

West Springfield Village News . . .

Message from the President - Shawn Klimek -

Every fall and winter the residents of West Springfield Village do an excellent job of raking leaves, bagging leaves, and shoveling snow. Occasionally, however, I hear from residents with neighbors who aren't always so quick to care for their leaves and/or snow. First, I'd like to know if there are residents out there who may be unable to do some of these activities. Contact me and perhaps the Association can help you, either by arranging for some helpful neighbors or just putting you in touch with someone who can do the job for you.

But if you're capable of caring for your lawn and snow, please be courteous to the community and neighbors by cleaning up your property before your problems are simply blown into someone else's yard or freeze into a dangerous situation for our children walking on the sidewalks.

Membership - A BIG thanks to all our Block Captains for a job well done. Our membership drive was a big success as we now have 352 members. It is a good feeling to see the support we have in our Association. Anyone who is new to the neighborhood and would like to join, please contact **Julia Hale** at (703) 569-3896. She will see that you get a form to fill out so we can keep you informed of our activities. There is no charge for new members joining at this time.

2005 Community Directory - Editor **Christy Grimste** - Association members should receive the new directory by the end of January 2005, weather permitting. Special thanks to our Block Captains for distributing the directory door to door. New neighbors who arrived after Nov. 1 are also provided a directory and their first year's membership free by simply completing a membership form. Please let your Block Captain know if you have a new neighbor. If you discover errors or see a need to change the content of the

directory, please call me at (703) 866-1579 or via e-mail at grimste@gmail.com.

Virginia Legislative Update - Past President **John Cooley** - Our Virginia General Assembly Delegate **Dave Albo** hosted a meeting on Jan. 6 to discuss legislative initiatives and to hear directly from his constituents. He expressed his desire to hear from us to help him vote our majority opinion in the Virginia Assembly. He has responded very quickly to our e-mail messages and can be reached at Dave@DaveAlbo.com.

Upcoming Activities:

March 19 - 9:00 a.m. - Pohick Stream Watershed Cleanup
May 19 - 7:30 p.m. - Membership Meeting Rolling Valley Elementary School
Early June - Community Yard Sale
June 18 - Community Cleanup

Dave mentioned that the rising costs of Medicaid created the budget shortfall last year that subsequently gave an open door to the Virginia Senate to raise the revenue side of our two-year budget by about \$4 billion. You may recall that 17 Republicans crossed political lines and voted with Democrats to pass a budget that:

1. Increased the sales tax by one-half cent.
2. Increased the cigarette tax by 20 cents last year and by another 10 cents in 2005.
3. Increased recordation fees from 15 cents to 25 cents per \$100 value. We'll see this difference when we sell or refinance our homes. I expect it will cost an additional \$450 to record the sale or refinance of most Village homes.
4. Capped the car tax reimbursement to localities at \$950 million. The car tax is a county or locality tax revenue. Our state legislators were to repeal it by paying counties or localities the same amount they

would have raised via car/personal property taxation. Last year 70 percent of my car taxes were paid from that \$950 million fund, but we should expect even less in future years.

The \$61.4 billion, two-year budget did:

1. Increase funding of K-12 education by \$1.54 billion.
2. Increase funding of higher education by \$175.8 million.
3. Increase payments to Medicaid by \$766.2 million.
4. Sock away \$430.0 million to the state's Rainy Day Fund.
5. Allow for a 3-percent pay raise for state employees and college faculty.
6. Grant a 1.5-percent reduction in the food tax.
7. Increase the state income tax standard deduction and personal exemption from \$800 to \$900 per exemption.
8. But it did not increase transportation funding.

Dave also reported that he tried to fix the funding formulas to give Northern Virginians back a larger percentage of our taxes. We in northern Virginia contribute 16 percent of the state's sales tax revenue and account for about 27 percent of Virginia's income tax revenue. But we only get 7 percent educational money from the state even though Fairfax County has 14.6 percent of Virginia's K-12 student population. In fact, our county taxes are higher than they need to be because we pay about 80 percent of the cost of educating our children while other counties pay as little as 20 percent.

Delegate Albo mentioned a news article that ran in a Franklin County newspaper declaring that since Franklin County had received so much educational money, their Board of Supervisors voted to reduce their real estate tax levy from \$0.53 to \$0.51 per hundred dollars of assessed value. In comparison, our levy rate is \$1.13 per hundred. We should expect our real estate property taxes to again increase this year. Why? Rising market valuation of our homes and county debt continues to grow. County administrators said that the budgets for the last two or three years were "bare-bone," but last November we passed a \$325 million bond referendum that will increase county debt by at/about \$160 million over the life of those bonds.

Dave's 2005 General Assembly focus will include (1) transportation, (2) battling gangs and (3) stopping illegal aliens.

1. Transportation - You recall that soon after the budget was passed, a surplus of about \$300 million was found. That has grown to \$980 million that our governor wants to spend primarily on

transportation. Decreasing revenue from transportation (gas tax and others) had made new road construction impossible. Road maintenance now consumes most of transportation expenditures, but this influx from the governor will probably put the Rolling Road Widening Project back on the front burner. Alternatively, Dave wants to use a portion of that \$980 million surplus for current transportation needs and invest the rest to supplement future transportation funding. He will re-introduce legislation to make all money collected as transportation revenue stay in the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF). The Virginia Senate killed the last bill intended to protect the TTF. Another initiative he will pursue is a \$300 yearly Abusers' Fee for those whose driving records include habitual traffic offenses, reckless driving, DWI, etc. Either way, Rolling Road may again be moved up.

2. Gangs - Dave wants to make a gang-related murder eligible for the death penalty. I was not aware that the definitions of murder that warrant consideration for the death penalty do not include a want-to-be gang member who is coerced into murdering someone as an initiation task. He also wants to make it a felony offense to recruit for gang membership.

3. Illegal Aliens - Delegate Albo wants to institute residency verification before granting state or local services such as welfare.

Ideas from the audience that Dave recorded for possible legislation include:

1. Capping the amount of real estate tax increases much like Maryland now has.

2. Cause Virginia to become an "opt-in" state rather than an "opt-out" like Vermont. All the states except for Vermont require us to request that businesses not share our account and/or personal information. Let's say that you also receive a notice from your mortgage company or credit card company that they intend to share your personal information with "others" unless you go through a tiring process to "opt out." No response means they may share your information. Vermont puts the burden on those businesses to solicit and obtain your permission to be included; no response to their request means they can not release your information.

3. Cause colleges and universities who want Charter College status to recruit 70 percent in-state students. The University of Virginia, William and Mary and Virginia Tech have stated that they want to break from the state to recruit nationwide without state influence. That would also allow them to charge whatever they want for tuition and fees. They

would continue to expect that the state would provide offset funding for in-state students, but once they received that payment, the state would not be able to control. Dave is ok with the colleges becoming Charter as long as their in-state student population does not drop below 70 percent and the State of Virginia remains involved in their decisions.

Delegate Albo praised Governor **Mark Warner** and believes he has served us well. He is not as impressed with our Virginia Senate, but believes that our senators (**Ken Cucinelli** and **Jay O'Brien**) are doing an admirable job. Lastly, he confided that his seniority in the Assembly would make him the Chair of the Judiciary Committee if he is re-elected.

Neighborhood Watch - Our Neighborhood Watch (NW) program has been active for many years now thanks to the support of a number of volunteers who repeatedly sign up for the three-hour shifts.

According to police, active NW programs contribute greatly to crime prevention efforts. Regional homeland security and gang-related activities are taking up more and more of their time, and assistance from local citizens does make a difference. By signing up for a shift or two, your presence can help convince criminals to think twice about entering our neighborhood.

If you would like to sign up, please visit our website <http://www.westspringfieldvillage.com>, click on the Watch tab on the left, click on the Patrol Dates Calendar (the password is Jeff) and follow the directions. Or call **Jeff Carter** at (703) 569-8784.

Thanks again goes to all who performed patrols this past year, including **Dick Denny** and his daughter, who provided coverage on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.

AAA Trash and Recycling Price Increase - Due to rising fuel and petroleum products costs, AAA raised their prices for residential service. However, that increase does not affect the fixed price agreement for our Village. You may have received erroneous information from their Customer Service Representatives or Billing Department, but we only are obliged to pay \$21.50 per month for once-per-week collection of household trash and \$24.50 per month for twice-per-week collection. If you have been billed for more, pay only these amounts. Our agreement with AAA expires in April so we also should be prepared for a price increase in our next year-long agreement (to be negotiated in March). Right now, AAA expects to ask for a \$1.50 per month increase in both prices. The specific

agreement is available to you by e-mailing Past President **John Cooley** at thunder@tidalwave.net or by phone at (703) 451-7055.

Pohick Stream Watershed Cleanup - Saturday, March 19, from 9:00 a.m. to noon. As we did last fall, let's get together to help clean up the watershed immediately adjacent to our Village. We'll assemble at my house (6901 Smyth Street), where we will also have refreshments after we've finished. Wear comfortable clothing that can get wet – and bring your work gloves. I also would like two volunteers who would be willing to be "team leaders" to contact me at (703) 569-6328. A letter of community service will be awarded to all children who participate. Please help preserve our local park; it is a great resource for the community. - **Shawn Klimek**.

Holiday Decorating Contest - **John Cooley** - What a difficult choice! We had so many beautifully decorated homes that really gave our children judges joy (and their parents also). I hope you also had a chance to enjoy the decorations.

Special thanks to our six elementary and pre-school age judges: **Michael** and **Sydney Cordoba**, **Marin Henry**, **Danni** and **Jordan Walker** and **Katrina Cooley**. Thanks also for the adults who served as judges: **Donnie** and **Kristy Walker**, **Kerri Henry**, **Mike** and **Julie Atlas**, and **Jun** and **Linda Jun Cordoba**.

The results of the 2004 Decorating Contest are:

1st Place - **Don & Susan Cheney**, 6702 Ontario (Santa Hanging/Climbing on to the Chimney)
2nd Place - **John & Carol Baccari**, 6808 Ontario (Candy Cane Corner)
3rd Place - **Jeffrey & Menne Dodd**, 6807 Ontario (Polar Express Choo-Choo on Roof)

Honorable Mention awards were requested by the judges for the following: **Mike & Carol Gallagher**, 6809 Ontario; **Russell & Kim Hilliard**, 8305 Wythe Lane; **Olin & Liz Greene**, 7004 Vancouver; **Hal & Marge Grant**, 7005 Barnack; **Kevin & Elees Anderson**, 6811 Hathaway; **Richard & Patricia Yost**, 6919 Rolling Road; **Cihat & Marie Aslan**, 8141 Edmonton Court; **Richard & Jule Ann Cheslock**, 8135 Springfield Village Drive; **Jaime & Ana Maria Basurto**, 6828 Rolling Road; and **Fred & Claudia Sanborn**, 6811 Landor Lane.

You Can Help Reduce Auto Theft! - The West Springfield District Station's Crime Prevention Unit is reminding all Village residents to lock their vehicle doors.

Board of Directors 2004-2005

Shawn Klimek, President	569-6328
John Cooley, Past President	451-7055
Mike Atlas, Vice President	451-6057
Kristy Walker, Treasurer	569-5985
Liz Greene, Secretary	866-0445

Free Birdcage - Had been used for a pair of finches, but should work for other small birds or pets. Complete with feeders, water container, perches, etc. Contact **John Cooley** at (703) 451-7055 or via e-mail at thunder@tidalwave.net.

Bassist Needed! - Bassist wanted for established, local band Honeylamb, featuring **Mike** and **Julie Atlas**. Rock/funk/blues/jam sound with a female vocalist, keyboard, guitar and drums. Covers include Ben Folds, Janis Joplin, Hendrix, Stevie Wonder, Aretha Franklin, and Frank Zappa.

We practice (in Arlington) once a week and play out once a month at clubs like the Laughing Lizard Lounge in Alexandria, Rhodeside Grill in Arlington, and the Firehouse in Fairfax. Play with a bunch of thirty-somethings! Check out our music at www.honeylamb.org.

Call **Mike Atlas** at (703) 587-7012 or e-mail matlas@fbr.com for more information.

Civic Association of
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Springfield, VA 22152

Mature Operators' Driver Improvement Program (MODIP) - The Fairfax County Police Department now offers an AAA-sanctioned, Mature Operators' Driver Improvement Program for Virginia residents 55 years and older. Completion of this program entitles the participant to a mandated insurance premium reduction. The fee is \$10 and you may find out more about their schedule by calling (703) 280-0621.

New Arrivals! - Welcome to **Owen Anthony Pinneri**, son of **Dr. Kathryn Haden** and **Jason Pinneri** on Landor Lane, who arrived on Nov. 15 weighing in at 6 lbs., 3 oz, and **Demir Beynam**, son of **Didem** and **Erol Beynam** on Vancouver Road, born on Dec. 15, weighing 6 lbs., 12 oz., and stretching out to 19-1/2 inches long as he entered this world..

Village Crier - If you have items of interest, e-mail **Larry Mark**, *Crier* editor (ldmark@erols.com).

