

West Springfield Village News . . .

Message from the President - Shawn Klimek -

Spring is finally here, but I think everyone agrees that it could be a little bit warmer. This is a very busy time for the Association, with four major events in the next two months.

First, we have a general membership meeting at Rolling Valley Elementary School at 7:30 p.m. on May 19. On the agenda will be discussion of a potential boundary change for West Springfield High School, the Rolling Road project, and some changes to the Constitution and By-Laws of our Association. Please read the article with details about these proposed changes.

Second, we have the annual community yard sale on Saturday, June 4 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. I would like everyone who plans to participate to call or e-mail me with a list of their items for sale. I will then provide the community with sale lists for each home and a map. If you are going to participate, please provide your list to me by June 1. The Association will pay for advertising the community yard sale in several local and regional papers as well as posting signs directing cars to the neighborhood. That same day, we will conduct a "Sparmuell" or Free-for-All where residents put out used, unwanted – but still useful – items for free collection by anyone who happens by. Clearly mark "free" on these items so that your saleable toys, tools, etc. are not accidentally taken.

Third, we have the community clean-up in the Rolling Valley Elementary School parking lot on June 18 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We do not take items that the trash collection services will pick up curbside, for free. And we cannot take hazardous material: batteries, paint, fuels, oils, etc. As we did last year, we will provide **two** 30-foot roll-offs, one for metal items and another for non-metal items. The clean-up is first-come, first-served and last year both roll offs left the parking lot packed to the top. Anyone willing to help and

anyone who needs help getting items to the clean-up should contact me a few days prior to the clean-up so we can coordinate our efforts.

Finally, we are going to go ahead and have another barbeque and pool party at our neighborhood swimming pool sometime in July. Although we had a string of really bad weather last year, all who attended had a very nice time. The party is one of the few social events that we've done in the past few years, so I encourage everyone to take some time out to meet your neighbors. We'll have games and prizes for the kids and provide non-alcoholic drinks. Hot dogs and burgers will be available for a nominal fee. We'll provide more details at the general membership meeting.

Upcoming Activities:

May 19 - 7:30 p.m. - Membership Meeting
Rolling Valley Elementary School
June 4 - 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. -
Community Yard Sale
June 18 - Community Cleanup
July ?? - Annual Pool Party

Membership Information - Welcome new neighbors! If you would like to join the Civic Association, please give **Julia Hale**, membership chair, a call at (703) 569-5896. There is no charge because you are joining as a new member after the fall membership drive. She will see that you receive a form to fill out and a free Association phone directory so that you will have the necessary information about the Association during the year.

Status of Rolling Road Widening Project - **Allison Richter**, Program Manager for Secondary Roads, VDOT/Northern Virginia, reported that in July 2005, VDOT/NOVA will receive funds for the Rolling Road Widening Project. That will allow them to get the design review restarted on their plans to widen Rolling Road to four lanes, with left

turn lanes and a 16-foot raised median from Old Keene Mill Road south to the Fairfax County Parkway.

The Fairfax County Secondary Six-Year Improvement Plan for FY07, which will probably go before the Board of Supervisors sometime around December 2005, will determine if the schedule for the project will be accelerated. The current schedule calls for advertisement in July 2009, with completion by 2010 or 2011. It could actually move up to late 2007 if given high enough priority by our County Board of Supervisors.

Your Civic Association has been invited to fax in our concerns to the design project manager, **Hamid Misaghian**. Ms. Richter promises to work with us to mitigate our concerns. Below are some of the issues that we had previously raised about VDOT's plan, but we also have time to make sure we include all. Ideally, they will address our concerns during the design review. VDOT will also host additional community meetings to discuss their revised plan and to receive feedback from the community. But we have learned in the past that it is hard to influence change at those town hall meetings. Review the list below and comment back to **John Cooley** at john.t.cooley@verizon.net or by phone (703) 451-7055 as soon as possible, but no later than May 27.

1. The plan does not include a traffic signal light from Old Keene Mill Road to the Parkway. It will be even more dangerous for our school buses to turn left across 4 lanes of traffic. It will be equally challenging for our commuters to turn left or right onto Rolling Road from our side streets if VDOT does not include a traffic light. The school intersection at Barnack and Rolling is the obvious place for a traffic signal to help ensure the safety of our children and to also cause breaks in Rolling Road traffic.
2. Plan calls for increase in speed limit on Rolling Road from 30 to 45 MPH.
3. Timing of Fairfax County Parkway(s) connection through the Engineer Proving Grounds and the Rolling Road widening project. Parkway is to be connected two, maybe three years before Rolling Road is widened. Without being widened, Rolling cannot handle frustrated traffic from the Parkway (and there will be a lot to handle).
4. Access to our homes during the 18- to 24-month construction period.
5. No plan to bury utility cables and potential power outages during construction.
6. Property acquisition: some corner lots will lose as much as 18 feet.
7. Parking for those on Rolling Road. We have previously asked VDOT to provide double-wide

apron driveway access; not a double driveway - just the apron entrance.

8. Many homes have been sold since the plans were first introduced in the 80's. Many new homeowners are unaware that VDOT will soon secure the right of way (buy that portion of each property) needed for the project.

School Boundary Review - The Fairfax County Public School Board voted to change certain school boundaries to accommodate the new South County High School. That decision included sending 40 high school freshmen each year starting in the fall school year from South Hunt Valley to West Springfield High School, thus causing overcrowded conditions.

Now the school board wants its staff to study three high schools in our area (Lee, Lake Braddock and West Springfield High School) and associated feeder schools for possibly another change to where our children will go to Intermediate and High School. Making matters worse is that Rolling Valley Elementary is a split feeder to Irving Middle School/WSHS and also to Key Middle School and Lee High School (those who live south of the Parkway). West Springfield Elementary feeds Irving, but some of these children split after middle school to attend either WSHS or Lee.

Some see a potential boundary change as a threat to the quality of their children's education. One high school's reputation for academics and safety is said to be better than that of another, for example. Others see this staff study of boundary changes as an opportunity to align their children with a school of choice. Daventry, for example is aligned with Lee, but would rather their children attend WSHS.

It's easy to see the potential impact on our children and on our home values if we are moved to another, more distant middle or high school. The point is, this is an emotionally charged issue and we should not sleep through the skirmish. You may recall that WSHS and its feeder schools were not initially involved in the South County high school proposal. Then with minimal notice, WSHS was included and the Board decided to exceed the school's capacity starting this fall. Our very own Springfield District Board Representative, **Catherine A. Belter** (catherine.belter@fcps.edu) and At-Large Member, **Stephen M. Hunt** (stephen.hunt@fcps.edu) voted "yes" to the amendment that will cause additional trailer classrooms and higher student-teacher ratios at WSHS.

Mrs. Belter promised that our WS Village children are not part of the subsequent boundary review and will continue to feed Rolling Valley and West

Springfield elementary schools, Irving and then WSHS.

Each of us should voice our opinion to **Mr. Hunt** and **Mrs. Belter**, but it may also become necessary for your Civic Association to speak for Village residents. In order to do so, we'll need to hear from enough of you to formulate a Village opinion. Should we ask the Board to stop the secondary boundary review? Should we align our position with that of our local PTA's? (A copy of that position is available upon request.) Should we, if it were to become necessary, enter a coalition with PTAs and other homeowners and Civic Associations? Please send your comments and opinion to our President, **Shawn Klimek** president@westspringfieldvillage.com.

Shut-it-Down Campaign - Prom and graduation seasons in Fairfax County will be aided by the establishment of an anonymous phone line to help prevent teenage drinking and driving fatalities. In response to feedback from students, the Fairfax County Police Traffic Division will host the "Shut-it-Down" campaign through the end of June. Anyone may call (703) 246-2333 to leave messages detailing student events where underage drinking is expected to occur, including the date, location and time of the events. This pilot program aims to provide concerned students and others a method to anonymously let law enforcement know about underage alcohol parties so that steps can be taken to save lives. Nationally, more than 15,000 teens have died since 1999 as a result of drinking and then driving. This telephone voice mail system is not meant to take the place of citizens calling the emergency dispatch center to report events that are taking place or need immediate police response. This pilot program is for reporting information prior to the event occurring. For more information, contact the Fairfax County Police Department at (703) 246-2253, TTY 711.

Reporting Dead Birds - The Fairfax County Health Department asks residents to report dead birds to help with the county's ongoing surveillance and tracking of West Nile virus. Infected mosquitoes are known to spread the virus to wild birds, other animals and sometimes humans during mosquito season, which typically runs from May until October. If anyone in Fairfax County finds a dead bird near their home or business, they now have several options to report it to the Health Department. They can call the agency's dead bird reporting line at (703) 246-2300, TTY (703) 591-6435, send an e-mail to fightthebite@fairfaxcounty.gov, or visit the Health Department's improved West Nile virus and mosquito management Web page at

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fightthebite. Residents are asked to provide their name, a contact phone number, the date the bird was found, the location of the bird, and the type of bird, if known, or a description of the bird. The Health Department reminds residents to avoid handling any dead animal with bare hands and to correctly dispose of a dead bird by double-bagging it and placing it in the garbage.

Keep Safety in Mind During "Spring Cleaning" - Here are a few spring season safety tips provided by the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department:

* **Window Safety** - Ensure all windows in the home are operable and can be opened by every adult and older child in the household. Never leave small children alone in rooms with open windows. Only open the top half of windows in homes with small children. Do not depend on insect screens to keep children from falling out of the window; they are designed to keep insects out, not children in.

* **Address Markers** - Keep posted address and mailbox numbers clearly visible from the street. Numbers should contrast the color of the home/trim. If present, make sure curbside numbers are freshly painted and visible.

* **Storage** - When packing away winter clothing and holiday items, ensure they are not stored near furnaces or in areas that may block exits from doors or windows. Remember to store all holiday electrical devices in basements or closets; attic storage of these items may prematurely age them due to temperature extremes, causing cracks and frays in cords and plugs.

* **General Safety** - Children should be reminded to always wear bike helmets, stay hydrated during sports and avoid environmental dangers such as harmful insects and reptiles. Additionally, each household should maintain an adequate first-aid kit. Fairfax County firefighters and paramedics will host several "Kid Safe" public events during Emergency Medical Services Week, May 15-21. For more information, visit the website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire/homepage.htm, or call the Public Information and Life Safety Education at (703) 246-3801, TTY 711.

Recognizing and Protecting Our Community's Elderly Citizens - May is Older Americans Month, a time to honor the many contributions our older citizens have made, and continue to make, to their country and their communities. More older Americans are living today than ever before in history, a number that will increase with the aging of baby boomers. Fairfax County is home to more

than 80,000 residents age 60 and over, with seniors being the fastest-growing segment of our population. May is also Adult Abuse Prevention Month, a time to renew efforts to identify and protect elderly or incapacitated adults. Last year, Fairfax County responded to 563 reports of alleged incidents of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Help protect the most vulnerable members of our community by calling Fairfax County Adult Protective Services at (703) 324-7450, TTY (703) 222-9452, if you suspect abuse, neglect (including self-neglect) or exploitation. Your identity as the caller identity is confidential. For more info, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/dfs/factsheets/APS.htm.

Preserving Laurel Hill - Efforts are underway to preserve a portion of Laurel Hill in Lorton, which was once home to a D.C. Department of Corrections maximum-security prison. On Saturday, May 14, a community meeting will be held to share information on the process for nominating the site to the National Register of Historic Places. The meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to noon in the cafeteria of Silverbrook Elementary School, 9350 Crosspointe Drive, Lorton. It is sponsored by the Lorton Heritage Society, Fairfax County's Architectural Review Board and the Fairfax County History Commission. For additional information about the community meeting, call Linda Blank, historic preservation planner, Department of Planning and Zoning, at (703) 324-1380, TTY 711. Additional information about the Laurel Hill project is available on the web at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/laurelhill.

Volunteers Needed for Medical Reserve Corps -

The Fairfax County Health Department, in cooperation with the Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council, launched a spring recruitment drive to add 3,000 more volunteers to its Medical Reserve Corps by June 30. The all-volunteer unit is designed to augment the capacity of the public health system to respond to large-scale events related to bioterrorism or widespread epidemics. Volunteers are needed from medical and non-medical professions, but specific needs are for seasoned, experienced managers to fill Medical Reserve Corp leadership positions, including incident coordinator, branch director, volunteer coordinator and unit leader. All volunteers will receive the necessary training to fulfill their responsibilities. For more information call (703) 246-2433, TTY (703) 591-6435, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/hd/fxhdpress19.htm

Proposed Changes to the Constitution and By-laws of Our Civic Association - Your Board of Directors has determined that the following changes would be helpful to our governing documents.

Below is a list of those changes with an explanation of each. A full version of the proposed changes is available on our website (www.westspringfieldvillage.com) or by request from President **Shawn Klimek** at (703) 569-6328 (e-mail at president@westspringfieldvillage.com). Please join us at the May meeting to cast your vote "yes" or "no" for the following changes.

Proposed Changes to Constitution of the Civic Association of West Springfield Village:

- * Change Board of Directors elections from May to October General Membership meeting.
- * Remove two-term limit of President, but we'd still recruit candidates and hold elections each October.
- * Clarify that the Treasurer expends Association monies, not "only" by directive of the President or the Vice-President, but also under the General Membership-approved budget.
- * Clarify that the fifth member of the Board of Directors is the "previous" President, if still a member in good standing.
- * Clarify that the President and also any 10 members in good standing may call for a special membership meeting.
- * Clarify that if there were to be a tie vote in elections, the "sitting" Board will vote to decide the winner.
- * Change to conduct the audit at the end of our fiscal year (Sept. 30), but also before the October meeting so the audit committee can report at that General Membership meeting. This starts the next fiscal year with a clean slate.

Proposed Changes to Civic Association of West Springfield Village By-laws:

- * Remove the implication that dues had to be paid by new residents who arrive and join after the membership drive. New residents who arrive after the drive are granted free membership status for that year provided they complete the membership application form.
- * Limit by-law discussion of budget to main budget categories (General Operating Expenses and Community Services) to allow change in subcategories without violating the by-laws. Budget subcategories will continue to be represented in the Board of Directors' budget proposal to the General Membership at the October meeting.
- * Minutes from previous meeting will be "posted" – not "read" – at the next meeting. Minutes are available on the website and sent to attendees for correction and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.

Neighborhood Watch - Although West Springfield Village is a relatively quiet community, we are not immune to the activities that cause eyebrows to be raised now and again. We have had, and will continue to have, our share of vehicle thefts, vandalism such as spray painting, mailbox burnings and damage to vehicles, and the occasional troublesome neighbor.

Taking a little extra time to keep an eye out on your street for suspicious activities and reporting them to the police when warranted will certainly help. Becoming familiar with your neighbors and their daily patterns and letting them know when you're going out of town or on vacation will help you to recognize when something seems out of place. The police strongly encourage erring on the side of safety rather than assume "someone else will probably call" or "it's probably nothing." Your action could help avert a potential problem or crime. The number to call for non-emergencies is (703) 691-2131. A dispatcher will take your call and send out a patrol car when necessary.

Certain activities that should cause suspicion include:

- * Cars coming and going at a particular residence for short visits at all hours
- * Unfamiliar vehicles in a neighbor's driveway when you know no one is home
- * Persons wandering or loitering around someone's house or yard
- * Group of unfamiliar teens loitering or entering the wooded areas

If you observe any suspicious activities, take note of as much information as possible to assist the police in identifying suspects, including the persons approximate height, weight, type and color of clothing from head to toe; type and color of vehicles and license plate number, the number of occupants, their direction or location.

Active participation in the Neighborhood Watch Program provides an added level of security that the police alone cannot provide. It may not prevent all crimes from occurring, but it demonstrates a level of presence and sense of community that criminals don't like.

To sign up – like you said you “were going to do one of these days” – call **Jeff Carter** at (703) 569-8784 or just do it online at our website (www.westspringfieldvillage.com).

A message from Vice-President Mike Atlas - Attention “Queen-style”house owners who have the dishwasher and range at right angles from each other: We recently purchased a new range from

Sears, replacing our old “Roper” brand. Many of the ranges have handles that extend two to three inches past the range itself, and even worse, the “depth” measurement does not always reflect this additional space. Unfortunately, we have had to go through three ranges before finding one that fits in the space and allows the dishwasher to open as well! I found that the Whirlpool line of ranges have the shallowest depth, and fit nicely in the space provided. As always, please measure carefully and look for “depth (with handle)” measurements in Sears’ documentation.

Notes from Your Supervisor - Elaine McConnell

- On April 25, the Board of Supervisors will vote to approve the 2006 budget that will allow a 13-cent reduction in the tax rate. This is the largest reduction in the tax rate in the 20 years I have been on the Board. Even though the reduction does not completely erase any increase in our taxpayer's bill this year, I am happy to support any relief we could get for the homeowner.

Our budget increase was only 2.99 percent, which is slightly less than the rate of inflation (3 percent). When you think of the number of projects that needed to be funded, this is a good sign that the County is controlling spending. The Board's funding decisions reflect their commitment to achieve their objective to continue to provide strong investment in education, public safety and gang prevention, affordable housing, environmental protection, transportation improvements and revenue diversification to reduce the tax burden on the homeowner. In our District alone, we are getting two new fire stations complete with equipment and staff. I think the Board acted in a responsible manner.

The school system was given an 8.2-percent increase, which amounted to a \$109 million increase in that budget. As you probably know, the school budget is approximately 52 percent of the County's overall budget.

We will continue to look for ways to control spending, but people must remember that Fairfax County is still growing and the needs of our people continue to grow with it. The housing market is still very active and houses are being "auctioned off" to the highest bidder. The real estate people are telling me that they have had as many as 30 bids on houses for sale. This continues to make our assessments skyrocket; as long as this lasts, I believe we will be seeing the high assessments that the state controls. We can only hope to keep reducing the tax rate to help ease the taxpayer's burden. Our affluence seems to have caught up with this.

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

Have You Registered Your Cell Phone with the “Do Not Call Registry?”- Just a reminder that in a few weeks, cell phone numbers will be released to telemarketing companies and you may start to receive unwanted sales calls.

You will also be charged for the time used in these calls. To prevent this, call the National “Do Not Call Registry” at the following number from your cell phone: (888) 382-1222. Or visit www.donotcall.gov to register up to three cell-phone numbers.

It will only take a few minutes to protect your cell phone number from annoying and possibly expensive telemarketing calls for five years.

Crier Distributors - Many thanks to the following folks who helped distribute the last issue of the Village Crier:

Dutch and Olga Van Looveren, Kathleen Cheney, Kim Brown, Deb Staron, Dick Denny, Joan Tarlosky, Mark Lord, Mary Mark, Leanna Wilson, Linda Cordoba, Julia Hale, John Strong and Mary Jo and Jim Mazzonna

Also, if you have items of interest (new babies, new neighbors, etc), e-mail **Larry Mark**, *Crier* editor (ldmark@erols.com).

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