

FALL
2006

HOTLINE

THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER OF WEST LAUREL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The phrase "election year politics" makes most voters groan. When contests such as our State Senate primary turn especially ugly, it's understandable that the public gets turned off and tunes out.

Nonetheless, I love election season; but it's not the candidates who pique my interest so much as the voters. In an election year, it seems, most folks are more candid about issues of concern to them and will more freely offer solutions.

I try as much as possible to keep my ear to the ground about community concerns. I got a unique opportunity to do that this summer when I canvassed door-to-door for a House of Delegates candidate. I heard all kinds of stories, both positive and negative, about goings-on in the neighborhood. The most encouraging thing to me

is that while more original or long-time homeowners are moving out – either to retirement communities or nearer to kids and grandkids – the newcomers seem to be mostly friendly people who want to fit in and be neighborly. Of course there are exceptions, and we do face some clear challenges, but overall, West Laurel is a very stable and desirable place to live.

I was particularly pleased to hear stories about residents welcoming new neighbors, and in the process getting to know better the people who have been living around them for years. **Joe and Marilyn Murchison** hosted an ice cream social earlier this year so residents on Kerr Road could get better acquainted. Nearly everyone came, and by all accounts, it was a big hit.

I also heard some unhappy stories that had happy – or at least

(Continued on page 7)

WLCA FALL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, October 19

7:30 PM

WEST LAUREL
COMMUNITY BUILDING

TOPICS

- NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES
 - POLICING
 - VANDALISM
 - COMMUNITY STANDARDS
 - QUALITY OF LIFE
- 2006-2007 BUDGET
- NEIGHBORHOOD Q&A

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE 1

MEETING TOPICS 1

WL HOUSING VALUES 2

WELCOME NEW NEIGHBORS... 2

WEST LAUREL HOME SALES... 3

ZONING UPDATE 6

WLCA CONTACTS..... 8

PROPOSED BUDGET..... 9

NEWS YOU CAN USE 10

NEW LANDSCAPING..... 11

FAMILY FUN IN WL 12

WHAT WLCA DOES 13

WLCA MEMBERSHIP FORM... 13

COMMUNITY HISTORY..... 14

MEETING TOPICS

Property Issues to Be Main Focus of General Meeting

For a majority of Americans, the home they own is their most valuable asset. In West Laurel, where about three-quarters of the homes are owner-occupied, that is certainly the case. So it's not surprising that among the main concerns in our neighborhood are property protection and property values. This will be the subject of the fall

general membership meeting, which will encompass:

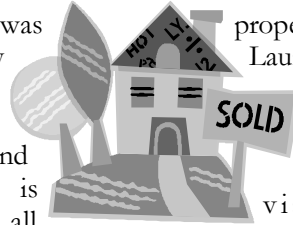
- Policing issues (response time, jurisdiction, enforcement);
- Vandalism (particularly mailbox destruction and theft);

(Continued on page 4)

WEST LAUREL HOUSING VALUES

From April through August 2006, there were 47 property transfers in West Laurel — 35 home sales, 1 unimproved lot and 11 no-cost property transfers. Two homes sold for \$700,000. The overall average home value for

the year to date was \$443,760, approximately \$8,000 higher than the average value in 2005. The data for 2005 and through August 2006 is shown below for all



property sold in the West Laurel areas of Montgomery County and Prince George's County.

For more information visit the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation web site at http://sdatcert3.resiusa.org/rp_rewrite/. After selecting the county of interest, you can then search by address, property sales, property account or map references.

If conducting property sale searches, West Laurel addresses in Prince George's County are located in District 10, Map 2; West Laurel portions of Montgomery County are located in District 05, Maps LS21 and LS22. ❖

Quarter	Total # Sold	Average Price	Lowest Price	Highest Price
Jul-Aug '06	10	\$480,230	\$395,000	\$625,000
Apr-Jun '06	24	\$425,281	\$75,000	\$700,000
Jan-Mar '06	26	\$427,076	\$275,000	\$625,000
Jan-Mar '05	8	339,362	285,000	380,000
Apr-Jun '05	17	390,835	300,000	581,000
Jul-Aug '05	12	423,658	387,000	525,000
Sep-Dec '05	24	504,845	355,000	769,000
2005	61	435,398		

Does not include no-cost property or transfers within families.

WELCOME, NEW NEIGHBORS!

The West Laurel Civic Association (WLCA) extends a warm welcome to the families who became residents of West Laurel this spring and summer. Every homeowner is automatically a member of the Civic Association, and upon payment of the annual dues, entitled to vote in elections.

West Laurel is a vibrant community with many volunteer opportunities, including the civic association, recreation council, and Bond Mill Elementary School. We look forward to meeting you at the October 19 General Meeting.

(in alphabetical order by street)

Olga M. De Aragon (Bounds)

G. Mensah, Edu & Akua B. Gyabaah (Bradford)

James B. & Janette E. Lovell (Brooklyn Bridge)

Michael J. & Jung-Eun Kim (Dougherty)

David Posada (Gales)

Belvian Carrington (Gales)

Alan D. & Rebecca Boss (Gales)

Thomas & Valerie Rey (Jerald)

Charlton Hostetler (Jerald)

Kizito D. Kikawa (Jerald)

Casey Speares & Donyel Prince (Jerald)

Oswart Vasquez & Alvarez Olver (Jerald)

David J. Krask, & Lesley R. Navin (Julie)

John Kirschbaum & Jane F. Simonds (Kaybro)

John K. & Lisa A. Ridgely (Kent)

John & Patricia Ahlquist (Kent)

Kenneth & Rachael Nix (Marmick)

Alberto Cases-Cruz (Malcolm)

Fausto & Miriam Sorto (Malcolm)

Emilio & Vivian Morales (Parkway)

Deryck & Laura Watson (Parkway)

Wilson J. Morales (Sandy)

Nora & Juan Flores (Sandy)

Deborah & Renee McMullen (Straughn)

Estanislao Gutierrez (Tilghman)

Veronica Ramirez (Windham) ❖

WEST LAUREL HOME SALES

CLOSING DATE	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE	CLOSING DATE	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE
04/07/2006	15625 Bond Mill Rd	\$289,000	04/20/2006	7106 Redmiles Rd	\$485,500
04/24/2006	16120 Jerald Road	440,000	04/25/2006	16302 Gales Street	449,000
04/26/2006	15913 Jerald Rd	440,000	04/26/2006	16122 Jerald Road	412,500
04/27/2006	6318 Sandy Street	440,000	04/28/2006	16208 Gales Street	328,000
04/28/2006	## Joyce Lane	328,000	04/28/2006	15411 Bond Mill Road	75,000
05/12/2006	16205 Cannfield Dr	405,000	05/16/2006	6300 Brooklyn Bridge Rd	280,000
05/23/2006	7907 Brooklyn Bridge	439,900	05/31/2006	16716 Dougherty	700,000
05/31/2006	15712 Dougherty	700,000	05/31/2006	16302 Gales Ct	415,000
06/01/2006	14006 Barkham Ct	525,000	06/06/2006	15408 Bounds Ave	454,900
06/19/2006	6614 McCahill Dr	430,000	06/20/2006	6203 Straughn Ct	485,000
06/21/2006	16202 Cannfield Dr	396,000	06/23/2006	15915 Jerald Rd	445,000
06/26/2006	16102 Kent Rd	430,000	06/28/2006	16113 Jerald Rd	464,500
06/28/2006	5901 Parkway Dr	390,000	06/30/2006	6009 Parkway Dr	410,000
07/03/2006	6902 Bradford Ct	474,900	07/05/2006	16212 Julie Ln	520,000
07/16/2006	16025 Tilghman Ct	625,000	08/08/2006	16109 Malcolm Dr	499,900
08/08/2006	6219 Kaybro St	445,000	08/11/2006	5910 Windham Rd	395,000
08/15/2006	16025 Kent Rd	560,000	08/17/2006	16112 Malcolm Dr	420,000
08/23/2006	7010 Marmick Pl	417,500	08/30/2006	6315 Sandy St	445,000



MEETING TOPICS, CONT.

(Continued from page 1)

- Community standards (property maintenance, parking and other vehicle related issues, occupancy questions); and
- Quality of life issues (miscellaneous problems including noise and pet complaints).

There obviously will be a lot to discuss and learn about what Prince George's and Montgomery County laws can and do address, how to improve response and enforcement, and even whether new standards are needed.

The civic association is not an HOA, so it has no authority to make or enforce regulations of any kind. However, we are fortunate to have the ear of key elected officials, and the meeting is a good opportunity to recommend ideas for enforcement and new laws to the people who make them.

Why this topic and why now? Well, first, property issues are always of interest and always timely. Second, we have experienced a significant increase in property related problems this year, in part because the neighborhood is turning over and new owners and renters are uninformed, and, certainly in some instances, inconsiderate.

However, it is important to recognize long-time owners also contribute to the problems. The latter include absentee landlords who rent their properties – in some cases for years – without ever checking to be sure their tenants are obeying the laws and being good neighbors.

For each of the areas listed above, we will have government and law enforcement officials to address what current law says, how and to whom to report problems, and, most importantly, how to ensure

there is follow-up and issues actually get resolved.

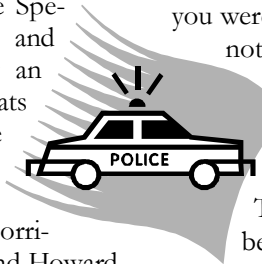
Policing: In Prince George's County, uniformed patrolmen and women are dispatched from the District VI barracks in Beltsville. This unit has 85 sworn officers (this includes investigators, the Special Assignment Team and crime analysts) to cover an area with six distinct beats that extend from outside the Capital Beltway north up U.S. Route 1, north and west along the I-95 corridor to the Montgomery and Howard county lines, and south and east to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the Anne Arundel County line.

When you call 911 for Prince George's police response in West Laurel, your request is actually processed by a call center on Central Avenue in Landover. However, that does not mean we should have to wait hours for help to arrive.

We have invited the Acting Captain from District VI as well as officials from Central Communications to talk about how calls are processed and prioritized and what you should say to ensure the responding officer stops to talk with you – or not (some people do not want neighbors to know the source of the complaint).

In Montgomery County, when you dial 911, your call goes through Central Dispatch in Gaithersburg; the responding officer typically comes from the District III police substation on Briggs Chaney Road across from the auto park. However, the main District III station is in downtown Silver Spring, and the officer could be coming from that vicinity. We have invited the District III Community Police Liaison to the meeting.

Vandalism: Property vandalism – theft and/or physical damage to cars, homes, garages, sheds and mailboxes – should be reported to Prince George's or Montgomery County police by calling 911, regardless of whether the incident happened hours or even days before (if you were away when it occurred). As noted in the February 2006 *Hotline*, do not make the mistake of calling a non-emergency police number to report such things. These are crimes and should be reported as crimes, not merely complaints.



Mailbox vandalism, tampering and theft, which have increased significantly this year, should also be reported to the Laurel postmaster at (301) 498-3933. Tell the postmaster you want to file a written report and request PS Form 2016, *Mail Theft and Vandalism Complaint*. The form helps the Postal Inspection Service determine whether the problem is isolated or part of a pattern in the neighborhood.

If you are not satisfied with the response of the postmaster, contact the Postal Inspection Service Office in Columbia, Md., at (410) 715-7700. WLCA has asked the Postal Inspection Service to send a representative to the October 19 meeting and we will distribute copies of PS Form 2016 as well.

Community Standards: In both Prince George's and Montgomery, the term "community standards" refers generally to property and zoning code enforcement. Inspections are generated almost exclusively as a result of citizen complaints. Inspectors check out problems ranging from deteriorated or unsafe structures to overgrown grass, accumulation of trash, storage of inoperable

(Continued on page 5)

MEETING TOPICS, CONT.

(Continued from page 4)

or untagged vehicles, and a variety of zoning violations including use and occupancy restrictions.

In West Laurel the most common complaints WLCA hears about are illegal or illegally parked vehicles and, increasingly, occupancy concerns (excessive numbers of unrelated people living under one roof). In Prince George's County, the Community Services Division (the name was recently changed from Community Standards) within the Department of Environmental Resources is the enforcement agency (301-883-6100). In Montgomery County, the Department of Housing & Community Affairs (240-777-3785) and the Department of Permitting Services are responsible for these same issues.

We have requested that officials from both counties come and clarify the laws on the books now and how their agencies are tackling enforcement. This is the biggest challenge for these agencies because they must be permitted onto properties to verify the problem and have to take people's word about who lives in the household and whether residents are related.

This is a growing challenge for local governments throughout the Washington area where extremely high housing costs force less financially secure people, including the newly immigrated and younger, unmarried people – often college students but others as well – to live together. This is a sensitive issue, but it can be tackled if we work together and help elected and agency officials to think outside the box to find workable and enforceable solutions.

Miscellaneous quality of life issues: Most of us want harmony and tranquility in the neighborhood, but it only takes one household to dis-

rupt the peace. When it comes to noise and other less-than-neighborly behavior (for example, owners leaving dogs outside that bark at all hours, kids riding ATVs and other motorized vehicles on roadways), enforcement can be tricky because officials generally need to be able to observe the problem to take action.

If talking to your neighbor directly is out of the question, police, animal control officers and other officials can still talk to residents about the offending behavior. Such complaints are confidential, so there should be no fear of reprisal. We have invited Animal Control to address pet-related problems. Police officials can explain each county's noise control ordinances and how and during what hours they are enforced.

WLCA meetings are always informative, but our aim is to make them enjoyable and social as well. In addition to the discussion about property issues, the October 19 meeting will honor a particularly helpful resident with our Good Neighbor Award. As

with other honorees, this is a person who goes above and beyond to help fellow citizens and make West Laurel a better place to live.

In addition to our usual refreshments, **1673** our **West Laurel Cub Scout Pack** has received special permission from MNCPPC to sell its delicious popcorn at our meeting. This is a major fundraiser for the kids, similar to the cookie sales that Girl Scouts sponsor. The scouts will have a table inside the front door beside the membership table, so be sure to check out their goodies before you go find a seat.

This is the first general meeting I will miss in a long time, as I will be traveling in Italy. However, I've left things in the very capable hands of WLCA Vice President **Robert Lennon** and board member **Melissa Daston**, both of whom have run many meetings in their professional and private lives. I hope you can make it out to the October 19 meeting; it promises to be a good one! ❖

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS

REDESIGNATE BONUS CARDS AT GIANT AND SAFEWAY

You must redesignate at the beginning of each plan year or your purchases will not benefit the school of your choice.

RECYCLE LASER/INKJET TONERS & CELL PHONES

You can recycle your used inkjet or laser toner cartridges and cell phones to earn money for Bond Mill Elementary School and/or Liberty Grove Nursery School.

This program runs year-round, accumulating constant income for our efforts. Please bring your empty printer cartridges and used cell phones to Bond Mill or call **Cindy Dollen** at (301) 725-3202 for pickup. They'll be recycled through Funding Factory to earn cash for our local schools.

CLIP THOSE BOX TOPS

Please clip and save Campbell's Soup product labels and General Mills' Box Tops for Education and send them to Bond Mill Elementary School. You'll be surprised how quickly they add up to buy needed educational supplies! ❖

ZONING UPDATE

BOND MILL STATION

Located east of Bond Mill Road, south of the intersection with Brooklyn Bridge Road. Detailed site plan 4-03103 was approved June 16, 2005. The small, brick ranch home along Bond Mill has been demolished and bulldozers have begun clearing the trees and land for 26 new homes. Of those, 24 homes will be arranged in three cul-de-sacs; two additional homes will have driveways right off Bond Mill Road. For neighbors who have any concerns related to the project, including truck traffic or sediment control, developer Doug Eschelmann requested that residents first contact Victor Scalia, project manager, at (301) 908-2595.

MNCPPC LIVING AREA WORKSHOP

The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission is in the process of updating the Subregion I Master Plan, which will influence tremendously how the area is developed over the next few decades. MNCPPC strongly encourages citizens to attend Workshop #3 for communities West of I-95 on Thursday, Oct. 26, 6:30 PM at Hope Christian Church, 6251 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Park and Planning staff want citizen recommendations on preservation, revitalization, and development issues for incorporation in the updated master plan. For more information, visit www.mncppc.org/cpd/subregionone.htm; email



The beginning of Bond Mill Station, NV Homes' development of "luxury estate homes from the \$700s"

Kierre.McCune@ppd.mncppc.org
or call (301) 952-3211.

ROCKY GORGE ANIMAL HOSPITAL

Located at 7515 Brooklyn Bridge Road. The City of Laurel Planning Commission gave final approval on August 8 for a site and landscape plan to build a new 16,435 sq. ft. animal hospital on the property. The property is zoned R-5, single family detached, but the animal hospital is a grandfathered use.

Using calculations based on square footage, doctors per shift, and additional employees, the project would require 100 spaces under the Laurel zoning code; however, the city planner approved 44 parking spaces because a large percentage of the building is not for public use or even access, including surgical and animal boarding areas.

Immediate neighbors appear to be satisfied with the building design

(one story in front, two from the rear) and the ingress/egress and parking lot size and configuration. The project manager expects installation of sediment control measures and grading to begin by mid- to late October.

SWEITZER LANE AND MD ROUTE 198

Northwest corner of the intersection of Sweitzer Lane and MD Route 198. This property includes the old log cabin at 6300 Sandy Spring Road (the driveway is off Sweitzer), but the remainder is undeveloped. The property is zoned Rural Residential; however, R-R is considered a transitional zone that allows for low-impact commercial development. Owner Joe Pietanza of Laurel has requested that WLCA organize a focus group to discuss potential uses of the property. If you are interested in participating, contact Zoning Chair **Dennis Cook** at (301) 776-4314. ❖

FALL GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, October 19 at 7:30 PM • West Laurel Community Building

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CONT.

(Continued from page 1)

satisfactory – endings. In a discussion about mailbox vandalism, WLCA board member **Kevin Tuttle** and his wife **Christina** mentioned theirs had been flattened when they were away on vacation. Asked whether they had replaced it with a sturdier model, they explained they didn't replace it at all; their neighbor had already installed a new mailbox by the time they returned home. "That's why we stay here," Christina said. "We have great neighbors."

The biggest challenges here involve an aging housing stock and related property maintenance and upkeep issues (the main meeting topic), plus the newer problems associated with too many occupants living in one household.

I want to state firmly and unequivocally that on my watch this dialogue will not be about finger pointing or stereotyping anyone. Both tactics are unfair and neither is productive.

It may be true that in some instances, renters do not take care of property. However, in other cases – as with my neighbors on Julie Lane – they take far better care of yards and homes than owners. (Our lawn doesn't hold a candle to theirs!) Conversely, some of the homes in West Laurel that are in the worst condition are owner-occupied.

Similarly, the problem of too many people living under one roof is typically associated with immigrants, and some people are quick to assume they have no regard for laws. Again, that may be true in some cases, but in my observation, there are more immigrant households of average size who are

working hard and, I might add, making major improvements to the homes they have purchased.

As with all new residents, they need information about community and property standards and pointers about county services. Recently, some new, non-English speaking neighbors who moved in on Brooklyn Bridge Road across from my kids' bus stop put out a large, upholstered chair on the curb, clearly intending to throw it away.

It sat and sat for about two weeks and I found myself getting annoyed just looking at it. Then it dawned on me – they probably think it will be picked up with their household trash, an honest and common mistake. The next day when I saw the man return home, I gestured for him to come over and explained as best I could that he needed to contact Bulky Trash (301-952-7600) to haul the chair away.

He nodded, but I wasn't sure he understood, so I called **Councilman Dernoga's** office and asked aide **Alex Hirtle** to explain in Spanish about bulky trash service. I'm happy to report the chair is gone.

I realize not all problems are as easily resolved, particularly those that are complicated by cultural and language barriers. However, I firmly subscribe to the notion that problems are opportunities in disguise and if we work together as a community and with government officials, West Laurel can be a model of *both* strength and diversity.

In researching relevant agency programs for the October general meeting, I discovered that the Prince George's County Office of

Community Relations conducts mediation training to resolve community disputes and sponsors workshops to promote understanding of changing neighborhood dynamics. I hope to explore with the Board and residents ways to take advantage of these programs and to learn more about other initiatives that communities such as College Park have implemented to make absentee landlords more accountable and renters more aware of their civic responsibilities.

I'm sure you have your own good ideas about these and other issues. By all means, bring them to the meeting, which promises to be a good one. I'm sorry that I won't be there, but I will get a full report from the board when I return. As always, I welcome your personal feedback on the Hotline, the priorities and direction of WLCA, and what you think we as an organization and a community can do better *together*.

Mary Lehman

President

301-498-0694/wlcamail@aol.com

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of *Hotline*:

Dennis Cook, Laurice Crawford, Melissa Daston, Cindy Dollen, John Hebert, Donni Larson, Mary Lehman, Kim Passmore, Doris Reynold & Jurgen Von Bredow.

2006-2007 WLCA CONTACTS

	NAME	NUMBER	EMAIL
WLCA OFFICERS			
President	Mary Lehman	498-0694	wlcamail@aol.com
1st. Vice President	Robert Lennon	206-0448	jonniferl@aol.com
2nd. Vice President	Barbara Sollner-Webb	604-5619	bsw@bs.jhmi.edu
Zoning Officer	Dennis Cook	776-4314	dennis@ceimd.com
Rec. Secretary	Denise Keener	490-0684	djndarl@aol.com
Treasurer	Laurice Crawford	490-8684	crawander@verizon.net
AREA I REPRESENTATIVES			
Rep. (2yr)	John Hebert	549-1129	jgherber@earthlink.net
Rep. (1 yr)	Susan Railey	206-9737	srailey@comcast.net
Alternate	Tom Sidor	604-8023	jsidor816@aol.com
2nd. Alternate	Jurgen von Bredow	549-3150	jurgen.vonbredow@fda.hhs.gov
3rd Alternate	Temmy Kimes	490-4268	temmykimes@msn.com
AREA II REPRESENTATIVES			
Rep. (2 yr)	Bob Stewart	953-7381	bobstewart99@aol.com
Rep. (1 yr)	Melissa Daston	776-2314	mdaston@comcast.net
Alternate	Kevin Tuttle	725-1194	ckt@wam.umd.edu
AREA III REPRESENTATIVES			
Rep. (2 yr)	Trish Crowley	490-1355	trish.crowley@att.net
Rep. (1 yr)	Jennifer Kalmanson	776-4873	jenny-kalmanson@hotmail.com
Alternate	Howard Rosenberg	776-4228	hrmkr@comcast.net
2nd. Alternate	Joan Norris	490-6876	none
AREA IV REPRESENTATIVES			
Rep. (2 yr)	Doris Reynold	490-8639	none
Rep. (1 yr)	Lucy Grimes	490-0414	lucygrimes33@verizon.net
Alternate	Bobby Garon	776-3632	rgaron1@comcast.net
2nd Alternate	Tony Spezio	498-3436	spezio@care2.com
AREA V REPRESENTATIVES			
Rep. (2 yr)	Steve Steenrod	725-6835	esteenrod@juno.com
Rep. (1 yr)	Bob Klein	776-3687	robertjklein@earthlink.net
Alternate	Carol Bounds	725-6012	carolrbounds@aol.com
2nd. Alternate	Elizabeth Schwartz	776-0542	bobandbits@earthlink.net
3rd Alternate	Elizabeth Evans	490-5679	none
COMMITTEE CHAIRS			
Road & Transportation	Barbara Sollner-Webb	604-5619	bsw@bs.jhmi.edu
Environmental	open		
Hotline Coordinator	Cindy Dollen	725-3202	ces625@hotmail.com
Membership Coordinator	open		
Neighborhood Watch	Carol Bounds	725-6012	carolrbounds@aol.com
Webmaster	Melissa Daston	776-2314	mdaston@comcast.net
Beautification	Lilia Toler	953-1558	Melissa, Barb S-W, Lucy
Good Neighbor Award	Lilia Toler	953-1558	Joan Norris, Doris, Lucy
OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS			
West Laurel Recreation Council	Kim Passmore	725-3157	passm@quixnet.net
West Laurel Community Center	Mark Allen	953-2199	mark.allen@pgparks.com
Laurel Leader Columnist	Chris Folks	490-0797	cbfolkswl@aol.com
Laurel Gazette Columnist	Cindy Dollen	725-3202	ces625@hotmail.com
Burtonsville Gazette	Jim Brockner	562-3264	jbrockner@gazette.net

Board Meetings are held monthly, usually on the second Thursday, at 7:30 p.m. at the West Laurel Community Center.

General Meetings will be held in October, February and May, usually on the third Thursday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. at the West Laurel Community Center.

2006-2007 WLCA BUDGET

The 2006-2007 WLCA Budget will be voted on at the Fall General Meeting. Please read the information below and bring any questions or comments to the Fall General Meeting On October 19. WLCA has generally kept a balanced budget, but it has been hard with a fluctuating number of members in recent years. We need over 450 households to balance this year's budget, but even more members would help in some of the big issues coming up. We're proud to be one of the largest civic associations in Prince George's County, and having that stature is an effective tool in certain forums. Please join WLCA and support your community.

We no longer have a FREE lawyer so if you have the means and can donate a little extra beyond your \$15 membership dues, we'd greatly appreciate it. Attorneys' fees add up very quickly.

	APPROVED 2004-2005	ACTUAL 2004-2005	APPROVED 2005-2006	ACTUAL 2005-06	PROPOSED 2006-2007
EXPENSES					
Hotline Issues.....	\$3,000	\$2,591	\$2,700	\$3,354	\$3,500
P.O. Box.....	90	0	90	90	90
P.O. Permit & Fee.....	150	0	150	94	94
Cub Scout Sponsorship.....	300	300	300	300	300
Laurel Fire Dept. Donation.....	150	150	150	150	150
Laurel Rescue Squad Donation.....	150	300	150	150	150
LHS Grad Night Donation.....	100	100	100	100	100
West Laurel Rag Tag Band.....	100	100	100	100	100
Bond Mill ES PTA Carnival.....	75	75	75	75	75
Laurel 4th of July Cmte.....	75	75	75	100	75
PG/Montg. Co. Civic Assn. Dues.....	75	25	50	0	50
Office Supplies.....	75	61	100	60	100
Zoning and Legal Fees.....	2,000	1,500	1,000	0	1,000
Refreshments.....	250	93	150	141	150
Mosquito Control.....	0	0	0	0	200
Misc. Expenses.....	500	276	570	443	500
Liability Policy.....	0	0	800	0	0
Total.....	7,090	5,646	6,560	5,157	6,634

INCOME

YEARS	MEMBERS	DUES	DONATIONS	TOTAL
2004-2005.....	440	@10.00	0	\$4,400
2005-2006.....	497	@10.00	1,453	\$6,423
2006-2007 est.....	455	@15.00	0	\$6,825

CURRENT STATUS

Checkbook balance.....	8/31/06	\$8,304
Annexation Bank Account.....		2,740
Bank CDs (5 @ 1,000).....		<u>5,373</u>
Total Cash on Hand.....		16,417

NEWS YOU CAN USE

MAILBOX SAFETY TIPS

The following advice comes from the United States Postal Service's U.S. Postal Inspection Service web page (go to www.usps.com and click the link at the bottom of the screen that says "Postal Inspectors Preserving the Trust").

Every day, the U.S. Postal Service delivers mail to more than 100 million addresses. Most of that mail arrives safely; however, there are things you can do to protect your mail from would be thieves:

- Never send cash or coins in the mail. Use checks or money orders.
- Promptly remove mail from your mailbox after delivery, especially if you're expecting checks, credit cards, or other negotiable items. If you won't be home when items are expected, ask a trusted friend or neighbor to collect your mail.
- Have your local post office hold your mail while you're on vacation, or absent from home for a long period of time.
- If you don't receive a check or other valuable mail you're expecting, contact the issuing agency immediately.
- If you change your address, immediately notify your post office and anyone with whom you do business via the mail.
- Always deposit your mail in a mail slot at your local post office, or hand it to your letter carrier.
- Exchange work and vacation schedules with trusted friends and neighbors; you can watch each other's mailboxes (as well as homes).

If you observe a mail thief at work, call the local police immediately,

and then contact the nearest Postal Inspection Office. For West Laurel residents, the office is located at 10500 Little Patuxent Pkwy, Suite 200, Columbia, MD 21044-3509, phone: 410-715-7700.

VACUUM LEAF COLLECTION

Prince George's County (301) 499-8520

The dates have not yet been determined. Signs announcing anticipated Vacuum Leaf Collection dates will be posted 7-10 days in advance. Collection dates might be delayed due to inclement weather and/or equipment problems.

Do NOT rake leaves into the street, storm drain or drainage ditches, put debris (tree limbs, branches, rocks, bottles, trash, etc.) in with leaves, or park vehicles in front of or within 60 feet of leaf piles.

For additional information about this service, please call (301) 499-8520 or 8576 or visit <http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com/Government/AgencyIndex/DPW&T/Leaf/index.asp>.

Vacuum Leaf Collection is not available in Montgomery County.

YARD WASTE

Prince George's County (301) 952-7630

Weekly curbside yard waste collection will continue through January 15th. Allowable yard waste includes grass clippings, leaves, small branches, and brush.

- Yard waste must be placed in securely tied, heavy-duty plastic bags or heavy-duty trash cans with handles and a secure lid.

- Cardboard boxes and paper bags are not acceptable containers.
- Limbs must not exceed four (4) feet in length and three (3) inches in diameter and must be securely tied in bundles.
- Bundles of limbs and bags of dry grass and leaves must weigh less than 60 pounds.
- Wet grass and leaves must weigh less than 25 pounds.

Montgomery County (240) 777-6410

Place leaves, grass, brush, and other yard trimmings in large paper bags (available at most grocery stores, home improvement stores, and garden centers).

- The total weight of the bag CANNOT exceed 45 pounds.
- Save money and use reusable containers, such as trash cans.
- Cans must be marked "Yard Trim" to ensure proper collection. Use the free Yard Trim decals available at [Montgomery County libraries](#), [Regional Service Centers](#), or by [ordering online](#) or calling our Customer Service Line at 240-777-6410. Be sure the "Yard Trim" decal faces the street.
- Total weight CANNOT exceed 45 pounds per container.
- Brush can also be tied into bundles with twine. Bundles should not exceed 36 inches in diameter. Each branch should not be larger than 4 feet in length, and 4 inches in diameter. Total weight CANNOT exceed 45 pounds per bundle.
- No rocks, dirt or sod, rootballs or tree stumps, or lumber.

(Continued on page 11)

NEWS YOU CAN USE, CONT.

(Continued from page 10)

BULKY TRASH

Prince George's County (301) 952-7600

Bulky Trash Collection is provided by appointment only. To schedule, call (301) 952-7600 Monday-Friday, or email BulkyTrash@co.pg.md.us. Appointments are scheduled for normal County workdays on a first-come, first-served basis.

Acceptable materials include: Furniture and refrigerators (remove refrigerator doors for safety reasons), washing machines and dryers, hot water heaters, lawn mowers (remove the gas tank and drain the oil), and other large materials generated in the household that are not picked up by refuse collection.

Montgomery County (240) 777-6410

Each residential property receiving County-provided trash collection is

entitled to five bulk collections per calendar year for certain types of miscellaneous and/or bulky household trash. Bulk collections must be scheduled in advance with the County by the occupant or resident. The collection will then be made on your trash collection day. All items must be placed at your curb by 7:00 AM on the day of collection. Collections are made between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Schedule bulk collection service online or call 240-777-6410 no later than 9:30 a.m. on the business day before your trash collection day. Please provide a list of items to be picked up.

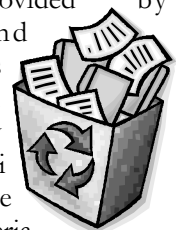
MONTGOMERY COUNTY TRASH COLLECTION

The current waste collection contract with Allied Waste/BFI expired October 1. You need to

make your own arrangements for trash pickup (Montgomery County will continue to accept responsibility for recycle pickup). Waste Management (1-800-877-7531) and Unity (301-990-2049) are available to pick up trash in Montgomery County.

BOND MILL ELEMENTARY RECYCLING FUNDRAISER

An alternative to using the regular weekly recycling provided by Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties is at Bond Mill Elementary School. The Abitibi recycling bins are located by the cafeteria entrance (on the left side of school). You may recycle magazines, catalogs, newspaper, office papers, and mail. **CARDBOARD** is not included in this program. ❖



NEW LANDSCAPING FOR COMMUNITY CENTER

Matthew Reynold of North Laurel has chosen to complete his Eagle Scout project in our community. A member of Boy Scout Troop 603 and a senior at Reservoir High in Howard County, Matthew has undertaken a project to re-landscape the West Laurel Community Center to create a perennial garden.

To meet the Eagle Scout requirements, Matthew must demonstrate that he has had full responsibility for the entire project, including supervising all aspects of the project, recruiting other Scouts, and completing a minimum of 80 hours of work. As we go to press, Matthew and his fellow Scouts have already completed more than

180 hours of work around the community building.

The overall project has entailed meeting with officials from Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission (MNCPPC), the WLCA, and other Prince Georges County officials, plus coordination with Scout leaders to gain approval of the design and choice of plants. Mike Tidd, Horticulture Supervisor for MNCPPC, has been particularly helpful in advising and working with Matthew and keeping the WLCA board apprised of the plans as they were being developed.

At press time, all old shrubbery had been removed and mulching was

well underway. The remainder of the mulching will be completed by October 14. MNCPPC staff will complete additional landscaping work between now and the spring.

Matthew is the grandson of Doris Reynold, a long-time West Laurel resident, retired Bond Mill Elementary teacher, and dedicated WLCA board member. He is also the third generation of the Reynold family to achieve Eagle Scout status, joining his grandfather and three uncles.

When you come to the October 19 General Meeting, you will see the results of Matthew's project. ❖



FAMILY FUN IN & AROUND WEST LAUREL

SCOTCHTOWN HILLS BUTTERFLY GARDEN



The West Laurel Recreation Council (WLRC) is partnering with Scotchtown Hills Elementary School to plant a butterfly garden as part of the "Gorgeous

Prince George's County" beautification. Teens interested in earning service hours, or gardeners interested in lending a hand, are welcome to join in the morning of October 14. For more information or to volunteer, please call **Kim Passmore** at (301) 725-3157.

LARS WALK FOR THE HOMELESS OCTOBER 15

Bethany Community Church (BCC) is joining other churches and schools in the area to help the Laurel Advocacy and Referral Service (LARS) in its goal to help the homeless. As part of a bigger initiative run by the Fannie Mae Foundation, money is raised by individuals willing to walk 1 mile and engage in learning more about the homeless.

The walk will take place at BCC on October 15, beginning with lunch at 11:45 AM followed by the walk around a trail. Please plan to join in this community endeavor! People of all ages are welcome. The entry fee is \$25 for adults 25 and over and \$15 for those under 25. For more information please contact

Cindy Valchar, the BCC Mini-Walk Coordinator at (301) 604-3374.

If your schedule does not permit you to walk, your donation is still



welcome. Also, community service credits are available for high school students.

All proceeds will be donated to LARS and will be matched dollar for dollar by the Fannie Mae Foundation. If more than 100 people participate, the Fannie Mae Foundations will donate an additional \$2000 dollars to LARS! So, please come out and support LARS in their efforts in helping the homeless in our area.

DISCOVER ALL THE FUN!

Cub Scout Pack 1673 invites all boys in 1st through 5th grade to discover the fun of scouting. Pack meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the West Laurel Community Center. Visit the Pack's website at www.cubscouts-1673.com or call **Donni Larson** at (301) 317-0853.



Pack 1673 has been supported by the West Laurel Civic Association for over 35 years. This year the Pack has received special permission from MNCPPC to sell its delicious popcorn at the WLCA October 19 meeting. Help to support our local pack by picking up some popcorn!

BOND MILL ELEMENTARY CRAFT FAIR

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, November 18, for the annual Bond Mill Holiday Craft Fair. This is always a fun event, with lots of crafts and holiday gifts available. The sixth graders sell lunch, drinks

and snacks to raise money for their class activities.

If you have crafts to sell, tables are available for \$25 and \$35. Contact **Mrs. Leibson** at (301) 497-3600 for more information.

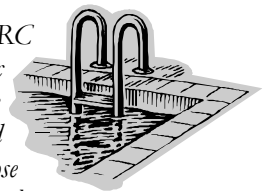
WEST LAUREL ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The annual **West Laurel Holiday Celebration** will be held Friday, December 1 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. This FREE annual party is always great fun for the whole family. There will be holiday crafts for the kids, light refreshments, caroling and a visit from Frosty the Snowman and Santa Claus. Please bring a new, unwrapped toy for LARS and a snack to be shared.

WEST LAUREL SWIM NIGHT

The West Laurel Recreation Council (WLRC) invites all West Laurel residents to the annual **Neighborhood Swim** at Fairland Aquatic Center on Friday, February 9, 2007 from 6:30 to 8:45 PM. Admission is \$2 per swimmer regardless of age. Snacks will be provided by the WLRC. Please come, and bring the whole family.

Please note that the WLRC and Fairland Aquatic Center are not responsible for babysitting "dropped off" children. If you choose to drop off your children, please pick them up promptly as the pool closes at 9:00 pm. Thank you!



Anyone interested in helping with this event should call **Kim Passmore** at (301) 725-3157. ❖

WHAT WLCA DOES FOR YOU

What is the West Laurel Civic Association and what does it do for you?

WLCA is preserving the tranquility and residential character of our neighborhood;

WLCA is taking part in neighborhood beautification and cleanup efforts (sign and plantings along Sweitzer Lane and annual Earth Day road and stream cleanups);

WLCA is constantly monitoring proposed/pending development in and around West Laurel (in both Prince George's and Montgomery Counties) to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood;

WLCA is organized and effective at opposing undesirable or inappropriate projects or policies that would negatively impact our quality of life (such as commercial development at the Bond Mill Road en-

trance, a mega-church/conference center along Brooklyn Bridge Road, the City of Laurel's attempt to annex property at our doorstep, a proposed dog kennel with 40 parking spaces at the dead end of Melbourne Drive);

WLCA is tracking legislation at the county and state level and testifies on policies that affect the community;

WLCA is in regular contact with county and state elected officials to communicate concerns and request assistance when necessary;

WLCA is informing and educating residents about issues of interest at community-wide meetings in October, February and May;

WLCA is providing written and electronic news via the Hotline and its newly restructured and renamed website (www.wlcaweb.org);

WLCA is working with police from MNCPPC (they patrol our two parks) and Montgomery and Prince George's Counties to keep the neighborhood safe;

WLCA is providing financial support and sponsorship for other important community organizations, including the Bond Mill PTA Carnival, Cub Scout Pack 1673, the Laurel High School Grad Night Committee, the West Laurel Rag Tag Band, the Laurel Volunteer Fire Department and the Laurel Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Please join our efforts to keep West Laurel one of the Washington area's greatest neighborhoods. Fill out and mail the form below or bring it in person when you come to the October general meeting.

Thank you in advance, and welcome aboard! ❖

WLCA MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues _____ Donations _____

Comment(s) _____

Dues \$15 per Household* — Make checks payable to WLCA

Please send your membership Registration Form to:

West Laurel Civic Association

Laurice Crawford, Treasurer • 16300 Gales Court • Laurel, MD 20707

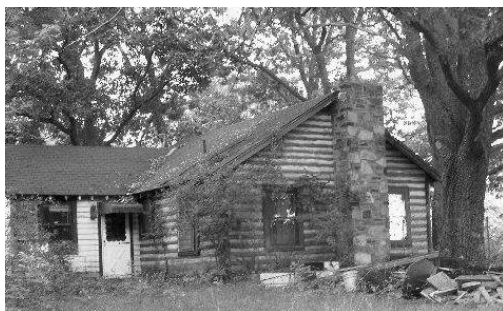
Or drop by the membership table at the October 19 meeting

**Covers up to 2 voting members*

COMMUNITY HISTORY

Back when West Laurel was woodland and farms dotted Sandy Spring Road, before I-95 came roaring through, **George T. and Bertha Seibel Sellers** opened a general store and later built a log home beside it that can still be seen from the westbound MD Route 198 off-ramp.

George and Bertha Sellers were the grandparents of **Eldon Taylor**, who now lives in Beltsville. Eldon reminisced about the family homestead and store, which was built in 1928 and where his grandparents lived for a decade before building the log cabin. George and Bertha had six children born between 1898 and 1911. They included George



The general store (top, about 1928) and log cabin (middle, about 1938). Photos courtesy of Eldon Taylor. The cabin as it is today (bottom) courtesy of Melissa Daston.

L., Hilda E., Mary Alice “Alice,” Marvin C., Mabel M., and F. Edith.

Alice married **Milton Taylor** and they lived with Eldon’s grandparents before building a house of their own next door where they raised Eldon and his older sister and younger brother. Alice would remain in the house until 2004. When she could no longer live alone, the house was sold to the Hunleys, its current occupants, and she went to live with Eldon. **Mary Alice Taylor** passed away in March 2006. She was 101.

Hilda married **Luther Bounds** whose family farm was just down the road from the cabin and store. Hilda and Luther’s daughter-in-law, **Carol Bounds**, lives on Darwin Court. In the winter, Eldon and his friends would sled ride through the open fields around what is now Bounds Avenue. In the spring and summer, he would catch minnows and crawfish in a stream that now runs mostly under Interstate 95 in the vicinity of the street that now bears its name: Walker Branch.

Mabel married **Albert Hawkins** of Sykesville where they lived and raised their son William. As an adult, **Bill Hawkins** worked for the State Roads Commission and ended up buying a home on Sherwood Avenue, where he still lives.

Edith married **Harry Becraft** and bought the farm across Sandy Spring Road where they grew vegetables and sold them at market as well as a roadside stand. “Uncle Harry’s tomato patch was about where Outback Steakhouse is now,” said Eldon. Their son, **Wayne Be-**

craft, and his wife **Nancy** live on Julie Lane in West Laurel.

George and Bertha sold their store and gas pumps to **James H. Harrison** in 1939. James Harrison later was appointed to the Prince George’s County Board of Education; an elementary school in South Laurel bears his name. The Harrison family operated the store and gas station until 1969 when the federal government was expanding the interstate highway system and I-95 bisected Sandy Spring Road.

The store and gas pumps were torn down to make way for the new road and Sweitzer Lane was carved out of the north side of the property. Sweitzer was designed as a service road for residents who no longer had access to their property from the Sandy Spring side, but the homes maintain Sandy Spring Road addresses to this day.

Meanwhile, James Harrison’s son **Jimmy** began using the cabin to operate his real estate office. His mother, **Edna**, ran a unique business on the property as well, selling tombstones made by the Merkle Monument Company of Baltimore. The sign advertising Jimmy’s sales office and Edna’s tombstone business is covered with vines but still visible to passersby on Sweitzer.

Developer **Joe Pietanza** of Laurel bought the cabin and the adjacent property in 1999 and is exploring possible projects. Unfortunately the structure is not considered historically significant — at least from a preservation standpoint.

The cabin is boarded up, and its days could be numbered. But for now it stands, facing a bustling state road, and reminding harried motorists who happen to glimpse it, of an earlier and simpler time. ❖

THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER OF WEST LAUREL

Hotline — Fall 2006

WEST LAUREL CIVIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 387
LAUREL, MD 20725

Presorted
Standard
US Postage Paid
Speedy Labels