



MINGLER

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



NORBECK MEADOWS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
NMCA, PO Box 441, Olney MD 20830 www.norbeckmeadows.org

FALL/WINTER 2016
Volume 16, Issue 2

TAKE NOTE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ed Weisel

GREETINGS NORBECK MEADOWS!!!

I like to begin my Mingler reports with notes of thanks and recognition to individuals who have made significant contributions to the life of our community. As has been the case for many years, the fall edition of these notes centers on the intrepid work undertaken by the small group of volunteers who worked so diligently planning and delivering our Community Picnic. I am pleased to report that, despite mean ol' Montgomery County having banned our beer, a good time was had by all, especially the children who devoted many precious hours to climbing around on the bounce house or enjoying the pony rides. The burgers, hot dogs, soft drinks (grrrrr!), and other delicacies were all delicious. I especially want to thank Amy Crawford, our second vice president, for planning and overseeing the event, Andy Crawford for his help in procuring the cooking grills, Jack Meyer and Andy Crawford, our chefs extraordinaire, for the many hours they spent slaving over those grills, Donna Page for her help with the drinks and the registration desk, and Dave Miller who seemed to be wearing himself out helping everywhere and with everything.

Halloween Parade

Monday - Oct 31

Santa's Ride

Monday - Dec 19



Details Inside

Contact Ed Weisel at
nmcaprexy2@comcast.net
with your special event
ideas for
2015-2016

Liability Insurance - The single-event liability insurance that Montgomery County required NMCA to buy to hold its neighborhood picnic in our local neighborhood park ended up costing our association just under \$300. If we were to obtain liability insurance on a more permanent basis, it might be possible for high school and middle school students to earn volunteer community service credit, which public schools require, by becoming involved in projects within the Norbeck Meadows community. Although we have occasionally offered assistance to children of NMCA member families who were working on a community service project (e.g., eagle scout), we have not made any consistent attempt to provide services to middle school or high school students. I shall, in the near future, provide additional information regarding the cost of obtaining insurance, with a view toward developing programs for our teens (even if we have to consider raising our dues a dollar or two per year to cover the costs).

Volunteers Still Urgently Needed - It bears repeating (see my articles in prior Minglers) that volunteers are the lifeblood of organizations such as NMCA. Time after time, it falls to the same few people to shoulder responsibility for planning and executing community events that are enjoyed by all. In a community of 500 homes, this is simply unfair, and one does not have to look very far to find community organizations



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONT.)

like NMCA that have become dormant for want of a few additional individuals who are willing to “chip in” and spend an hour or two a month to help out. At this point in the life of our community, the need for new volunteers to step forward has become acute. Two members of our executive board have announced their intention to leave the board after their current terms expire in June, and other committee assignments are also in need of attention.

Bylaws Changes - Related to the above comments, the job of second vice president in NMCA involves a substantial commitment of work and time. Amy Crawford has suggested an amendment to our bylaws that would provide for two individuals to serve in this office so that its responsibilities can be shared. I believe this suggestion has merit and should be considered for adoption at our winter business meeting. Certain aspects of our budgeting process also need to be updated.

Community Cleanup - Please mark your calendars for Sunday afternoon, October 30, from 2 PM to 4 PM, for our semi-annual community Cashell Road and Norbeck Meadows Park cleanup (rain date is November 6). We provide the trash-grabber-picker-upper tools, work gloves, snazzy orange safety vests, and plastic bags. You provide the enthusiastic participation. This activity has been carefully planned so it will not interfere with Washington Redskins football games. The October 30 game will take place across the pond in the United Kingdom, and kickoff is scheduled for 9:30 AM (our time). Fans will be able to get their Redskins fix with their morning coffee, and then come out in the afternoon to help with road or park clean-up. The following week is the Redskins' by-week.

Trash Collection - Members of our association are reminded that NMCA has a continuing agreement with Potomac Disposal, the trash collection company that has the largest number of clients in our area. Our members, and only our members, enjoy a very substantial discount from prevailing rates for trash collection for as long as they maintain membership in NMCA. The agreement gives us flexibility and options not available to neighborhoods that have county-arranged trash collection, and at a very similar cost. The rates are \$6 per month for once-a-week and \$10 per month for twice-a-week curbside pickup. It's a great deal!

We Live in a “Swale” Community - Unfortunately, the swales are approaching 50 years of age in the older parts of Norbeck Meadows, and they are beginning to show signs of decay and collapse. We have received a number of inquiries from member homeowners regarding the deteriorating state of the drainage pipes, which were installed under our driveways when Norbeck Meadows was originally built. We believe that storm drainage and, therefore, the maintenance of the swales is the county's responsibility, and we shall be raising this issue with Montgomery County officials in the near future. Watch my emails for additional information, and shoot me an email if you think you have a problem in this regard.

NMCA Membership - Please consider renewing your NMCA membership if you haven't done so already. In unity there is strength (and you will more than recover the cost of your \$15 annual dues because of the discounted trash collection from Potomac Disposal). Multi-year memberships are available (up to three years for \$45). A membership form is included in this Mingler and is also available online at our website (www.norbeckmeadows.org).

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dave Miller

GOCA

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) is comprised of delegates from the 20 or so civic associations and homeowner associations in the Olney area. It meets monthly in Olney, usually on the second Tuesday of the month. Meetings, which are open to the public, feature presentations and debates by members, subject matter experts, and local and state representatives. Below, I summarize the results of the past several meetings. For additional information, please visit the GOCA website (www.GOCA.org).

Bus Depot - Montgomery County, which operates 400 buses, needs a new bus depot, and is considering four to five sites, including the Blue Mash Golf Course in Laytonsville. The county may establish two sites if sufficient area is not found for a single site. Part of the decision will involve an assessment of the environmental impact of such a depot. GOCA has requested a 90-day notification of any decision.

Thefts - Lawn mowers and bicycles are being stolen from sheds; to counter this, a little defense is pru-

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT.)

dent. Keep your sheds, garages, cars, and houses locked and report crime by phone (to the police) or via www.crimereports.com.

College Affordability Act - This recently passed act provides matching funds for certain Maryland residents. For additional information, please see <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2016RS/bills/hb/hb1014E.pdf>

Door-to-door home-improvement scams - New legislation to protect homeowners has been enacted.

Scams of incompetents and estates of decedents - New legislation permits legal access to Internet accounts and provides prosecution authority.

Drunk driving - Progress has been made on the enactment of an ignition interlock law, which will require persons convicted of drunk driving to install an ignition interlock device. (Note: this law has since been passed). Data from areas in which such a program has been used show a clear decrease in drink-driving deaths after six months; no such decrease was found when using heavy fines or imprisonment as a deterrent.

Gerrymandering - Gerrymandering is a nationwide problem that makes it hard to vote out incumbents—both parties do it. I proposed that the worst gerrymandering could be prevented by setting a maximum perimeter-to-area ratio for political districts. Presenters responded that gerrymandering needs to be dealt with nationally. Does anyone want to take a few minutes to raise this idea with our senators and representatives?

"Puppy mill" industry - Puppy mills are reportedly a moneymaker for the Amish community, with females bred repeatedly under bad conditions. Maryland has taken steps to regulate puppy mills and their storefront outlets and to ban unregulated sale of puppies in park-

ing lots and fairs. Recommendations made to the public are to deal only with reputable breeders and official animal shelters.

Olney Town Center - Making a concept plan for a multipurpose site for town-sponsored activities will be activated when an appropriate site becomes available. For additional information, visit the Olney Town Center website (www.olneytowncenter.wordpress.com/) or send an email to info.olneytowncenter@gmail.com.

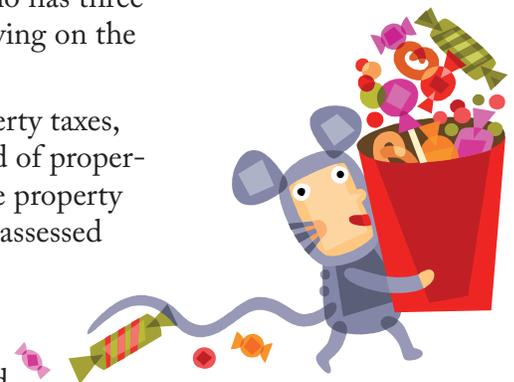
Term limits - Robin Ficker is the primary proponent for term limits; Tom Moore is the primary opponent. Ficker recently submitted a petition to the County Council to put a three-term-limit proposal on the ballot. The signatures are being validated to determine if the petition contains a sufficient number of valid signatures. (Note: the signatures have been validated and the term-limit proposal will be on the November ballot.) Ficker's main point was that opening up one or two places on the County Council in every election would provide an opportunity to vote out entrenched incumbents on the County Council and break the cycle of 9-0 voting for 10% tax increases every year. Mr. Moore's main point was that elections are a better way of dealing with multiple-term incumbents. He noted that elections provide a way for the public to choose who they want on the County Council, while term limits would bar everyone who has three terms of experience from serving on the Council.

Taxes - For purposes of property taxes, Maryland evaluates one-third of properties in the state each year. The property tax is now \$1.03 per \$100 of assessed value—an increase of 3%. A senior property tax deferral program is available for residents who are 65 or older and

have a combined income of \$80,000 or less. A recordation tax is applicable to the sale of a property; some changes have been made to the parameters governing this tax.

Schools - The Montgomery County school budget is \$2.46 billion—about half the county total budget.

Shortcut - Batchellors Forest Road to Georgia Avenue: Due to the absence of a left turn from Batchellors Forest Road onto Georgia Avenue, drivers who wish to turn left from Batchellors Forest to go south on Georgia Avenue are cutting through Olney Manor Regional Park to Emory Lane instead of turning right onto Georgia Avenue and making a U-turn at Emory Lane. The county is considering blocking this shortcut by closing the gate at Batchellors Forest Road. A delay on this decision was requested to determine if the problem is significant.



VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (CONT.)

Olney businesses - Demolition for the planned Chick-fil-A in Olney is scheduled to start immediately, with a planned opening in 2017. Jiffy-Lube is also looking to locate in Olney.

NMCA

Fall weather is a welcome change after the heat of summer--a good time to enjoy the outdoors and take care of some tasks around the house and yard.

Landscaping - NMCA's offer to contribute to the cost of landscaping yards and circles at the end of some of our streets remains in effect. NMCA will contribute 50% of the cost of one or two cherry trees for front yards and 50% of the cost of landscaping the circles, up to a maximum of \$100. The fall is the best time of the year for such projects—the temperature is good and the plants have nearly a year to get established before they have to deal with the heat and drought stress of summer.

Swales and culverts - As Ed tells us in his President's report above, the swales and culverts under our driveways, which are on the county's right of way, are beginning to require some maintenance. Problems include rusted-out flanges and culverts, with partial collapse of culverts and driveways. Also noted was erosion and sedimentation of swales, with water retained in the culverts. Mosquitos, which breed in standing water, do not travel far. Thus, if your swale or culvert breeds mosquitos, it represents a problem for you and your immediate neigh-

bors. In addition, if (or when) we must deal with the Zika virus, these mosquitos will be more than a problem—they will be a public health menace. This fall, NMCA will look into the issue and contact Montgomery County. However, we do not expect a quick fix from the county; homeowners are free to take initiatives themselves.

Fall leaves - Adrian Higgins, in an article in the Washington Post Local Living Section, reported that, for more than 20 years, instead of raking and bagging leaves, the gardeners at Winterthur, the du Pont estate in Wilmington Delaware, have been mulching the leaves on their lawns with mulching mowers. This chops up the leaves in small pieces that fall, hardly noticed, down between the blades of grass, where they progressively become part of the topsoil layer: much easier than raking and bagging and better for the grass. Works best on a grass like tall fescue--just mow once every week or two until the leaves are down. If you don't have a mulching mower, block the outlet chute of your mower with crumpled newspaper or use it as is. Even with lots of trees, mowing the fall leaves instead of raking and bagging works. If you are not convinced, just mow the leaves on half of your yard, rake and bag the leaves on the other half, and compare the results.

Olney area map - The Olney Chamber of Commerce has produced an excellent, free map of the Olney area, from Brookville to the ICC and from Sandy

Spring to Muncaster Road. Visit the Chamber's website (www.olneymd.org) or call 301-774-7117. Or better, stop by the office at 3460 Olney-Laytonsville Road, Suite 211. It's a good opportunity to see what the organization does for Olney.

Calendar tip - Have you ever changed the page on your monthly calendar on your refrigerator a few days late only to find you missed an appointment on day one or two? To prevent this from happening again, display both the current month and next month.

For information on NMCA, please visit its website (www.norbeckmeadows.org).



Treasurer's Report

Jack Meyer

NMCA closed out the 2015/2016 fiscal year with nearly a \$2,500 surplus. This was a result of not spending any of the \$1,300 contingency, and not conducting a number of activities for which we had budgeted. We also ended the year with a bank balance of nearly \$16,000; of this amount, a little over \$8,000 is the accumulation of the \$3 per-member, per-year special assessment we've collected since 2008 and approximately \$2,500 for membership fees collected in advance.



Membership Report

Russell Erb

Thank you to all who have renewed or joined the NMCA during the Fall membership drive. Our membership at the time of this article stands at 314 member households. Your membership dues help in supporting neighborhood activities, including the Annual Picnic in The Park, Ice Cream Social, 4th of July Parade, Halloween Parade, and street-by-street Santa visit.

Members-Only Email List

Russell Erb

If you are an NMCA member, or know of an NMCA member, who has not been receiving regular NMCA email announcements about activities happening in the neighborhood, please contact Ed Weisel (nmcap-rexy2@comcast.net) or Russell Erb (RussErb@hotmail.com) to be included on the distribution list.

NMCA Neighborhood Directory

Russell Erb

The cutoff date to be included in the 2016-2017 NMCA Directory is November 4, 2016. Any members joining or renewing their membership after that date will not be guaranteed inclusion in the 2016-2017 Directory. If you are interested in placing an ad in this year's directory, contact Arlene Sha (301-774-6323). The directory will be published during November, thanks to Arlene Sha and Russell Erb. Copies of this directory will be hand delivered to ALL member households of the NMCA during the first two weeks of December, thanks to Sandra Ames and her distribution volunteers.

NMCA Annual Phone Directory:

We are working on the Norbeck Meadows annual phone directory. If you are interested in placing an ad for your business, please contact our Directory Advertising Coordinator, Arlene Sha (301-774-6323), for additional information.

The deadline for submitting final ads is November 4.

The Directory will be delivered to all NMCA member households by year end.

Phone Directory Advertising Rates

Ad Size	NMCA Members (25% Discount)	Non-Members
Full-page ad	\$75	\$100
Half-page ad	\$37.50	\$50
Quarter-page ad	\$22.50	\$30
Business card-size ad	\$22.50	\$30

Halloween Parade

Amy Crawford

Please join us this year for our annual Halloween parade through the streets of Norbeck Meadows. The parade will start at 6:00 PM. Please watch for signs indicating the starting location. Your civic association is asking everyone to be extra careful driving through our streets; and watch for children who will be out trick-or-treating.



Norbeck Meadows Civic Association Membership Form

Please fill out this form (or submit one online at <http://www.norbeckmeadows.org>) and send it along with your membership dues to NMCA Membership, PO Box 441, Olney, MD 20830 or better yet drop it off at my house (16904 Governors Way) and save the postage. - Thank you, Russell Erb

Member Information:

Household Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Street Address: _____

May we list your name and address in the annual NMCA Directory? **Yes / No**

Phone #'s (if any) to be listed in Directory: _____

Adults: First & Last Names (E-mail addresses optional*):

(*E-mail addresses will **NOT** be published or listed and will ONLY be used for official NMCA notifications)

Children: Names and ages: _____

Teen Services to be listed in the NMCA Directory: (Mother's Helper, Baby Sitting, Pet Sitting, House Sitting, Lawn Mowing, Yard Work, Snow Shoveling, Heavy Lifting, Odd Jobs, etc.)

Name: _____ Jobs of Interest: _____

Name: _____ Jobs of Interest: _____

Name: _____ Jobs of Interest: _____

Pets to be listed in the NMCA Directory: (Name, Type, Breed, and Color)

Dues: Membership dues are **currently \$15/year** (September 1st - August 31st)

You may choose to pay for: _____ one year (\$15) _____ two years (\$30) _____ three years (\$45)

Comments: The NMCA is you, the members of our community, so your input (ideas and participation) is important for NMCA to work. Please list any suggestions and if you would like to volunteer, just let us know.

HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS

Trick-or-Treaters

- Carry a flashlight. • Walk, don't run. • Walk on the side of road facing traffic. • Obey traffic signals.
- Stay in familiar neighborhoods. • Don't cut across yards or driveways.
- Wear a watch you can read in the dark. • Make sure costumes don't drag on the ground.
- Shoes should fit (even if they don't go with your costume). • Avoid wearing masks between houses.
- Carry only flexible knives, swords or other props. • Approach only houses that are lit.
- (If no sidewalk) walk on the left side of the road facing traffic.
- Wear clothing with reflective markings or tape. • Stay away from and don't pet animals you don't know.

Parents

- Make your children eat dinner before setting out. • Children should carry cell phones so they can call home.
- If your children go on their own, be sure they wear watches, preferably ones that can be read in the dark.
- If you buy a costume, look for ones made of flame-retardant material.
- Look at each candy wrapping carefully and toss out anything that looks suspect.

Advertisements

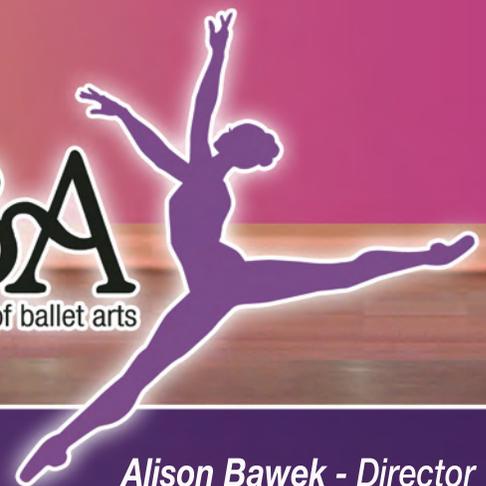
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