to them for their commitment and willingness to extend their tenure!
- The neighborhood **Yard Sale** and June **Ice Cream Social** are cancelled. Yard Sale rescheduled for September, date TBD.
- Support your local food and drink places in your community! The new **MoCo Eats: Take Out and Delivery Guide** can help you find what is open nearby. Organized by category and city or zipcode.
<https://visitmontgomery.com/restaurant-directory/>

SFCCA Officers & Chairpersons

Officers:

Karen Michels, President • Laurence Dickter, Vice President • Secretary **VACANT** • Richard Messalle, Treasurer

Chairpersons:

Emma Bennett, Social Media / Social Events Chair / Groups.io Listserv Manager / Website • Eileen Broderick, Membership • John Holden, Welcome Bags • Jane Jannotta, Newsletter Editor / Website • Michael Lucy, Public Works • Dave Nettleton, Newsletter Distribution • Nghi Nguyen, Neighborhood Safety • Dave West, Yahoo Groups Listserv Manager

SFCCA May/June 2020

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SFCCA Listservs:

<https://groups.io/g/SFCCAMembers>

<https://groups.yahoo.com>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/southfourcorners/

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A PERSPECTIVE ON THE PANDEMIC

By Laurence Dickter, SFCCA Vice President

The year was 1941. Some of our neighborhood's earliest residents were settling into the Tudor Capes and other newly built homes on streets named after various burghs and counties in Scotland, the developer's ancestral homeland.

Throughout the previous year and continuing into 1941, a significantly broadened military mobilization and greatly increased defense spending by the federal government was hastening the end to the decade-long Great Depression. Once America officially entered the Second World War after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, our federal government prepared, organized and led an unparalleled national effort in which the country's economy was re-tooled almost overnight and in which everyone sacrificed and pitched in.

Fast forward eighty years, a period during which our neighborhood experienced rapid growth on the way to becoming a community of 1200 single family homes and roughly 3000 residents.

Today we have travelled full circle from the days in which the Bresnahan's, the Haacks, and all the other "pioneer" families started moving to South Four Corners. Just as it was so then, today we are faced with another crisis unprecedented in our nation's history. What makes today's coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic unique is its near denial of one of our most basic human needs, our sense of belonging and connectedness. For many of us, our emotional well-being depends upon maintaining our social contacts, something that is particularly challenging during a time when physical distancing is a must.

What also sets our current situation apart from other crises in our history is

the absence of any coherent strategic plan that only the federal government can provide. Unlike the lead role it took in developing a centralized national strategy and in coordinating the war production effort during World War II, the federal government today, by most accounts, has been beset by colossal lapses and epic dysfunction, leaving every state and U. S. territory to fend for itself.

Fortunately, here in Maryland, Governor Lawrence Hogan is demonstrating on a daily basis what steady, focused leadership and competent governing during a crisis looks like. He took the virus seriously early on and acted accordingly, most likely saving the lives of untold numbers of Marylanders in the process.

We can only speculate what the "next normal" will be like and how both our social and interior lives may be changed if and when it becomes clear that there may be no going back to the "old normal"

And closer to home, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich has made it clear that he will be guided solely by the advice of public health experts and what the data shows, something that is refreshing to hear after the steady diet of science-denial and "alternative facts" we have become accustomed to over the past several years.

Above all else, we are lucky to live in a community where neighbors have each

other's backs and can be counted on to lend a helping hand whenever and wherever it is needed.

Even the experts admit there is still a lot they do not know about COVID-19, although they are learning more and more about it every day. But until science comes up with an effective treatment or develops a vaccine against the virus, we can only speculate about what the "next normal" will be like and how both our social and interior lives may be changed if and when it becomes clear that there may be no going back to the "old normal".

To paraphrase my favorite anthropomorphic cartoon character, Daniel Tiger, the question is: What will be different and what will be the same?

Do we want to return to the "old normal," if that means ignoring, rather than fixing, at least some of the societal ills and economic inequities that the pandemic has thrown into stark relief?

For instance, out of the 36 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which represents the wealthiest countries in the world, the United States is the only one in which access to health care is not a birthright. Even before the pandemic, 82,000,000 Americans had either no health insurance or inadequate health insurance.

Since approximately half the U.S. population is dependent on employers for their health insurance, the loss of a job often means the loss of coverage for an entire family. And with the magnitude of recent job loss approaching levels not seen since the Great Depression, tens of millions more Americans will soon be uninsured.

It is embarrassing enough to be the outlier among our peers (the member nations of the OECD), but how can it be



that Cubans, who live under a dictatorship with widespread poverty, live as long as Americans at a tenth of the cost?

One of the many heart-rending stories to come out of the COVID-19 pandemic is a critical care nurse's account of a dying patient asking him "who's going to pay for it?" before being put on a ventilator.

The pandemic has also underscored the fact that the U.S. is the only advanced country in the world that does not mandate paid sick leave for its workers, let alone paid leave to take care of sick family members. Most low-wage workers are unable to earn any sick days at all, and are regularly forced to choose between their job or their health. Guess what most of them choose.

Hopefully, universal health care and paid sick leave will become the "next normal," so that no American worker will ever again have to go to work sick, leave a sick child at home, or worry about the affordability of a doctor's appointment.

As an expression of respect and gratitude, many Americans are wont to say "thank you for your service" when they encounter a man or woman wearing a U. S. military uniform. Now that COVID-19 has spotlighted the courage and heroism of every worker on the front lines of the pandemic, isn't it long past time for us to thank them for their service, not just now, but even in the best of times?

No doubt most of us are acutely aware of and grateful to our brave and selfless **front-line medical workers** who are risking their lives every day under horrendous conditions (described by one

doctor in New York City as "the pit of hell") and often without basic protective gear.

But what about the others we don't hear so much about, some of the most unheralded, underpaid, and abused workers in our country?

If you have witnessed your trash, recycling, and yard waste getting hauled away recently, you will have seen our **sanitation workers** literally running up and down the street, trying mightily to keep up with the tons of additional refuse being generated by a newly homebound population. I have always admired the zeal with which these



workers go about their duties and I am astonished at how quickly they can make it through their routes. Now, more than ever, would be a good time to thank these gentlemen for **their** service.

What about the "**gig**" **workers** who are doing your grocery shopping and delivering your food and restaurant orders to your door? By the time all their costs and before tips are factored in, some may not even be making minimum wage. Moreover, as "independent contractors," they have few if any of the benefits or protections on the job other workers take for granted. They are risking their lives so you can eat, mainly because they have to in order to survive themselves. **Thank you, "gig" workers for your service!**

Where would we be today without the **grocery store cashiers and other workers** (average annual pay, \$22,646) who have been risking their lives every day so we can buy food and other necessities, or the **nursing home aides** (\$29,580 a year) who go to work every

day in what are essentially incubators for infectious diseases? And what about the **retail clerks** (\$10.24 an hour at CVS), and the **largely immigrant work force in our meatpacking plants and slaughterhouses** (\$12.15 an hour) who labor under hellish conditions while suffering serious on-the-job injuries at shockingly high rates? **Thanks to all of you for your service!**

And then, of course, there is **Amazon**, whose warehouses are described as modern day sweat shops, but which also has served as a lifeline to many of us who are "sheltering in place". **Thank you, Amazon warehouse workers** (median annual pay, \$28,466) **and drivers for your service!**

A former U. S. President once said that "the nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I'm from the government and I'm here to help". Really? Ask yourself where we would be without the millions of **federal, state, municipal and county employees** (not to mention the hundreds of thousands of **postal workers**) who have served our country so well for so long, many of whom have remained on the front lines to serve and to protect all of us during the greatest public health emergency not seen in a century, even if that means placing their own safety and welfare at risk.



And so, to all our government workers, and especially to our own **Montgomery County** public service professionals – the **firefighters, police officers, EMTs, paramedics, bus operators, public health nurses, correctional officers, sheriff's deputies, code inspectors** and others too numerous to recognize here – **Thank you for your service!** □

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Multiple Offers ■ Under Contract



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Multiple Offers ■ Sold



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Reflections

By Jane Jannotta, SFCCA Editor

silver linings...

What a gift, this reminder: that
in using less, the earth heals.
And in doing less, we heal.

If there is one thing we can be certain of, it is that these are strange, unprecedented times. Phrases like "flatten the curve", "safe-distance" and "new normal" pepper our conversations daily. We miss our routines and our friends. There is widespread sadness and suffering, loss and fear.

How does one cope?

Every little bit helps. There is solidarity in exchanging friendly waves (from afar) with neighbors, commiserating with colleagues, Zooming with family and friends. The Internet keeps schools running and makes telework possible. There are closets to purge, bread to bake, long-neglected house projects to tackle. And it's spring – blessed spring! – with its warmer weather and light-filled days.

But it is also worthwhile to take a step back and view crises through a broader lens. If we look with candor and courage, we can see this pandemic as a mirror of sorts, one that is reflecting back our old habits and ways, and suggesting new ones. What lessons can we glean from this? What is it urging us to look at and reassess? How is it illuminating our humanness, and our stewardship of the earth?

For me, covid-19 has brought into focus a few very useful reminders: we are inherently vulnerable, we overdo, we are deeply connected to one another, and we are kind.

The human body is unmistakably vulnerable. How humbling this is. We wisely anchor our days with habits and measures that provide a sense of security. We go to our doctors. We look to the future, we plan. But the truth remains that we cannot know what is in store for us today, tomorrow, next week, next year. A silver lining in this virus cloud is that in forcing us to face our vulnerability and the unknown, we are nudged toward valuing what is real and what matters – this moment, ourselves, one another. And we are reminded to practice gratitude. Despite uncertainty, we can be thankful for even the simplest of things: the air we breathe, the legs

that tirelessly support us, the hands that create and give, the food we eat, this one simple day.

Another silver lining is that the coronavirus has forced us to STOP. We must slow down, use less, reflect. This is hard for us. Our culture is externally focused. It encourages doing, producing, using, spending. These are not bad things, but we tend to overdo, overproduce, overuse, overspend. We waste and we throw away and we get lazy with our many conveniences. Well, here's some very positive news: since lockdown measures have been put in place, big cities across the world are witnessing record decreases in air pollution, and in just a few short weeks! Many are seeing, for the first time in decades, safe air quality indexes, blue skies, far-away mountains. What a gift, this reminder: that in using less, the earth heals. And in doing less, we heal: we can unwind, relax with a good book, sip a cup of tea, play with our children, take long walks. We give our nervous systems a blessed rest. We connect with our families and ourselves. These are all very good things.

And there is that operative word: connect. The coronavirus pandemic is the perfect metaphor for how deeply connected we all are to one another. It takes but a day for a virus on the other side of the globe to get to our shores. It takes only weeks for the entire human race to be brought to its knees. The silver lining? Crisis breeds extraordinary kindness and giving. People truly care. In our own little neighborhood – our own microcosm of the larger world – there is so much support and togetherness: rainbows in windows, handmade face masks at the ready, lunch



The India Gate War Memorial
New Delhi, India
Oct 2019 (top) and Apr 2020

services for area children, grocery runs for the elderly, and so many other gestures. Across the world, charities are swift to provide supplies and resources. The saint-like medical professionals, EMTs, fire fighters, give tirelessly day after day after day. So many are called to help and to serve. It is truly

heartwarming.

So we carry on. We humans are a resilient lot. Time and time again during great difficulty, we rise to the challenge and find new ways to cope, new ways to help. It is my wish that we also find new ways to Be. That as the months wear on,

we continue to slow down and listen. To take an honest look at what matters, at what we truly need to use and consume. And that we remember that we are all in this together. To borrow from a familiar phrase – we can build a stronger world community, one person at a time. □



Around Four Corners April 2020



Clockwise, from top: robin, harbinger of spring; bridge over Sligo Creek; Integrity and Competence Save Lives; Four Corners during rush hour on Apr 16; Sligo Creek Pkwy on Apr 11 open to walkers and bikers; Earth Day 2020 on Portland Road; Masks 101

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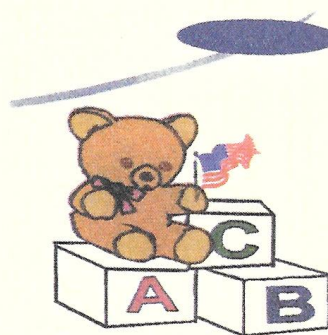
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