



FALL NEWSLETTER 2023 MEMBERSHIP ISSUE

Newsletters and Events are posted on
GreaterFarmland.org
facebook.com/GreaterFarmland

JOIN US! FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 25

PANEL DISCUSSION ON I-270: PROJECT HISTORY AND STATUS

A Zoom forum comprised of transportation and policy experts with Q&A. Learn about the issues, options, and proposals for the I-270 corridor and the American Legion Bridge.



OCTOBER 29 - HALLOWEEN PARTY

Come in costume and join in the fun at Farmland Elementary School's front parking lot from 4 to 5:30 pm. There will be games and prizes, and folks can pre-order Paisano's delivery pizza so your dinner is not an issue with the kiddies! Details will be on the listserv.

NOVEMBER 4 - PUMPKIN SMASHING AND COMPOSTING

GFCA is sponsoring a pumpkin collection event, but first, take a bat and SMASH them! Fun for all. Carved or uncarved gourds are welcome! They will be composted by Compost Crew. Drop off your pumpkins and join the smashing fun 9:30 am—12:30 pm at 11917 Tildenwood Drive. Pumpkins can't be painted, glittered, or have a candle/foil still inside.

NOVEMBER 29 COMMUNITY-WIDE GENERAL MEETING

Farmland Elementary School, 7 pm and via Zoom for those who can't come in person. Topics and speakers will include our local representatives to discuss our community issues. Any additional speakers and topics will be announced on the listserv.



JANUARY 7 WINTER-ON-THE-FARMLAND PARTY

Farmland Elementary School All-Purpose Room, Time: 1 to 4 pm
Everyone is invited! **Entertainment** to be announced in the near future.

Featuring games and entertainment to be announced. We'll have hot chocolate to go with our popular **Desserts-to-Share** ...bring some goodies to share with everyone, along with **all-ages Books to Exchange**, and non-perishable food items to donate to **Manna Food Center**.

Bi-monthly **GFCA BOARD MEETINGS** are via Zoom and are open to community members.

Watch for 2024 **COMMUNITY DAY, YARD SALE, JULY 4TH AND HALLOWEEN CELEBRATIONS**, Programs from the **ENVIRONMENTALISM-AT-HOME** Group, and **GARDEN CLUB** activities.

Keep an eye on the listserv and on GreaterFarmland.org's Calendar for details and Zoom links for all of our events.

We ♥ our
Members.
Join today!

LOOK FOR THE 2024 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION ON PAGE 3

Annual membership dues pay for the neighborhood listserv, website hosting, this newsletter, Zoom meeting capability, landscaping and maintenance of high-profile common areas through a contract with Trillium Landscaping, among many other services. Every household in our community benefits from the GFCA, whether or not they pay dues. Please be part of paying for these community benefits.

FARMLAND ES PLANTERS ATTRACT POLINATORS & MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

By Jeremy Martinich



Monarch butterflies are the most well-known and beloved butterflies in this part of the country. Known for their long-distance seasonal migration and spectacular winter gatherings in Mexico, the monarch population has recently declined to dangerously low levels (70-90% decline in the past 30 years).

The GFCA recently teamed up with the Farmland Elementary PTA to rebuild the garden boxes on the west side of the school. GFCA paid for materials to replace the boxes and add soil. The new plantings provide nectar-rich flowers needed to fuel adult monarchs as they migrate and included milkweed – the only plant that monarchs will lay their eggs on. By August, the garden boxes already had monarch caterpillars living and feeding on the milkweed!

You can help butterflies in your garden. In a sunny location, plant nectar-rich flowers (for ideas, go to nwf.org/nativeplantfinder), and plant some milkweed to attract monarchs. Please remember never to apply pesticides or spray for mosquitos around these plants—that's like putting out a buffet and poisoning the food! For more info about protecting monarchs, visit <https://xerces.org/monarchs>.



NEIGHBORS BEAUTIFY THEIR CUL-DE-SAC ISLAND—A SUCCESS STORY

By Nouné Sekhpossian



The idea to beautify our uninspiring and weedy circle was born on Halloween of 2021 when the Race Horse Lane neighbors gathered around the candy tables. Over the winter and spring months, we created a plan for the new garden. Rather than relying exclusively on our own elbow grease, we decided to chip in and hire a landscaping company to remove the grass and plant a few evergreen shrubs. By the spring of 2023, we were ready to add native flowering perennials



chosen for hardiness, deer resistance, low maintenance and high pollinator value. It has been a wonderful team project – with neighbors generously donating money, volunteering to water the plants when needed and occasionally weeding the circle. GFCA's assistance of \$100 for yearly maintenance also helped to increase the variety of plants. This year, we are all enjoying a beautiful native garden that is abuzz with bees and is visited by butterflies and hummingbirds. It is amazing how much pleasure a small garden can bring to those living nearby!

Contact GFCA, info@greaterfarmland.org, to ask about a \$100 grant program for beatification projects on your circle.

WHAT TO FEED BIRDS (HINT: IT'S NOT BREAD) by Jill Bocchicio and Emily Mintz

Throwing pieces of bread out for birds is a long-standing habit for many, but bread is not bird food. Birds eat seeds, nuts, worms, and small insects.

From thespruce.com/good-bread-for-birds-385833: "Bread contains very little protein, which birds need to develop muscles and feathers, and it does not contain the fat birds need for energy. Instead, bread is primarily a carbohydrate that, while it will fill a bird's stomach and alleviate hunger, does not provide much nutrition."



To feed birds, install a bird feeder with the type of seed for the birds you want to attract. Hulled sunflower seeds attract cardinals and many other species, mixed bird seed attracts finches, titmice, chickadees, and other smaller birds, and thistle seed attracts goldfinches. A block of suet will keep your woodpeckers happy. Squirrels will likely visit your feeders, too, and there are numerous squirrel baffles available to discourage them (none are squirrel-proof), but they are fun to watch, too.

It's a joy to watch the birds come and go. Adding a birdbath makes your yard bird heaven. Keep the water clean and put a piece of Mosquito Dunk in it so the mosquitoes can't breed there. Mosquito Dunks are harmless to birds and other animals.

HOME MAINTENANCE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FALL/WINTER

1. Leaves provide a winter "blanket" and compost for your plantings, so you can leave them in your garden areas.
2. Leaving your dormant plants uncut allows native insect eggs to overwinter and promotes native ecosystems.
3. Have your fireplace cleaned and inspected before using it.
4. Stack firewood and lay mulch at least one foot from any wall to prevent termite intrusion into your house structure.
5. Clean gutters and downspouts after the leaves fall. Water intrusion promotes mold growth.
6. Clean out the clothes dryer flue to prevent fire. There are companies that will come do this.
7. Check that your smoke & carbon monoxide detectors are less than 10 years old to be sure they will alert when needed.

FUN, LEARNING, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR IN 2023

COMMUNITY DAY

Free to all GFCA paid members, this is our biggest event of the year. We enjoyed seeing each other behind Farmland ES, and the kids loved the Reptile Show and bounce house. Lunch was catered by Moby Dick House of Kabob. Our councilmember, Kate Stewart, hosted an educational table, and the Environmentalism-at-Home group gave out anti-mosquito kits and recycled/composted discards.



KAREN LIPSY MEMORIAL COMMUNITY YARD SALE

The Yard Sale was back in action! Over 52 households participated in this single-day, highly advertised event. Huge thanks to Scott Keohane, who organized this event. GFCA is looking for a volunteer (or two) to take over from Scott for next year's Yard Sale. He will be happy to convey his wisdom, methodology, and materials, if you will step forward. Email skeohane@yahoo.com.



JULY 4TH PARADE Prizes and popsicles!



BLOCK PARTIES!!!!

This year, several neighbors on different blocks have organized parties.



Great time had by all at the Magruder Lane block party

Did you know that the GFCA may reimburse up to \$100 of party expenses for these events?

Go to greaterfarmland.org/block-parties for an online form and helpful information to plan your next block party.



A Big Thank You to Those Who've Already Renewed for 2024! GFCA Dues Pay For:

- * Community Day * Neighborhood Yard Sale * Winter-on-the-Farmland Party * Halloween Party * Email Listserv *
- * Landscaping Improvements and Maintenance * July 4th Parade * Online & Print Directories *
- * Website and Facebook Page * Newsletters * General Meeting Programs * Advocacy for Community Interests *
- * Environmentalism-at-Home Programs * Candidate Forums * Block Party Support * New Neighbor Welcome Bags *

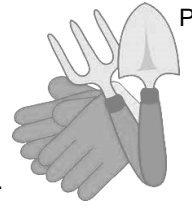
Your membership helps to build and improve our warm and caring community.

Online option 1: Go to the GFCA directory at GFCA.membershiptoolkit.com. If you're registered on this site, log in. If not, register a new account. Follow the prompts to purchase the membership length of your choice. Your membership renewal will be automatically reflected in the directory.

Online option 2: On our website, GreaterFarmland.org, select the number of years you'd like to pay for, and click Head to Checkout. Please fill in your address, where indicated.

Mail: Use the enclosed addressed envelope to **mail a check, payable to GFCA** for \$35, \$70, or \$105. Please allow time for us to manually update your membership and deposit your check.

We are a volunteer organization composed of neighbors.



At the last Garden Club meeting, Mary Travaglini, Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection, heard our concerns and answered our questions about mosquito control. Here is a link to the articles she has written on the My Green Montgomery website: mygreenmontgomery.org/author/mary

If you are interested in coming to any future GFGC meetings, please contact me at sue.schick@gmail.com.



TREES ARE STILL FREE FROM THE COUNTY by Ron Levin

Trees cast shade, cool, and filter the air. There are two county programs that provide trees for private property.

1. The County's Free Shade Tree program accepts applications beginning Oct 1: montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/free-urban-shade-trees/
2. The Native Tree program offers a \$50 coupon for purchases at any of four County nurseries: montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/forest-conservation-and-trees/reforest-montgomery/native-trees-discount/

Let's replace our aging (and dying) trees for the new generation. Trees can be planted whenever the ground isn't frozen.

GFCA LISTSERV

Your dues pay for the operation of our community listserv, which is an email distribution group that allows us to communicate in real time. Over 650 of us use the GFCA listserv. GFCA announcements, buying & selling or free items, traffic concerns, security events, lost & found items/deliveries/pets, tips, gardening, appeals for charity events, all of these are the "stuff" of our discussions. To be part of "what's happening," join. Email GFCA+subscribe@groups.io or click the Community Email List icon at the bottom of GreaterFarmland.org homepage.

DO YOU HAVE AN ACCOUNT IN OUR PRIVATE, SECURE DIRECTORY?

- Present your household information any way you want, including whatever you'd like to be visible
- Pay dues seamlessly, with your membership status automatically updated with your online payment
- Have the most up-to-date information, so you don't have to wait for the printed directory to get updates
- Download the free app to your phone, so you have our directory with you when you need it



Go to GFCA.membershiptoolkit.com and click Register a new account.



Welcome

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD ?

We invite you to join the Greater Farmland Civic Association and our community listserv, which is our major means of communication. Please email directory@GreaterFarmland.org so we can get a Welcome Bag to you.


JULIE MERBERG'S SCHOOLS CORNER

Increasing student population continues to be a key issue for our local schools. While final enrollment counts for the 2023-2034 school year are not yet available, Farmland Elementary School, Tilden Middle School, and Walter Johnson High School are all nearing and exceeding their capacity.

Overcrowding will be addressed at the high school level when Woodward High School begins accepting neighborhood students in 2026 (it will be a holding school for two years starting in 2024). There are, however, no announced plans to address school capacity at the area elementary and middle schools.

School population growth will continue as new families buy homes in our community and residential construction projects add even more students. One source will be new construction at the intersection of Josiah Henson Parkway (formerly Montrose Parkway) and East Jefferson Street. It was hard to miss the loss of mature trees, and they will be replaced with 141 townhomes. This area is zoned for Luxmanor Elementary School and Tilden Middle School. These two schools re-opened during the Pandemic into expanded new facilities; however, their student population has grown so quickly that both schools now exceed the stated capacity despite being completed in 2020.

GFCA is working with other local community associations, schools PTAs, and local leaders to address the needs of current and future students. As the County plans for new development, it is critical that it is supported with infrastructure including schools, roads, and stormwater management to ensure that it fits into our existing communities.



Do you have a concern about something you have experienced or observed in the community, need guidance on who to contact about an issue, or are just looking for information, and you have not found it on the GFCA listserv or website? The GFCA Ombudswoman is here to assist. Contact Pamela at 240-606-6333. If no answer, please leave a brief message with your name, phone number, and the nature of your call.