

WINTER
2006

HOMELINE

THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER OF WEST LAUREL

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It's been just six months since I took over as president of the West Laurel Civic Association (WLCA) and there are so many exciting things going on around the neighborhood that I want to share with you.

I'll start by bringing you up to date on the two main goals I articulated when you entrusted me with leading this great organization.

One of my primary goals is to spruce up the main entrance to West Laurel at MD Route 198 and Bond Mill Road. Okay, "spruce up" may be an understatement! The main entrance to West Laurel is a pretty sad sight – ugly concrete medians (with weeds sprouting from the cracks during the growing season), no landscaping or ground lighting, and no welcome sign.

All around the area, local and state governments are working to beautify roadways — including median strips — with ornamental brick, landscaping, signs and historic markers. Anne Arundel County has very attractive gateway signs, particularly on its major highways, and the City of Laurel, with financial assistance from the State Highway Administration, is installing ornamental brick and new sidewalks along the U.S. Route 1 corridor.

I'm happy to report that West Laurel is finally getting on the beautification bandwagon. Former board member **Lilia Toler** has kindly agreed to lead this effort.

Lilia has begun working with the Prince George's County Department of Public Works and

(Continued on page 8)

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THE FEBRUARY 16 GENERAL MEETING

Three times a year, the WLCA board must decide on topics of interest to feature at the general membership meeting. The upcoming meeting on **Thursday, February 16, 7:30 PM**, West Laurel Community Building, offers the organization an opportunity to bring residents up to speed on a variety of issues. Pending development has historically been of great

interest to our membership, which is why we are always prepared to provide updates, either through formal presentations, maps and other visuals, or both.

However, it is also important that we be aware of what our current neighbors are doing. Our most immediate and largest neighbor is the **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission**, and many activities

(Continued on page 7)

WLCA WINTER GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, February 16 at 7:30 PM
WEST LAUREL COMMUNITY
BUILDING

TOPICS

- **WSSC GENERAL MANAGER ANDY BRUNHART —**
future plans to install new pipeline through West Laurel, pinhole leaks, and the use of WSSC parkland & ballfields
- **ELECTED OFFICIALS**
- **RENEW MEMBERSHIP**
- **NEW WL AUTO DECAL (LIMITED AVAILABILITY)**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Message	1
Don't Miss General Meeting	1
Housing Values	2
Development Update	3
Winter Contacts	4
A Piece of History in WL	5
Welcome to the Neighborhood!	5
Club Amazon Fight Continues	6
WLCA Discussion Topics	8
News You Can Use	9
Family Fun in West Laurel	10
Easy Ways to Support	10
Help Identify Local Issues	11
Trash Pickup for Seniors	11
Call 911 for All Crimes	12
Street & Sidewalk Repairs	12
WLCA Membership Form	13

WEST LAUREL HOUSING VALUES

Many of you have asked for an update to our September article on housing values in our neighborhood. The good news is living in West Laurel continues to pay off and housing prices remain high.

During the last quarter of 2005, twenty-four (24) property sales occurred in West Laurel, all in Prince George's County. The highest sold for \$769,000; the average value was \$504,845. The data for 2005 shown at right are for *sold* properties only (two in Montgomery County, 59 in 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 search

by address, property sales, property account, or map references. West Laurel, PG County is located in District 10, Map 2; Montgomery County is located in District 05, Maps LS21 and LS22. ❖

Quarter	Total # Sold	Average Price	Lowest Price	Highest Price
Jan-Mar	8	\$339,362	\$285,000	\$380,000
Apr-Jun	17	390,835	300,000	581,000
Jul-Aug	12	423,658	387,000	525,000
Sep-Dec	24	504,845	355,000	769,000
2005	61	435,398		

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

WEST LAUREL HOME SALES

CLOSING	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE	CLOSING	ADDRESS	SALE PRICE
09/15/2005	16207 Jerald Road	\$414,900	09/15/2005	6701 Park Hall Drive	\$505,000
09/21/2005	16009 Malcolm Drive	455,000	09/28/2005	6805 Brooklyn Bridge	400,000
10/04/2005	6641 Park Hall Drive	449,900	10/14/2005	6410 McCahill Drive	413,500
10/24/2005	6400 Forest Mill Lane	424,000	10/28/2005	16203 Gales Street	420,000
11/01/2005	6915 Redmiles Road	430,000	11/03/2005	15805 Joyce Lane	630,000
11/03/2005	15803 Joyce Lane	630,000	11/03/2005	15801 Joyce Lane	630,000
11/03/2005	15800 Joyce Lane	630,000	11/03/2005	15802 Joyce Lane	630,000
11/03/2005	15804 Joyce Lane	630,000	11/03/2005	15806 Joyce Lane	630,000
11/04/2005	16027 Jerald Road	424,900	11/04/2005	6605 McCahill Terrace	417,000
11/08/2005	15606 Straughn Drive	700,000	11/08/2005	6403 Forest Mill Lane	468,000
11/08/2005	16103 Kenny Court	410,000	11/08/2005	16101 Kenny Road	425,000
11/09/2005	5906 Parkway Drive	370,000	11/09/2005	6703 McCahill Terrace	355,000
11/15/2005	16012 Malcolm Drive	420,000	11/29/2005	16026 Burtons Lane	375,000
11/30/2005	16310 Bond Mill	769,000	12/02/2005	16004 Kenny Road	435,000

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Zoning and land use have long been important issues for the West Laurel Civic Association and that has not changed. In fact, the neighborhood is arguably experiencing more development pressure and actual growth than it has in years. The following is a summary of projects in and around West Laurel that WLCA is monitoring.

ALMAS SHRINER'S CENTER

Located at 6001 Sandy Spring Road, on the south side of MD Route 198 and 400 feet east of Old Gunpowder Road. This project includes two structures to house meeting and storage space plus a banquet facility for the Shriners, a service organization that arranges treatment for burn victims. Preliminary plan 4-05045 was filed with Prince George's County November 23, 2005. The property fronting Route 198 is posted for a public hearing to be held **February 16**. For more information about the hearing, contact **Reyna Kosla** at (301) 952-4148. At the May 2005 general meeting, an attorney for the developer outlined the proposal and indicated that the main entrance to the facility would be from a new section of Bauer Lane, which would be extended south across MD Route 198. The WLCA board has not taken a position yet on this project.

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 developer has begun grading and erosion control; construction of 30 or so single-

family homes is expected to begin in spring 2006. Landscaping and other improvements at Bond Mill Elementary School were paid for by the developer and completed last fall. The civic association did not oppose this development but worked with the applicant to address concerns about stormwater runoff, installation of sidewalks and other infrastructure improvements.

CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Located on the old Laurel Block Plant property at MD Route 198 and Bond Mill Road. The land has been cleared and is being fairly well maintained.

An untagged and apparently abandoned van recently was removed from the property after sitting there for months. No development plans had been filed when the *Hotline* went to press. WLCA has not yet taken a position on this project.

CITY OF LAUREL ANNEXATION LEGAL CHALLENGE

Oral arguments in this court case, which dates back almost two years, have finally been scheduled for early March. WLCA filed suit against the City of Laurel for what it contends is an illegal annexation along Brooklyn Bridge Road in the unincorporated area of Prince George's County. The City is only permitted to annex land that is contiguous to its current boundaries; WLCA does not believe the City met this test with the acreage it owns on the opposite side of Brooklyn Bridge Road. Legally speaking, the question will hinge on

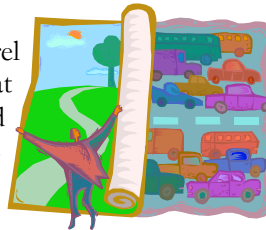
whether the City, when it annexed the land across the street years ago, took over that property to the center of Brooklyn Bridge Road. There is also an argument to be made about whether the City met its own requirements for properly notifying affected citizens and advertising in a newspaper "of record." Politically speaking, WLCA is fighting the City's insatiable appetite for grabbing land in an effort to "even out" its borders.

The Board believes if this annexation is permitted, the City will continue its march along Brooklyn Bridge Road right up to and perhaps some day into West Laurel. The court hearing in March is on a routine "motion to dismiss" by

the City, whose attorneys will argue that the plaintiffs in the case do not have standing to file suit. Two City property owners are parties to the suit, so the City is unlikely to prevail on this issue.

KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES OF LAUREL

Located in the northeast quadrant of Sweitzer Lane and MD 198. Preliminary plan 4-03022 was approved January 8, 2004. In October 2005, the applicant requested and received an extension for the plan, which would have expired in January 2006. The extension gives the applicant until January 2007 to file a site plan. WLCA worked with the applicant to address concerns about stormwater runoff and flooding of downstream properties, parking and landscaping. Those issues were addressed to the Board's satisfac-



(Continued on page 4)

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE, CONT.

tion; therefore, WLCA voted not to oppose the project.

KONTERRA

Konterra is the name of a series of contiguous, undeveloped properties sandwiched between Beltsville and West Laurel off Interstate I-95. The Gould family is proposing to develop the core properties, totaling 488 acres on the east side of I-95 and 253 acres on the west side of I-95, with a mix of office, upscale retail and residential, civic and cultural uses. Architects of Prince George’s County’s Subregion I Masterplan in 1990 supported the general concept but emphasized that screening and buffering must be extensive. MNCPPC, as part of its process to update the Subregion I Masterplan, encouraged the Gould family to host a specific type of focus group meeting (known in planning circles as *charrettes*) to build consensus around design considerations. These can include car and pedestrian traffic patterns, retail and entertainment venue preferences, possible civic uses (such as libraries, post offices and schools) and connectivity to surrounding communities. On February 24, there will be a public presentation based on two charrettes that were held in January and attended by representatives from surrounding jurisdictions, including West Laurel. For more information, contact Konterra representative **Hillary Cahan**, (301) 953-7650.

REACHING HEARTS INTERNATIONAL CHURCH

Two parcels of property located on the north side of Brooklyn Bridge Road in Prince George’s, about one-third of a mile from the Montgomery County line. On

November 22, 2005, the applicant’s second request to the Prince George’s County Council for a sewer category change was denied. The applicant filed suit in Prince George’s County Circuit Court, but the court upheld the County Council’s denial of the water and sewer change. An appeal of that decision was scheduled for February 6, as the *Hotline* was at press. The applicant has also filed suit in federal court, claiming that the county’s denial of the water and sewer category change amounted to racial discrimination. County attorneys tried but failed to get that suit dismissed; however, the county did succeed in getting a delay of oral arguments in the federal case pending resolution of the case before

the Court of Special Appeals. The WLCA is strongly opposed to a project of this size and scope along a rural stretch of roadway that backs directly up to the Patuxent watershed and Rocky Gorge Reservoir, which provides our drinking water.

SUBREGION I MASTER PLAN

A new coordinator, Kierre McKune, was appointed in November 2006. The revised plan is scheduled for release in March 2006, but it will probably be delayed. If you have particular rezoning concerns, now is a good time to make them known by contacting Kierre McCune at (301) 952-3211. ❖

WINTER CONTACTS

PRINCE GEORGE’S	MONTGOMERY
<i>Leaf Pickup</i>	
301-499-8520 www.goprincegeorgescounty.com under “Select a Service” choose “Leaf Collection”	1-240-777-7623 www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ content/dpwt/index.asp Under “Highway Maintenance” choose “Leaf Collection”
<i>Snow Info</i>	
301-350-0500 www.goprincegeorgescounty.com under “Select a Service” choose “Snow Information”	1-240-777-ROAD www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ content/dpwt/index.asp Under “Highway Maintenance” choose “Snow Removal”
<i>Power Outages</i>	
BGE 1-800-685-0123	Pepco 1-202-833-7500
<i>County Council Representative</i>	
Tom Dernoga 301-952-3887	Marilyn Praisner 1-240-777-7968

A PIECE OF HISTORY IN WEST LAUREL

There is something special about the log cabin that sits behind Bethany Community Church and was once part of the original Maiden's Fancy Estates. As the 1770's-era cabin stands proudly against the winter sky — more exposed now with the leaves off the trees — people have stopped recently to look and take pictures. There are stories to be told and stories still to be found out, but they are not all told yet.

Known as the Caleb Carr house after its original owner, a prominent landowning family in Montgomery County, the cabin is situated in the middle of Maiden's Fancy Estates, a farm that was donated to Bethany Community Church by the owners, James and Win Smith.

Excavations have uncovered bowl fragments, porcelain, a buggy step, boxes of chards and paper relics from the old house. With title deeds, marriage licenses, census reports and personal logs of daily

business interactions, purchases and even recipes, the church has demonstrated that the house and the Carr family are an integral part of Laurel's history. Genevieve Crook, whose federalist-style brick house on Aitcheson Lane was part of the original farm and dates back to 1807, remembers the last generation of the Carr family operating a dairy farm on the property. It also served as a boarding house in the 1950's.

Constructed of hand-carved chestnut trees held together by plaster-like chinking, this cabin has weathered more than two centuries of winters and springs. Its original rafters are still intact. Amazingly, there are no rotten boards and authentic pegs from 1790 are still holding the roof together. Purchased in 1948 by Dr. James T. Smith, a dentist, and his wife, Helen Tilghman Smith of Tilghman Island fame, the farm was the family's summer home during the Smith brothers' boyhood.

Cochran's Stone Masonry of Leesburg, Va., currently is restoring the site with funding from the Maryland Historical Trust. The log house has been leveled and squared and a reinforced concrete footing has been poured. Allen Cochran has ordered roofing material and will soon complete the roof portion of the project. Allen specializes in preserving pre-Civil War structures from the bottom up.

Laurel resident **Chris Erdle**, who owns HVAC contractor Sovereign Service, has agreed to donate and install a complete heating and air conditioning system.

The Board of Bethany Community Church invites those who are interested to check out this piece of Laurel history from the black top parking area to ensure everyone's safety during the construction phase.

A special thank you to Jean Dean, a BCC member, for writing this article. ❖

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

The West Laurel Civic Association (WLCA) extends a warm welcome to the following families who became residents of West Laurel this past fall. Every homeowner is automatically a member of WLCA with a voluntary donation of \$10 per year per household.

- Walter & Celso Aguilars (McCahill Terr)
- John & Lesley Brinton (Redmiles Rd)
- Richard & Jacqueline Brown (Malcolm Dr)
- Ismael Falcon-Rodriguez (Straughn Dr)

- Jhansir & Ramakrishnan Ganesan (Burtons La)
- Emmett & Gina Hendershot (Forest Mill La)
- Jose & Sulma Herrera (Kenny Ct)
- James Holley (Bond Mill Rd)
- Fred & Donna Johansen (Parkway Dr)
- Shane & Gladys Kelley (Jerald Rd)
- William Linares & Dilma Menendez (Kenny Rd)
- Kabuu Murithi (Kenny Rd)
- Robert Ofenstein (McCahill Terr)
- Premalatha Shadrach (Dorset Rd)

You will find that West Laurel is a vibrant community with many op-

portunities for volunteers to support our great neighborhood (the best in the four-county area, we like to say). Neighborhood groups include WLCA, West Laurel Recreation Council, West Laurel Swim Club, Bond Mill Elementary School PTA, the West Laurel Rag Tag Band, 4-H Explorers, and Cub Scout Pack #1673.

Again, welcome to the neighborhood! We look forward to meeting you at the **WLCA General Meeting on Thursday, February 16, 7:30 PM**, West Laurel Community Building. ❖

CLUB AMAZON FIGHT CONTINUES

If you've been following the public debate about the proposed strip club at Route 1 and Contee Road in Laurel, you know the owner of the property has cancelled plans for a dance club and is proposing a restaurant instead.

However, West Laurel resident **Richard Rhodes**, one of the organizers of Citizens Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE), assures WLCA the group's work is far from finished.

While WLCA typically focuses on land use and other quality of life issues closer to home, we applaud the efforts of CASE, which brought people together to defeat an undesirable project and is working to ensure the club doesn't resurface elsewhere.

"We don't want them thinking they can move down the road into Howard or Montgomery County either," Rhodes said.

Facilities in which alcohol consumption and exotic dancing are the main attractions too frequently spawn serious criminal activity. In April 2003, a triple homicide occurred in the parking lot of the Stardust Inn, a topless dance club in West Lanham Hills, Maryland, whose liquor license was transferred by the Prince George's County Board of License Commissioners to the new Laurel location.

The transfer would have allowed the new establishment, Club Amazon, to have "exotic cabaret female dancers" as part of its liquor license. While officially in an area zoned for industrial use, the site is adjacent to a church and in close

proximity to a family restaurant and two major shopping centers.

CASE is now focused on urging state and county agencies to review the process that allowed the easy transfer of a liquor license from a facility where so much violent crime had been logged in recent years. It also is lobbying lawmakers to strengthen notification requirements for affected communities where adult entertainment or exotic dancing is proposed.

Sign the petition below and send it to your representatives in Annapolis or mail the form to CASE and it will be forwarded to lawmakers. If you have any questions about CASE's efforts, call **Richard Rhodes** at (301) 318-1172.

Citizens Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.)
13503 Baltimore Avenue
Laurel, MD 20707



PETITION FOR LEGISLATIVE AND INVESTIGATIVE ACTION

I hereby request the **Maryland Attorney General** and the **Prince George's County State's Attorney** to investigate the circumstances surrounding the transfer of a liquor license by the Prince George's County Board of License Commissioners (Liquor Control Board) to the operators of the Stardust Inn — a nightclub in West Lanham Hills whose liquor license had been revoked following a triple homicide in 2003. The transfer would have allowed the operators of the Stardust Inn to resume operations as Club Amazon in Laurel featuring "exotic cabaret female dancers."

I also request the **Maryland State Senate** and **House of Delegates** to pass legislation to give county liquor control boards additional authority to revoke or suspend liquor licenses when faced with significant opposition from local communities in a post-licensing setting. I also request the **Maryland State Legislature** and the **Prince George's County Council** to investigate and close loopholes in existing liquor licensing statutes and processes, including requiring notification be given specifically to the affected community when adult entertainment or exotic dancing is proposed.

Signature

Print Name

Address

City, ST, ZIP

Date

Phone

mail to:
Citizens Against Sexual Exploitation (C.A.S.E.)
13503 Baltimore Avenue · Laurel, MD 20707
301-210-3170

GENERAL MEETING, CONT.

(Continued from page 1)

related to its provision of water and sewer services have a direct physical and financial impact on our community. WSSC also owns much of the parkland in West Laurel, which means our recreational and leisure activities are affected by its policies. Therefore, we have invited **WSSC General Manager Andy Brunhart** to speak at our February meeting.



Mr. Brunhart will address a variety of issues including future plans to install new pipeline through West Laurel, whether WSSC's strategy to reduce the problem of pinhole leaks in our copper pipes is working, and concerns related to the use of WSSC parkland and ballfields in our community.

WSSC is among the ten largest water and wastewater utilities in the United States, with 420,000 customer accounts. It operates and maintains four reservoirs including Rocky Gorge, which provides West Laurel's drinking water. WSSC has extensive pipelines running through West Laurel from the Rocky Gorge dam to the treatment plant at Sweitzer Lane and MD Route 198.

Following the upgrade of its treatment plant, WSSC in the next few years must increase the capacity of these pipelines. This may mean some disturbance to easements on private property if WSSC installs the new pipeline near the existing ones, which run about one block west of I-95 behind the homes on Fitzgerald and Bradford Drives.

While the alignment of the new pipeline and the timing for installation have not yet been determined, these clearly are issues the civic association and West Laurel residents will need to monitor closely.

Many West Laurel residents assume that the **Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission** owns the open space in our neighborhood. In fact, the reservoir, boat ramp, surrounding picnic area and the park off Brooklyn Bridge Road all are owned by WSSC. (The play areas and the ground on which the community center sits are leased to MNCPPC by WSSC.) In addition, the ballfields along Brooklyn Bridge Road, including Panther Field by the I-95 overpass and the Supplee Lane fields, also are owned by WSSC. The growing crowds and traffic problems associated with these fields have some residents concerned and wondering who to call and what to do if things get out of hand, particularly on a weekend.

These are all issues we expect to discuss with Mr. Brunhart. WLCA has several board members who serve on advisory committees to WSSC. All of them have been greatly impressed by Mr. Brunhart's leadership and vision for the utility. Please take advantage of this opportunity to meet him at the February general membership meeting and ask him questions of importance to you.

There is another exciting reason to come to the meeting as well. We're offering dues-paying members an opportunity to get a West Laurel

ID sticker for your car. For a small donation — it's up to you to decide how much — we will offer each household a white window sticker with the initials WL. We're talking about the white oval stickers with black letters that are all the rage and advertise places such as OBX (Outer Banks), KW (Key West), and CI (Chincoteague Island).

We are initially ordering just 500 of these stickers — with 1,700 homes and an average of at least two cars per household, we expect them to go fast. If there is enough demand, we will place a second order. Don't miss the chance to be the first one on your street with a WL sticker on your rear windshield!

As with each of our general membership meetings, we have invited all of our area elected officials, including **Prince George's County Councilman Tom Dernoga**, **Montgomery County Councilwoman Marilyn Praisner**, and our delegations (Prince George's and Montgomery) to the Maryland General Assembly.

Of course, the February meeting also means getting out, socializing with friends and neighbors, and saving a 39-cent postage stamp by paying your dues in person (if you haven't already done so). What more could you ask for? See you **Thursday, February 16, 7:30 p.m.**, West Laurel Community Building, Brooklyn Bridge Road and Supplee Lane. ❖



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE, CONT.

(Continued from page 1)

Transportation (DPW&T) to identify what can be done and where, whether the state can assist with the project, and what, if anything, WLCA can contribute financially or otherwise.

County engineers first must check traffic patterns at the intersection and consider accident rates and visibility for motorists before it gives the go-ahead for any landscaping. There are other considerations as well, such as whether there is money in the DPW&T budget for brick paving and whether there is a convenient power source for a lighted welcome sign.

Also, at the Prince George's/Montgomery County line along Route 198 (in the vicinity of Tubby's Diner), there may be an opportunity to get one of the new gateway signs promoting Prince George's County Executive **Jack Johnson's** Livable Communities initiative.

Our Prince George's County Councilman, **Tom Dernoga**, has already pledged his support for the project and has tasked his legislative aide, **Judy Thacher**, with assisting us. Because Route 198 is a state road, WLCA and Prince George's County DPW&T will seek input, ideas and possibly financial support for the beautification effort from state highway officials.

I don't know what we'll end up with, but I have every expectation that it will be great, in keeping with the wonderful neighborhood that lies so inconspicuously behind the drab entrance.

If you have any questions, comments or ideas about this project, you can email wlcamail@aol.com or visit WLCA's Website, www.wlcaweb.org.

My other main goal, which is wholeheartedly shared by the Board, is to increase the number of WLCA memberships by at least 20 percent above the 2004-2005 level.

Thanks in large part to our fall door-to-door membership drive, as of our January Board meeting, 410 households had paid dues for 2005-2006. That's up from 350 dues paying households at this time last year, representing a 21 percent jump. Thank you to Membership Chair **Stan Shock** for organizing the door knocking campaign. We hope to continue the effort once the weather is consistently warmer.

In the meantime, we are still striving to reach our goal of at least 520 paid memberships. If you have not yet joined for the current fiscal year, now is the time to do it. A one-year membership is just \$10 per family. There is a form on page 13. You can fill it out and mail it to the address listed or, better yet, come to the General Membership meeting **Thursday, February 16** with cash or check payable to WLCA.

Lastly, I want to share some information about a new **Good Neighbor recognition program** that the board formally launched at its October 2005 meeting. The premise is simple: the board at each of the three general meetings (October, February and May) will publicly acknowledge and thank individuals in the community who go the extra mile to help make West Laurel the safe, friendly place

that it is. Honorees receive a certificate of recognition and a small token of our appreciation, such as movie tickets or a gift card for a local restaurant.

I'm not going to give away who will be honored at the February meeting; you'll have to attend to find out! For more information about general meeting topics, see the main article on page 1. ❖

WLCA BOARD DISCUSSION TOPICS 4TH QUARTER 2005

The WLCA Board of Directors met four times between September and December 2005. Topics discussed included the following: door-to-door membership drive; the role of the past president; 2005-2006 budget; timing for increasing annual dues; creation of new signs to publicize meetings; liability insurance for the Board; topics and articles for the *Hotline* and the membership meetings (including emergency readiness); creation of "Good Neighbor" awards; updates on zoning and development issues and projects, including the Shriners Temple, Reaching Hearts church, Jehovah's Witness Church, the Sealing Case, the SW corner of 198 and Bond Mill, a dog kennel on Melbourne, a dog park, and the Abitibi recycling concept; a beautification initiative for West Laurel's main entrance; the posting of Board minutes on the WLCA Website, large sporting events on Panther Field; and various road issues, including the ICC and erosion and sediment problems caused by U.S. Route 29 construction. ❖

NEWS YOU CAN USE

TRASH & YARD WASTE COLLECTION

Prince George's County

A new company, Consolidated Waste, Inc. (CWI), has replaced BFI as the trash hauler for the Prince George's side of West Laurel.



According to the Prince George's County Department of Environmental Resources (DER), trash pickup will be provided by a CWI subsidiary, Unity, Inc., twice per week as scheduled. If you experience any problems with the new contractor, please call DER at (301) 952-7630.

Also, an important reminder about yard waste: Collection is suspended every winter. This year the no collection period began on January 16, 2006, and will continue through April 14, 2006. Beginning in mid-April, the normal weekly yard waste pick-up will resume. If you have yard waste to dispose of, you may put it out with your regular trash. Tree limbs and small shrubs must be cut up, bundled and tied in four-foot lengths or it will not be taken.

Montgomery County

Unity, Inc., is also providing trash collection for homes in the Montgomery County section of Wyndham Woods, replacing the previous contractor, Waste Management, Inc.

VOTER INFORMATION AND IMPORTANT DEADLINES

With 2006 being an election year (off-year at the national level,

which means all of the House of Representatives, plus one-third of the Senate is up for reelection; at the state level you'll vote for governor, House and Senate members; at the county level, you'll choose Prince George's and Montgomery County Council representatives and County Executives), be sure you know the requirements and deadlines for registering, changing your address or party affiliation, and requesting an absentee ballot.

All registered voters are required to keep their voter registration information current. This includes changes of name or address. Maryland law requires voters to notify their respective elections office of these changes within 30 days.

A change of name, address or party affiliation must be made in writing and signed by the voter. Changes can be made at any time voter registration is open; however, changes of party affiliation cannot be made 12 weeks preceding the day of the primary election.

Voter registration is permitted all year around, except 21 days before and 11 days after the primary election, and 21 days before and 11 days after the general election.

Prince George's County Voter Information

Voter registration applications are available in person at two full-service Motor Vehicle Administration offices: 10251 Central Avenue, Largo; and 11760 Baltimore Avenue, Beltsville. Both offices are open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Applications also are available from the Board of Elections, 16201 Trade

Zone Avenue, Suite 108, Upper Marlboro. Office hours are weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (except holidays). You may have a form mailed to you by calling (301) 430-8020. For more information on voter registration, including frequently asked questions and forms that can be downloaded, go to www.goprincegeorges.com and click on Elections under the government agency index.

The polling place for West Laurel's Prince George's County residents is Bond Mill Elementary School, 16001 Sherwood Avenue, Laurel.

Montgomery County Voter Information

Voter registration applications are available in many public places including libraries, post offices, schools and MVA offices.

Applications also are available from the Elections Office, 751 Twinbrook Parkway, Rockville. Office hours are 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday; telephone (240) 777-8500. You may have a form mailed to you by calling (240) 777-VOTE and leaving your name and address after the recorded message.



For more information on voter registration, including frequently asked questions and forms, go to www.montgomerycountymd.gov and click on Departments and then on Elections.

The polling place for West Laurel's Montgomery County residents is New Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church, 15121 McKnew Road, Burtonsville. ❖

FAMILY FUN IN & AROUND WEST LAUREL

The West Laurel Recreation Council (WLRC) exists to help neighbors get to know and enjoy each other. Is there a class you'd like to teach or a new hobby/skill you'd like to learn? Why not give us a call and let us know what you'd like to do. We'd like to hear from you.

Kim Passmore .. (301) 725-3157

Betty Mannas (301) 953-2503

Rush Kester..... (301) 490-1310

The WLRC meets at 7:30 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month at the West Laurel Community Building. Why not join us at the next meeting?!

The following events are sponsored by the WLRC and supported by your volunteer activities and donations.

WEST LAUREL ANNUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The 2005 West Laurel Annual Holiday Celebration was, as always, great fun for the whole family. Young and old alike enjoyed holiday crafts, light



Frosty surrounded by his fans!

refreshments, and a visit from Frosty the Snowman and Santa.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered their time to make this such a fun family event. Thanks also to those attendees who brought a new, unwrapped toy for LARS. Hope to see you there in December 2006.

WEST LAUREL SWIM NIGHT

The annual West Laurel Swim Night at Fairland Aquatic Center is scheduled for Friday, February 10. Cost is \$2 per West Laurel resident, regardless of age. Reservations are not necessary. Bring the whole family! The event runs from 6:30 PM to 8:45 PM. Snacks will be provided by the WLRC. *If you choose to drop off your children at this event, please be aware that neither the WLRC nor the Fairland Aquatic Center is responsible for babysitting your children.*

Children should be picked up promptly as the Aquatic Center closes at 9:00 PM.

ADULTS' NIGHT OUT

The second "Adult Dinner Theater Outing" will be at Toby's in Columbia on Saturday, April 1. Join the WLRC for a buffet dinner and a fantastic musical comedy — *Thoroughly Modern Millie* — for only \$26.50 per person for West Laurel residents (\$15 off Toby's regular price, courtesy of the WLRC). Non-residents are also welcome but will pay the full price of \$41.50 per person. Prices include a great dinner buffet, tax, tip and the show.

You'll need to contact **Kim Passmore** at (301) 725-3157 or **Kathy McKay** at (410) 792-4968 to make your reservations (DO NOT make your reservations through Toby's). Reservations must be made by February 17; payment is due by February 26. ❖

EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT LOCAL SCHOOLS

RECYCLE LASER/INKJET TONERS & CELL PHONES

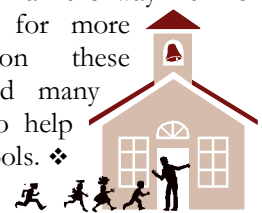
You can recycle your used inkjet or laser toner cartridges and cell phones to earn money for Bond Mill Elementary School and/or Liberty Grove Nursery School. This program runs year-round. Please bring your empty printer cartridges and used cell phones to Bond Mill ES or call **Cindy Dollen** at (301) 725-3202. They'll be recycled through Funding Factory to earn cash for our local schools.

CLIP THOSE BOX TOPS

Bond Mill ES is collecting Campbell's Soup product labels

and General Mills Box Tops for Education. Please clip and save these labels and boxtops in your household as you use participating products, and send them to the school. You would be surprised how quickly they add up to buy sorely needed educational supplies for the school!

Visit the PTA's website at <http://www.pgcps.org/~bondmill/pta.htm> (scroll all the way to the bottom) for more information on these programs and many more ways to help our local schools. ❖



HELP IDENTIFY COMMUNITY ISSUES

Many of the issues the civic association takes up are those that are raised by neighbors who have a concern that they communicate to a WLCA area representative or officer.

The WLCA needs all residents to act as the eyes and ears of the community to bring issues to the attention of the association and local government officials. The board can then work with government agencies, elected officials, and law enforcement personnel to request assistance in addressing various problems.

A good example of this occurred recently when some of our regular walkers, including WLCA Environmental Chair **Jane Blewett**, noted that the retaining wall on Bond Mill Road near McCahill Drive was developing cracks and becoming overgrown with small trees and brush (see below).

Lilia Toler, who heard these concerns at a recent board meeting, had arranged to discuss with a representative from Prince George's County's Department of Public Works and Transportation landscaping, lighting and other improvements to West Laurel's main entrance. After discussing ideas for the main entrance, Lilia asked the DPW&T official to accompany her to some other problem areas to

find out what, if anything, the county could do.

She escorted the official up Bond Mill Road to the retaining wall and then over to Sweitzer Lane to point out the community sign and landscaping that she and some enterprising neighbors installed last year as well as the ongoing problem of illegal dumping just off Route 198. Based on that visit, DPW&T will consider remedies, including possibly installing an additional guardrail along the west shoulder of Sweitzer Lane to deter would-be dumpers from pulling off to dispose of furniture, tires and other trash.

Meanwhile, at the request of Councilman Tom Dernoga's office, a county engineer later returned to the retaining wall to take pictures, make notes about possible structural weaknesses as well as the overgrown trees, and recommend actions the county can take to correct the problems.

CBS News Commentator **Charles Osgood** once read a funny poem on the air about everybody thinking that somebody else was going to take care of some problem but nobody did. The trouble, Osgood joked, was "It seemed to be a job **anybody** could have done, if **anybody** thought he was supposed to be the one. But since **everybody** recognized that **anybody** could,

everybody took for granted that **somebody** would."

The point is, if you see a problem — whether it's an abandoned car or a pothole, broken play equipment or a burned out streetlight — pick up the telephone and call the relevant government agency, an elected official or your WLCA area representatives to make them aware. Don't assume somebody else will do it! For a current list of WLCA reps, see page 11 of the October *Hotline*. ❖

SENIORS QUALIFY FOR IN-YARD TRASH & RECYCLING PICKUP

Prince George's County residents over age 65 or who have a qualifying medical condition may arrange to have their trash and recycling picked up from next to their house rather than at the curbside.

For more information or to sign up for the program, call the Prince George's County Environmental Resources Department at (301) 952-7630 and ask for the refuse collection inspector. He/she will then arrange to interview you and process the necessary paperwork to enroll you in the program.



If you know someone who would benefit from this service, please let them know of this program. It could be a real lifesaver, particularly in the ice and snow of winter. ❖



CALL 911 FOR ALL CRIMES!

Thanks to the persistence of a Sherwood Avenue resident who has become fed up with a property crime spree on her street, we've learned something new about reporting such problems. If you thought you shouldn't bother 911 operators with complaints of mailbox bashing, car mirror smashing and paint ball trashing, it turns out you're wrong.

Residents of Sherwood Avenue have been experiencing all of these problems for months and had begun to feel increasingly victimized and frustrated at what they felt was the lack of police response. It turns out no one had been calling 911 to report any of the incidents. In some cases, residents attempted to follow the perpetrators; in other cases, they waited a day or two and then called the non-emergency number for the District VI police station in Beltsville, which provides coverage for West Laurel.

The Sherwood Avenue resident contacted **District VI Police Captain Paul Evans** to express her frustrations, and he instructed her and her neighbors to dial 911 to report such problems in the future. In a jurisdiction with spiking homicide rates and other violent crime problems, Captain Evans said too many residents assume the police cannot be bothered by property and other non-violent crimes.

This thinking is incorrect, Captain Evans said. Calling 911 to report such problems guarantees that an officer will respond and that a case number will be assigned to the call for tracking and followup action. If

an arrest is made as a result of the call — either immediately or at a later date — the paper trail generated by a 911 call is particularly useful. Captain Evans explained that residents can and should expect prompt police response to all 911 calls; however, operators must prioritize calls, so officers naturally will be sent to check on reports of violent crime first.



When residents report property and other non-violent crimes to 911 when they occur, it

also helps Captain Evans and other police supervisors decide where they should increase patrols. In the case of Sherwood Avenue, Captain Evans pledged to periodically send a patrol car that might have otherwise bypassed the dead-end street.

For general questions or concerns relating to public safety, call the non-emergency number for the Prince George's County District VI station, (301) 937-0910. The non-emergency number for Montgomery County Police is (301) 279-8000. ❖

STREET & SIDEWALK REPAIRS

As West Laurel gets older, its infrastructure has begun showing its age. Both Prince George's and Montgomery counties perform regularly scheduled maintenance on streets, sidewalks, and curbs and gutters. Both jurisdictions perform additional, unscheduled repairs on an as-needed basis.

On the Prince George's side of West Laurel in particular, drainage problems in some areas have increased in recent years. Flooding in basements, backyards and streets occurs because of increased storm-water runoff associated with the deforestation and soil displacement that comes with new construction.

According to Prince George's County Councilman **Tom Dernoga's** office, in FY '06 the following streets are scheduled for resurfacing, curb and gutter installation or repairs, or sidewalk repairs where tree roots, flooding or other

problems have caused buckling.

Straughn Drive, Windham Road, Sandy Street, Park Hall Drive West, Darwin Street, Plowman Drive and **Wayne Avenue** are scheduled for curb and gutter installation and/or sidewalk repairs. Work on this contract (780-H) is in progress.

Park Hall Drive is getting curbs and gutters following installation of a new underground drainage system. This is being done to alleviate the standing water problem at the intersection of Park Hall Drive and Wayne Avenue. The concrete work is currently in progress; road resurfacing is scheduled for April but could occur sooner if the mild weather continues.

If you have any questions about this work or other street/sidewalk repairs, contact **Alex Hirtle** in Councilman Dernoga's office, (301) 952-5349. ❖

SUPPORT YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION

To all new residents of West Laurel, welcome to our community. Come join our association. Hello once again to all our old members!



Please come to our General meeting on February 16 and bring a neighbor!

An important reminder — it is not too late to pay your yearly Civic Association dues if you had forgotten. Dues are for membership from September 1, 2005 through August 31, 2006.

Your officers and Board of the WLCA are committed to reaching

out to our neighborhood and building an even stronger and more involved community for local issues and the broader issues that can and do affect us all. We care about

street repairs and broken curbs, recycling bins, cable service, home security, gypsy moths, developers' plans, and the like on the local level. We also care about county and state plans for major road building, zoning changes, high traffic-generating developments, and more in the broader picture as they affect West Laurel and the area around us.

At \$10.00 per household, membership in the WLCA costs less than a dollar a month, and you get a lot for that smart investment. Some members have suggested we raise the membership fee to \$15, but if we have enough members at \$10, this will not be necessary. So, please support the WLCA by filling out the membership form below, including your check for \$10 payable to WLCA and mailing it to:

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

You can save a stamp by bringing your membership form to our table at the February 16 General Meeting at the Community Center. ❖

Join Now!

WLCA MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Dues \$10.00* or _____ Additional Donation \$ _____

Comments: _____

Dues: \$10 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 February 16 General Meeting

**covers up to 2 voting members*

THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER OF WEST LAUREL

Hotline – Winter 2006

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

Presorted
Standard
US Postage Paid
Speedy Labels