



NORTHWOOD NEWS

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How to Rent North Four Corners Recreation Center for Your Events

By Carole Barth

For about five decades the recreation center in North Four Corners Park has been the site of scout meetings, "Sweet 16" parties, language classes, wakes, anniversary parties, and countless neighborhood meetings. Its iconic style (featuring unsmoothed logs

and local mica-rich stone) brings to mind summer camp and scout jamborees.

I think fondly of the time we held a potluck Yule party to thank the AmeriCorps kids for their hard work rebuilding the Rachel Carson Trail along Northwest Branch. I remember the searing heat one summer when over 100 residents packed the then un-air-conditioned center to demand meaningful participation in planning restoration projects along the branch. I treasure the snapshot of Marion Lane and I making friends with a Park Police draft horse at National Night Out. I feel the presence of dear friends that have moved away or passed on, and an echo of those who came before me and made memories here every time I see the building.

So, I would like to encourage you to make your own memories at the rec center. You can rent the building for four hours at a cost of \$76 during the week or \$152 on weekends. Additional hours cost \$19 per hour for weekdays or \$38

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Next Meeting on 15 October

Due to Yom Kippur, the Jewish High Holy Day, occurring on the evening of the regularly scheduled NFCCA meeting (8 October), President Carole Barth has succeeded in rescheduling the use of the Rec Center to the following week.

Therefore, the next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on **Wednesday, 15 October 2008**, at 7:30 p.m. at the North Four Corners Rec Center. The Rec Center is located at the end of Southwood Road, just off Edgewood Drive.

Items on the agenda include election of a new Board of Directors.

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote.

Annual dues (October to September) are \$10 per household and may be paid at any meeting. You also may mail your dues to current NFCCA Treasurer Linda Perlman at 1203 Caddington Avenue in the envelope included in this issue. ■

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall is officially here. The black gum leaves are starting to turn scarlet, asters and goldenrod are in bloom, and the fresh cider season has begun. It's a good time to consider the year's "harvest" for our Association.

We met our membership target for the year, with 160 paid members. Still, that is only 10.7 percent of the households in Northwood/Four Corners/Forest Knolls. I would like to see that doubled in FY2009. Please use the envelope enclosed in this newsletter to renew your membership for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. It's still a bargain at only \$10 per household.

Remember, only active members are allowed to vote at Association meetings. For you competitive types, Timberwood Avenue led the pack in 2008 with a whopping 40 percent of households signing up as active members. Can your street beat that?

Fall is also election season, and the first order of business at the October meeting is to elect a new board. The Board meets five times a year (September, November, January, March, and May). At these meetings we discuss any issues we expect to come up at the next members' meeting and plan articles for the upcoming newsletter.

In general, we look to board members to contribute occasional articles to the newsletter and help with association events and activities. Often Board members chose to focus on a particular issue or project. Of course, you don't have to be on the board to write articles or help with events and activities, so sometimes board members help by recruiting volunteers. We are all volunteers, so it's understood that we do what we can in the context of very full lives.

In addition, the officers have the following duties:

- The President serves as the point of contact for the community, receiving official notices from a variety of agencies. The President usually conducts NFCCA meetings and often represents the Association by testifying at hearings or otherwise communicating NFCCA's positions.
- The Vice President steps in if the President is unavailable.
- The Treasurer manages the accounts, keeps track of the memberships, and writes the checks.
- The Secretary checks for a quorum (if we're voting on any resolutions) and records any proposed resolutions and votes.

Please consider joining the Board; we do have open positions. Contact Mark Weingart (301.593.5702) if you're willing to serve. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions. In the end, the civic association is really just neighbors getting together to protect and improve our community. It's a pretty simple idea, yet it can be very powerful.

—Carole Ann Barth

Parents Seek Babysitters

The Northwood-Four Corners Baby Network is updating its list of babysitters. Any teen interested in babysitting in the neighborhood should Contact Alexandra Travers, 301.593.1798, alexandra_travers@hotmail.com. Two references are required. Northwood Parents List Serve members may request a copy of the list. To join, send an email to northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoo.com. ■

NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,489 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

The *Northwood News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

Editor

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Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

New County Recycling Rules—No More Checking Necks or Numbers

By *Jacquie Bokow*

Montgomery County has greatly expanded its curbside recycling program for plastics. Instead of accepting only plastic bottles with a narrow neck, Montgomery County residents can now recycle plastic bottles, containers, and lids. There's no need to check for the neck or the number! Recycling is the law in MoCo, which has a goal to recycle 50 percent of all waste generated in the County.

Do Recycle

- Plastic bottles such as milk, juice, water, syrup, vegetable oil, salad dressing, detergent, and shampoo/conditioner bottles
- Plastic food-grade tubs and lids such as margarine/butter tubs, cottage cheese, yogurt, mayonnaise, dairy topping, peanut butter, and salad containers
- Plastic pails/buckets such as ice cream, detergent, pet food and kitty litter containers
- Plastic flower pots
- Plastic beverage cups

Don't Recycle

- Any plastic bottle or container that held hazardous automotive or garden products such as motor oil, anti-freeze and pesticides
- Plastic wrap and bags
- Polystyrene and Styrofoam products

The Rules

- Labels and plastic rings around the neck of the bottles are okay.

- Empty the containers.
- Rinse. The less contamination the better.
- Place plastic containers (and lids) in your blue bin.

The County also provides scheduled curbside collection of large scrap metal items such as appliances, metal filing cabinets, metal doors, lawn mowers, or grills. To schedule a scrap metal pickup, contact the Div. of Solid Waste Services, 240.777.6410 or www.montgomerycountymd.gov/scrapmetal by 11:00 a.m. the day before your regular recycling collection day. ■

New Board To Be Elected

The terms of the current NFCCA Board expire with the October meeting. Several officers have agreed to serve again, but several replacements will be needed.

Maureen Carrington has agreed to take on the position of Secretary, which has been vacant for the past year. Mark Weingart also is stepping down as Vice President.

If you would like to consider running for the 2008-2009 NFCCA Board of Directors, please contact Mark Weingart, 301.593.5702, markweingart@yahoo.com, to have your name added to the ballot. If you have questions about serving, feel free to contact any of the Board members listed at right. ■

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association meets five times a year, in October, December, February, April, and June. Current officers for 2007-2008 are:

President

Carole Barth
10602 Lockridge Drive
301.593.7863
cbarth@mindspring.com

Vice President

Mark Weingart
309 Timberwood Avenue
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Treasurer

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Vacant

At Large

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Black Squirrels Are Escaped Canadians From Zoo

By *Jacquie Bokow*

Ever notice how many black squirrels there are in our neighborhood? In case you missed the explanation in *The Washington Post*, staff writer David Fahrenthold wrote that 18 Canadian squirrels were released at the National Zoo during the presidency of Theodore Roosevelt. Unlike the native gray squirrels you still see around, the released Canadians have glossy black coats and have spread out from Washington, D.C., at least 30 miles in each direction.

Scientists say it's "a real-life example of natural selection at work," writes Fahrenthold. The black critters are just a color variation



of the common gray squirrel—called melanistic, meaning "dark-pigmented"—and *not* a different species.

The Smithsonian archives mention that the zoo got black squirrels from the Canadian Department of Crown Lands in Ontario in both 1902 and 1906. There's no record of exactly why they were brought to D.C., or even

why they were released, although a zoo spokeswoman said the best guess is that "they were trying to restore the local population of gray squirrels, which had been decimated through hunting," according to the article.

Some scientists believe the black squirrels' dark coats allow them to retain heat from sunlight in winter, allowing them to survive more easily than the lighter common gray squirrels as they wouldn't need as much food to stay warm. ■

To join the NFCCA List Serve, send an email to nfcca-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Montgomery Co. Will Recycle Your Old Electronics

Montgomery County is now accepting electronic items for recycling. The program for electronics is open to all Montgomery County residents and businesses.

A Community Drop-Off Event will be held Sunday, 19 October 2008, at Montgomery Blair High School from Noon to 4:00 p.m.

All collected items are recycled. Accepted items include:

- small electronic appliances
- calculators
- camcorders
- CDs and floppy disks
- CD players
- cell phones
- computers and computer-

- related products
- consumer electronics
- copiers
- cords and cables (including chargers)
- digital cameras
- electronic typewriters
- fax machines
- microwave ovens
- personal digital assistant equipment
- printers
- projection equipment
- scanners
- telephones
- small electronic toys
- televisions
- VCRs

For more details on MoCo electronics recycling, with location maps, visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hazardouswaste. ■

How to Rent the NFC Rec Center

(continued from page 1) on weekends. Here's how to do it:

1. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/5y03zu> and select "North Four Corners Park" from the park list. Enter the date(s) you are interested in and press the "search" button.

2. Press the tiny "availability" button. Assuming the day you are interested in is not fully booked, click on the day to see what hours are available. Check the block of time you want to reserve and add it to your cart. Hopefully you will get a response telling you that your payment has been received.

3. Plan a visit to the Parks permit office (9500 Brunett Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901) well before your event to pick up your permit. As the website says, "reservations can only be finalized with the assistance of the Park Permit staff." This means that your online reservation and payment is

no guarantee that you have actually made a reservation. (Remember the Seinfeld line, "You know how to take the reservation, but not how to hold the reservation.") Your reservation is not official until someone downloads it from the computer and enters it into the system by hand. This usually takes several days and, in the meantime, someone else could reserve your slot. (This is also probably why double-booking is a recurring problem.)

4. You will need to plan your visit(s) because the permit office is not open evenings or weekends. Even when they are supposed to be open (8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.), it is not uncommon to find the office empty. Bring a book and be prepared to wait.

5. Finally, when you get your permit, double-check everything. Over the years I have been presented permits with the wrong dates, times, and even places. ■



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A Personal Look Back: Democrats for Agnew

By David L. Perlman

The Northwood-Four Corners area—which makes up most of Precinct 13-11—has voted strongly Democratic in election after election. The one big break in the political pattern was in 1966, when most of us voted for the Republican candidate for governor.

Our votes helped Spiro Agnew to a close win over Democrat George Mahoney and came close to changing the course of America's political history.

First, a bit of background. In a crowded field of eight candidates for the Democratic nomination, our precinct had strongly supported liberal two-term congressman Carlton Sickles. Statewide, though, Mahoney won with 31 percent of the vote, very narrowly edging out Sickles.

Mahoney, a Baltimore contractor who six times had been an unsuccessful candidate for governor or senator, ran a one-issue racist campaign of opposition to laws prohibiting racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. Mahoney's campaign slogan: "Your Home is Your Castle; Protect It."

Agnew, then considered a political moderate, was the county executive of Republican-leaning Baltimore county but was little known in our part of the state. Dismayed at the primary outcome, the precinct Democratic committee refused to endorse Mahoney. With the encouragement of

Precinct Chair Ken Young, a "Democrats for Agnew" Committee was quickly formed. My wife, Laura Perlman, and our Caddington Avenue neighbor, Bernard Fell, were co-chairs.

Thanks to the crossover voting pattern, Agnew carried our precinct and narrowly won statewide.

Two years later, he was Richard Nixon's surprise pick as his vice presidential run-



Spiro T. Agnew, former governor of Maryland, U.S. Vice President, and tax evader.

ning mate. "Spiro who?" delegates asked about the little-known choice. But Agnew had been a supporter of Nixon's rival, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, and his selection was intended to help unite the party.

Almost overnight, Agnew changed into a Republican pit bull. He savagely attacked his critics in the media as an "unelected elite" out of touch with the American people and eventually be-

came something of a laughing stock. If Agnew had remained in office, it is likely that Congress would have been reluctant to elevate him to the presidency by impeaching Nixon. The Precinct 13-11 vote for governor would have helped change history.

Early in the Nixon-Agnew second term, however, the Vice President was engulfed in a federal investigation that led to criminal charges of bribery and large-scale tax evasion, from the time he was a county executive through his years as vice president.

The Watergate scandal was starting to unravel, leading to a nightmare scenario of the possible impeachment of both the President and Vice President of the United States.

But Nixon could no longer count on Agnew as a political safety net. The Vice President's plea bargain allowed him to escape jail by paying a fine for tax evasion and promising to resign his office. Nixon made the safe choice of popular House Republican Leader Gerald Ford as the new Vice President. The Watergate scandal deepened, but Agnew was no longer around to protect Nixon from being forced out of office.

So, in the end, the votes of Precinct 13-11 didn't really change history. But they came close.

[David L. Perlman is the father of NFCCA Treasurer Linda Perlman.] ■

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First NFCCA-Sponsored Dog Show, 'Pitting of the Pooches,' to be Fun Event on Saturday, 25 October

NFCCA will sponsor its first-ever dog show on Saturday, 25 October 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The "Pitting of the Pooches" will be held in Rachel Carson Meadow adjacent the Rec Center at 211 Southwood Avenue (off Edgewood Avenue).

Here is the proposed schedule for the event:

■ 10:00–11:00, Sign Up. Owners can add their pet's name to the list for each event they wish to enter. Each owner and pet will be called into the "ring" when it's their turn. There are no restrictions on the number of events individual pets may enter.

■ 10:15–10:30, Best Kisser. Owners willing to have their dogs give them kisses line up with their dogs and the judge watches as each owner is kissed by his/her dog. Most enthusiastic kisser wins. There may be second and third prizes, too.

■ 10:30–11:00, Best Junior Dog Handler. Kids 12 and under walk their dogs around the ring on a leash and, at the judge's command, tell their dogs to sit, reverse direction, speed up, and slow down. The winner is the child who demonstrates teamwork with his or her dog and shows promise as a future responsible pet owner. First, second, and third place prizes will be awarded.

■ 11:00–11:15, Best Singer. Owners whose dogs can make interesting vocalizations take their turn demon-

strating for the judges. The crowd can influence the vote by applause.

■ 11:20–11:45, Best Butt. Participants lead their dogs around the ring once and stop. Each participant will be asked to walk the dog away from the judge into the center of the ring so that the judge can check out the dog's rear. Multiple judges help to mitigate differences in dog taste. Possible first, second, and third place prizes.

■ 11:50–12:20, Best Trick. Each participant demonstrates a trick. The panel of judges may give first, second, and third place prizes.

■ 12:20–12:30, Dog-Owner Look-Alike Contest. In this event there is only one winner, the person who looks most like his/her dog (or vice-versa).

■ 12:30–1:00, Best Manners. A judge will ask each participant to tell his/her dog to sit, take a treat nicely, and be petted by the judge. Points are taken off for jumping up on the judge or exhibiting unfriendly or aggressive behavior. All dogs receiving a certain number of points will win a prize.

■ 1:00–2:00, Best-In-Show. All dogs that have won first place in any of the other classes compete for best all-around dog. The competitors should walk nicely

around the ring with their humans, be well-groomed, and display a good personality.

All entrants will receive a bag of doggie treats; winners will get doggie toys and their names (and perhaps their photos) in the *Northwood News*.

NFCCA Board Member Ted Daniels has agreed to emcee the event, but judges with a good sense of humor



Emily and Alycia Levy (with neighbor Nancy, center) believe their dog, Chili, would win as "Cutest Pooch."

are needed. Potential judges may not enter a dog in the competition.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to help set up or who would like to enquire about selling beverages and food during the event (preference given to local scout troops or other nonprofit organizations) should contact Laura Hussey, 301.592.0646, laura_hussey@mindspring.com. ■

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307 Belton Rd	\$360,000	Rambler	3	2	0
1016 Chiswell Ln	\$389,000	Colonial	7	3	1
901 Caddington Ave	\$410,000	Split Level	4	2	1
10306 Colesville Rd	\$459,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0
1108 Chiswell Ln	\$474,900	Split Level	4	2	1
1004 Chiswell Ln	\$459,954	Split Level	4	2	1
10619 Glenwild Rd	\$459,000	Rambler	4	2	1
208 Hannes St	\$374,900	Rambler	3	2	0
423 Kerwin Rd	\$299,000	Rambler	4	2	0
405 Kerwin Rd	\$350,000	Rambler	3	2	0
501 Kerwin Rd	\$440,000	Rambler	4	2	0
409 Kerwin Rd	\$364,900	Rambler	3	2	0
10915 Lombardy Rd	\$369,000	Rambler	5	2	0
11007 Lombardy Rd	\$305,000	Rambler	4	2	0
304 Ladson Rd	\$345,900	Rambler	4	3	0
310 Ladson Rd	\$365,000	Rambler	2	1	1
311 Ladson Rd	\$310,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0
904 Loxford Ter	\$399,000	Split Level	4	2	1
1191 Loxford Ter	\$390,500	Split Level	4	1	1
907 Loxford Ter	\$379,500	Colonial	3	3	1
825 Loxford Ter	\$424,900	Split Foyer	4	3	0
817 Malta Ln	\$389,900	Split Level	4	2	1
812 Malta Ln	\$379,900	Split Level	6	1	1
110 Southwood Ave	\$344,500	Colonial	3	1	1
112 Southwood Ave	\$429,900	Rambler	4	2	0
10212 Sutherland Rd	\$649,000	Colonial	4	3	0
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Revisiting the Question of Latino Inclusion

By Cait James

In the last edition of the *Northwood News*, I wrote a piece raising the question of whether the Northwood Four Corners Civic Association (NFCCA) could be more inclusive. I pointed out that, in my limited experience with the civic association, it had struck me that the membership of the association did not seem as diverse as the people who make up the neighborhood. I raised the idea of trying to attract a more diverse membership. Since one of the largest racial/cultural groups in this neighborhood is Latino, I pointed out that one possible means to becoming more inclusive would be to publish the neighborhood newsletter in both English and Spanish or have simultaneous translation to Spanish at NFCCA meetings. I published my phone number and email address in hopes of getting some sense of whether there was any interest in the neighborhood in such ideas.

I did get some responses—exactly four—and all expressed the same point of view. [Responses received by the editor and president appear in boxes on this page and next.] Those who responded were civil but very opposed to the idea of making the NFCCA bilingual. These four people believe that bilingualism is not a desirable goal for our civic association because they feel that using two languages would discourage those with limited English from learning the

language. Some said they believe that some immigrants choose not to learn English and isolate themselves by choosing not to assimilate, which makes it difficult for them to get ahead. They believe that the NFCCA would be enabling this problem if it became bilingual.

When I received these messages (by email and phone) I simply noted the opinions but did not respond. I truly wanted to hear how people felt about the ideas in

One Response

Transcript of a message left on the editor's answering machine on 7 June 2008:

Hi. I'm calling ... um ... live in the area, got the *Northwood News*, was *horrified* that you had put an article in here in *Spanish*. With all the problems with Latinos—the shooting up at Takoma Park, two of them, two people dead, all the illegals and all the problems with them devastating our system here and our way of life—and you put an article in here in *Spanish*? When English is the official language? *No* documents should be in Spanish. So, if I find another one in this paper, I don't want to receive it and I would like ... I will be asking for my dues back from the Association. Thank you.

[The caller did not identify herself. See next page for another response via email.]

my article. However, the truth of the matter is, I felt saddened by these responses. I felt saddened by the lack of understanding of the situation of many immigrants expressed by these views. I felt saddened by a lack of willingness to try something different. I felt saddened that I did not hear from anyone who is supportive.

What particularly concerned me was the conception expressed by the people who contacted me that most people with limited English “choose” not to learn English. In my experience as a teacher of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), there are many immigrants who are working so hard (in many cases at more than one job while trying to raise a family) that they do not have very much time for study. And then there are some who do carve out significant amounts of time to study the language but for whom learning a new language does not come easily and who still struggle to read a simple flyer or fill out a form after years of part-time study. Such folks, I imagine, might be grateful when a neighbor or a neighborhood organization reaches out to them in their own language, the language in which they can function fluently.

In addition, my personal inspiration is also celebration. I firmly believe that bi- or multilingualism is an asset to individuals, to organizations, or to nations and can be used
(continued on page 12)

Solar Collective Moving Forward

By Jim Zepp

Over the Summer, the Silver Spring Solar Collective was formed to encourage the purchase of solar residential water heating and electrical power systems by seeking a volume discount from installers and benefitting from the technical knowledge and experience of other members. It has over 40 members so far, who live in Four Corners, Takoma Park, Silver Spring, Hyattsville, Bowie, and Germantown. You can find current information and also join by signing up at solarcollective.ning.com. Participants are asked to send a check (made out to NFCCA) for \$20 to Jim Zepp, 10602 Lockridge Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20901 to defray operating expenses for the group.

One of the collective's first tasks was to survey the members' needs and priorities since some members are just beginning to explore the solar concept while others are ready to install a system. To this end, a questionnaire was distributed. So far, most members are interested in solar electricity (photovoltaics) but there are also members interested in solar thermal (hot water.)

Next, it's important to figure out each individual's current energy situation and whether or not they have enough sun exposure. Members can sign up for a home energy audit conducted by Collective member and Northwood community resident Reuven Walder (info@energyefficienthome.net) at a special discount. A home energy audit evaluates the en-

ergy performance of the whole home as one system. Analyzing heating and cooling systems, water heater, insulation, air leakage, and windows reveals how to significantly reduce energy consumption, address health and safety issues and improve comfort. The audit report shows the homeowner which investments (e.g., new windows, adding insulation) will have the greatest impact for the least money.

To determine if they have enough sun for photovoltaics to be practical, members can have a solar pathfinder calculation for a nominal fee. Collective member and Northwood community resident Jacquie Bokow (jcbokow@verizon.net) is providing this service for other members at a reduced fee.

To receive future announcements about events, join the solar collective listserv by sending an email to solar-collective@googlegroups.com. ■

Response #2

The operative word concerning the proposal to also publish the *Northwood News* in Spanish should be *assimilation* instead of *inclusion*. Those who hesitate to assimilate isolate themselves from the community. If people want information in a language other than English, then they should bear the cost of translation and publication. Taxes and product costs are higher because of such reverse thinking.

—Email to the NFCCA
President from Susi Slocum,
17 June 2008.

Inclusion or Not

(continued from page 11)
to celebrate multiculturalism. In my personal vision, I would love to be a part of a civic association that celebrates the diversity of its members by reaching out in more than one language. I would love to be a part of a civic organization that is a place where I could meet folks that I might not normally cross paths with in my daily routine with, but with whom I might soon find things in common because of the shared experience of where we live. (I realize that many in the neighborhood have such opportunities through activities at Forest Knolls Elementary School. However, there are many others here whose children do not attend Forest Knolls, whose children have moved on from Forest Knolls, or who do not have children who do not have such a meeting place.)

I have talked in-person to a number of people who are sympathetic to the idea of making the organization more inclusive. Clearly bilingualism is not the only means to this end, and certainly it is not the way this community is interested in going at this point. I love the potential of a community organization like ours, and I hope we can find ways to grow and change as the neighborhood does. I'm sure there are many out there with better ideas than the ones I have put forth so far. I hope the idea of becoming more inclusive will not die, and I am happy to continue the conversation with anyone who is interested. ■



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Northwood Closed Transactions JAN 1- SEP 24, 2008

Close Date	Address	List Price	Close Price	Subsidy	BR	FB	HB	Lot SqFt	Days on Market (DOM)
15-Sep-08	11201 LOMBARDY RD	\$335,000	\$330,000	\$15,000	3	2	0	6,965	364
15-Sep-08	512 ROYALTON RD	\$329,900	\$320,000	\$5,000	3	1	1	8,067	26
10-Sep-08	10204 LORAIN AVE	\$409,000	\$400,000	\$9,572	3	1	1	7,952	63
29-Aug-08	1106 CADDINGTON AVE	\$369,900	\$376,400	\$14,108	4	2	0	1,150	157
30-Jul-08	10304 LORAIN AVE	\$425,000	\$400,000	\$14,000	2	1	2	9,171	18
30-Jul-08	10427 EDGEWOOD AVE	\$409,900	\$405,000	\$	4	2	1	8,253	87
28-Jul-08	10703 LOMBARDY RD	\$349,000	\$340,000	\$10,200	3	1	1	5,938	339
11-Jul-08	10707 ORDWAY DR	\$349,000	\$346,000	\$	2	1	0	6,050	12
25-Jun-08	313 DENNIS AVE	\$469,990	\$470,000	\$	3	1	1	5,636	10
24-Jun-08	413 KERWIN RD	\$365,000	\$355,000	\$	4	2	0	7,283	68
19-Jun-08	10906 HANNES CT	\$375,000	\$374,000	\$24,000	4	3	0	7,374	33
13-Jun-08	1006 PLAYFORD LN	\$474,900	\$454,900	\$	4	2	1	7,954	64
30-May-08	10705 LOMBARDY RD	\$359,900	\$337,000	\$13,480	3	1	1	5,982	136
29-May-08	1304 CADDINGTON AVE	\$409,000	\$400,000	\$5,500	4	2	1	7,116	24
27-May-08	10625 EASTWOOD AVE	\$349,900	\$335,000	\$10,000	4	1	0	6,473	56
19-May-08	924 MALTA LN	\$419,000	\$390,000	\$11,700	5	2	1	9,689	193
9-May-08	201 UNIVERSITY BLVD W	\$417,000	\$417,000	\$	7	3	0	9,524	145
30-Apr-08	407 HANNES ST	\$400,000	\$390,000	\$1,400	4	2	1	6,157	14
15-Apr-08	405 ROYALTON RD	\$359,000	\$340,000	\$2,000	3	2	0	6,562	206
26-Mar-08	10611 EASTWOOD AVE	\$459,000	\$449,000	\$	4	3	0	6,508	169
11-Mar-08	105 BELTON RD	\$449,900	\$415,000	\$	3	3	0	6,900	47
10-Mar-08	905 MALTA LN	\$355,000	\$355,000	\$	3	2	1	7,200	129
8-Feb-08	501 ROYALTON RD	\$399,900	\$395,000	\$800	3	2	0	7,493	92
25-Jan-08	1117 CADDINGTON AVE	\$379,900	\$375,000	\$10,344	4	1	1	9,523	19
24-Jan-08	216 THISTLE CT	\$399,875	\$390,000	\$5,000	4	2	0	14,844	253
14-Jan-08	1005 CHISWELL LN	\$349,900	\$316,000	\$6,000	3	2	1	6,054	99

Living the Good Life (Part 1): More Efficiently

By Patricia Stephenson

A few weeks ago I attended the first planning meeting of the Northwood Solar Co-op. I am a Takoma Park resident but I had heard about the Northwood Group through the Save Our Sky Corn Co-op, a cooperative that uses corn and other biomass for home heating purposes. One of the key issues discussed at the meeting was the need to reduce electrical consumption through improvements in efficiency in order to correctly “size” the solar system needed and thus reduce the length of time it takes for the system to pay for itself (the payback time).

Several years ago, when I was trying to make the switch to renewable energy, I benefited from some good advice from solar contractors. Before installing solar panels, any reputable contractor will advise you to improve your energy efficiency first. When you do this, you stand a fighting chance at becoming energy independent (or nearly so).

My house has been my laboratory and my electric and gas bills the “data” I needed to determine what works. I was never a good candidate for solar because my 90-year-old, four-bedroom house is situated under huge American beech and oak trees. Nevertheless, I was able to reduce my average electrical use by 66 percent from baseline. I currently use about 250 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in spring, fall, and winter

and 500 kWh during the hottest summer months when I need the air conditioner. That translates to about \$35 a month for the cooler months and \$80 a month for three summer months, and that is with a higher rate for 100 percent wind power purchased through the Montgomery County Clean Rewards Program. In this article, I will summarize the lessons I have learned from my own (ongoing) journey to reduce my carbon footprint and my electric bill. My favorite online websites for gadgetry and energy efficient products are provided at the end of the article.

Lighting Options

One hears a lot of talk about lighting, perhaps because it is the easiest place to start. Your incandescent bulbs and halogen lamps need to find their way to Value Village. Anything that burns hot to the touch is enormously inefficient. Replace regular light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) or bulbs made of light emitting diodes (LEDs). They now make these bulbs to fit any fixture, even recessed (can) lights, chandeliers, track lights, lights for art and china cabinets, spotlights for outdoor security lights, refrigerator lights, and under the kitchen cabinet lights. Strosnider’s and Home Depot carry a range of sizes and shapes of CFLs and models that work with dimmer switches. LEDs are more difficult to find but can

be purchased online.

You can also purchase powerful solar landscaping and security lighting online. Home Depot also carries a model of security light with a motion sensor. For outdoor areas that get little sun, consider a battery-operated, high-intensity light with a motion sensor. I have several of these positioned in places where I need a bit of task lighting for short periods and where I need extra security lighting.

Obviously, turn off lights in rooms when not in use. If you cannot manage this, consider installing motion sensors that switch off the light after a certain period of time when no movement in the room is detected. Some motion sensors screw into the fixture and the bulb directly into the sensor.

Reduce Your Phantom Loads

“Phantom loads” are those household appliances that burn electricity even when they are off. These include the usual suspects: televisions, stereo equipment, and computers, printers, and other peripherals. They also include smoke detectors, doorbells, microwave ovens, MP3 players, cell phone chargers, power tool chargers, cordless telephones, security systems, and alarm clocks. Anything with a black box adaptor plug (such as a cell phone charger) or a little indicator light is running up your electric bill even when not in use. Unfortu-

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Living the Good Life: Efficiently

(continued from page 14)
nately, we Americans have been convinced by the companies that want us to buy all these gadgets that the amount of energy use is infinitesimal. However, when you add it all up, the power they use is significant. Add it up across all households in Silver Spring—you get my drift.

Here is what you do:

- According to the building code in Maryland, three of your smoke detectors must be hard-wired. Leave them alone. The others can run off batteries.

- Get yourself some powerstrips and plug home entertainment and home office equipment into them. Configure in such a way so that you can conveniently switch them off at the wall when not in use. Do the same with your rechargeable power tools. Some people like to plug powerstrips into timers so they avoid having to remember to do this. The timer is programmed to automatically switch equipment off and on. I highly recommend this for kids' rooms (you know what I mean; avoid the battle if you can).

- Switch to battery-operated or wind-up alarm clocks and wall clocks.

- Turn off the clock on the microwave. Many authors will advise you use a powerstrip for the microwave instead. *Do not* do this unless you have the appropriate gauge or you will burn up the machine (or your house). Most modern microwaves

are programmable and give you the option to shut off the clock.

- Switch off the central air conditioning unit at the end of the season. Do not let it run all winter (look for the little indicator light and on-off switch). Likewise, switch off the boiler in summer when not in use.

- Consider switching to a battery-operated or mechanical doorbell.



- Consider going back to a regular telephone rather than a cordless model.

- Unplug cell phone chargers and chargers for iPods, PDAs, and other gadgets when not in use.

Reduce the Juice

One of the best ways to improve energy efficiency is to switch out old appliances with Energy Star models. Not all Energy Star appliances are as efficient as others, so do a little research before you buy. All rated appliances are listed on the Energy Star website for comparison purposes. Top-of-the-line brands are not always the best for efficiency in

electricity and water use. For those of you (like me) who cannot stand waste, if your appliance is still in good condition you may donate it to Habitat for Humanity. If this is not an option, remember that the steel will be recycled after the company hauls it away.

Hot water heater tanks need to be wrapped in an insulating blanket. These are available at Strosnider's and Home Depot for about \$10. Turn the electricity or gas down to the lowest setting that allows your family members to have a comfortable shower *without* having to turn on the cold water. Usually 120 degrees works for most people and it is much safer if you have little kids in the house.

Install a programmable thermostat for your central AC and heat. They cost about \$50 or less and are quite easy to install. Set the AC to 85 degrees when people are out during the day. About a half hour before the evening hour when people start returning from work or school, set the thermostat for 78 degrees to return the house to a comfortable temperature. During the winter, set the thermostat for 68 degrees when people are home and 50 degrees when they are out. If you have animals, you might want to keep the house a little warmer. If you have a corn or wood stove for heat, you probably turn the boiler or furnace down much lower.

For those who like to really ratchet down electrical
(continued on page 17)

A Humorous Response

How to Save the Rec Center

By *Fiona Morrissey*

The Rec Center is a disgrace to the community. By not generating enough hard cash, it has become a heavy burden on the county. So Parks and Planning have graciously given it three years to start making money, otherwise the Center is toast. For those among us who feel that this is unfair, I say shame on you for doubting the wisdom and experience of Parks and Planning.

Is it any wonder the Center is struggling to get by? Ballet lessons, civic meetings, birthday parties, and—God help us—church groups. Folks, we need to raise the stakes here. To turn an em-

barrassment into a profitable enterprise, the time has come to implement a more aggressive marketing strategy. Here are some ideas that just might do the trick.

Gang Appreciation Night

Invite leaders from various gangs to speak on the benefits of joining up. Membership forms will be by the door.

Start A Distillery

Hit the liquor stores with Rachel Carson Organic Whiskey.

Bare-Knuckle Boxing

Revive this noble sport! Enjoy the spectacle of broken

noses, torn and bleeding flesh, knockouts, and flying teeth.

Dog-Fighting

If your pooches are too timid, round up the local strays and let the fur fly.

Burlesque Night

Calling all hot-blooded males! Watch scantily clad young ladies sing and dance. (The kitchen area will be screened off for more intimate pursuits.) Officials from Parks and Planning get free passes *and* a bottle of Rachel Carson Whiskey.

If you have any other ideas on how to save the Rec Center, please call Fiona at 301.593.4026. ■

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Living the Good Life Efficiently

(continued from page 15)
use, consider going back to non-electrical lighting and appliances. Lehman's hardware—which caters to the Amish community—sells non-electrical floor sweepers, food choppers and processors, cake beaters, waffle irons, oil lamps, clotheslines, and a host of other products that can help you live free of fossil fuel. I realize this isn't everyone's cup of tea, but do consider the added benefits of energy independence, especially in power outages.

Seal the Envelope

Most people are not concerned about little air leaks. But some houses have so many tiny air leaks that they add up to the equivalent of leaving a window or door open to the outside. You need to seal the conditioned space of your home from the unconditioned space to reduce air leakage. Get a case of clear silicon or caulk and plug up any obvious holes where plumbing and electrical lines come into the house. Seal around windows, doors, and baseboards. Seal around duct work and use foam insulation gaskets (available at Home Depot) behind electrical switchplates. Outlets should be plugged with baby safety plug-ins to avoid air leaks through the electrical outlets. Go outside and seal the space underneath the siding and the foundation of the house. Go into the basement and seal the space between the rim joists and the foundation (this in older homes may

be so great you can see daylight; if that is the case, then use spray foam). You may also benefit from insulating the space in the basement around rim/ribbon joists.

Make sure you are not losing heat up the chimney of your fireplace. Plug it with a balloon device for that purpose.

Be sure you have adequate weather-stripping around doors and windows. After fussing for years with the products available at local stores, I found a product online that I like much better. Be sure to install door sweeps to prevent air leaking in from the bottom of exterior doors. Also effective are insulating curtains and blinds.

Insulation was one of the best investments I ever made. Nowadays there are lots of "green" choices such as water-based foam, recycled blue jeans, fiberglass (John Mansfield is the only fiberglass product that does not off-gas formaldehyde), blown-in cellulose (recycled newspaper treated with boric acid as a fire retardant), and reflective insulation made from aluminum and plastic air bubble paper. I use all but the recycled blue jean insulation in my home.

Insulate your hot water pipes and air conditioner duct work. Make sure to seal any leaks in duct work, as this can greatly reduce the efficiency of your system. Also, be sure to clean the filter once a month when in use. Dirty filters make the system

run inefficiently.

Replacement windows are great but, like everything else, you probably should think about how they factor into your long-range plan and do the low-cost stuff with a quick payback time first. Do not believe the hype about window replacements. The motto is "buyer beware." First, not all replacement windows are Energy Star rated. Get the ones that are Energy Star rated, have at least a 15-year guarantee, and have a good *Consumer Report* rating. Second, replacement windows will probably not pay for themselves. However, you may get a tax break for installing them if they have an Energy Star rating.

Many people can benefit from a home energy audit using a blower door test. Alternatively, you can often locate the source of air leaks by walking around your house on a windy day with a stick of incense. Think carefully before shelling out the money for an infrared test (an infrared photograph of the outside of your home to determine where heat is escaping). It isn't cheap and it will not surprise you that you are losing heat through windows, around doors, and up the chimney!

Below is a list of websites you will find helpful:

- www.superbrightleds.com
- www.lehmans.com
- www.discountenergy.com
- www.energystar.gov
- www.vintagedoor.com/html/sweep_seal. ■

The Home Energy Audit That May Have Saved My Life

By *Jacquie Bokow*

I mean that title quite literally. Let me tell you how it happened.

I know our home is inefficient, energy-wise. It was built in 1955 as one of the 44 cooperative homes in our neighborhood. There is *no* insulation *at all* in the walls.

We've taken some steps to save energy. We've upgraded both the windows (from single-pane aluminum clad to triple-pane vinyl) and the insulation in the attic (from several messy layers, each different, to one R-38 layer). We use compact fluorescent bulbs in almost every light fixture in the house.

I know these steps have helped us save energy, but I've always wondered what else we could do and how effective different measures would be. And just how bad is our home?

When Jim Zepp started the Silver Spring Solar Collective, I joined immediately. I've long been a supporter of renewable energy and thought a group purchase and the expertise of others in choosing a system, etc., might allow us to add solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to our roof.

At the first Solar Collective meeting, I met Reuven Walder, who lives on Lombardy Road and who conducts energy audits for a living through his company called Energy Efficient Home Services (301.802.7038, *info@energyefficienthome.net*). He offered any member of the Solar Collective a 25 per-

cent discount on a home energy audit (a savings of \$100). I signed up right away!

Really, if you're going to add any sort of additional energy generator (like solar panels) to your home, it makes sense that you should try to reduce your home's energy usage as much as possible first. So Walder appeared on the scene right when we needed him.

Walder was accompanied

on our audit by Glenn Dickey, Technical Services Director with Maryland Home Performance with Energy Star. With Glenn looking over his shoulder, Walder spent 4-1/2 hours conducting tests throughout our home. He checked the efficiency and flue gases of the furnace and water heater. He checked appliances and lights. He went into the attic to check

(continued on page 19)



Walder uses a "blower door" to test for air infiltration.

Energy Audit

(continued from page 18)
insulation levels and leakage of heat from the living space below.

The most interesting part to me was the blower door test. All windows are closed and a barrier with a fan in it is secured over the front door. When the fan is turned on, the leakage out of the whole house can be measured. We then walked around the house, feeling for breezes.

A strong gust from the knob plate on my son's bedroom door jamb confirmed what Walder had seen while in the attic: the board placed atop the walls (called a "top plate," shown at right) had shrunk over time, allowing air to seep through the living space into the attic (despite the layer of insulation).

But there was practically a gale downstairs. It turned out there was a gap around



Walder uses a pressure meter to measure the air pressure in a bedroom as part of a combustion gas safety test.

the chimney that went clean through to the attic. Essentially, the hot air from the furnace was rising straight up to the unfinished attic!

It was the first test Walder conducted, however, that showed us just how dangerous our house is. He tested the exhaust system to make sure the house was venting properly. First he set up a "worst case scenario," where all the windows were closed and the fans in the bathroom and kitchen were turned on. With a digital carbon monoxide meter in



The shrunken top plate in the attic meant heated air was escaping daily during winter.

his hand, we watched as the CO levels rose ... and kept rising, until they had to stop the test and open all the windows to air our home out. It seems that, during times when windows are closed but we have a fan running, we've actually been pulling deadly carbon monoxide gas into the house from the flues on the gas-fired water heater and furnace.

We're scurrying now to replace both units with closed-combustion, high-efficiency equipment before winter sets in. Since Walder told us our 15-year-old air conditioner was near the end of its service life, we'll try to replace that at the same time (especially if we can get a



Walder checks the attic.

good deal from the installer).

Walder gave us a list of changes he recommended we make in our home, including how much each item would approximately cost. He then calculated how much we would save: \$228.91 in natural gas heating, \$40.79 for air conditioning, \$146.66 in water heating, and \$572.19 in electricity. So our annual energy savings from following his suggestions he estimated would total \$988.55, which would reduce our total energy consumption by 40 percent.

The cost to update our equipment, appliances, etc., as Walder suggested would be \$11,575. He estimated the simple payback to be 11.1 years. That's if prices for electricity and natural gas don't rise during those 11 years; if they do, payback will come more quickly.

I highly recommend you have an energy audit performed on your own home. You may be surprised at what you find out! ■

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1. How long have you been in the real estate business?
2. Are you full-time or part-time?
3. Do you live in the area that you are marketing?
4. Are you familiar with the market conditions in my neighborhood?
5. Do you hold any other professional real estate designations besides the basic real estate salesperson license?
6. Do you hold any other professional real estate related licenses that could further help me/us understand the whole real estate process from start to finish?

- Licensed Real Estate Mortgage Loan Originator/Officer
- Licensed Real Estate Title Agent
and ...
- Mortgage Banking knowledge
- National/Maryland Association of Mortgage Brokers (Member)

7. What is your marketing plan?
8. Can I get your résumé?
9. Approximately how many transactions have you and your Partner/Team done?
10. Will you be there for me during the entire process and explain each step ... listing ... loan process ... settlement and post-settlement?



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