

EVERYONE IS INVITED ON Monday, October 21

7:30 pm to 9 pm, Farmland Elementary School All-Purpose Room

- Andrew Friedson, newly elected District 1 County Councilmember, who currently serves on the Planning, Housing, & Economic Development committee and the Government Operations & Fiscal Policy committee, and
 - Developing a 20852 Village to support all-age volunteer opportunities

Bring your questions and concerns for Councilmember Friedson to the meeting.

Pazit Aviv, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Village Coordinator will talk about developing a new North Bethesda village, how it will enhance our community, and what it means to all of us.

A community "village" is a volunteer grassroots organization, assisted by the county village coordinator's office. The primary goal is to provide support, assistance, as well as social connections as seniors age-in-place. We anticipate that our new Village and GFCFA will complement each other's missions and be an advantage to our community.

A survey is included in this newsletter so that planning includes and highlights our desires for our new Village. Please fill it out and return it so that we have a vibrant and useful Village.

MORE SUCCESSES AND FUN THIS PAST SPRING AND SUMMER...



THIRD ANNUAL COMMUNITY DAY BBQ

All the photos we took can't convey the fun and excitement at our Community Day BBQ, which featured our famous Mission BBQ buffet, bounce house, pony rides, face painting, DJ, desserts we all brought, and, best of all, our neighbors there to greet us.



THE 2019 JULY 4TH PARADE was also a big hit, including our fire department volunteers and their truck, Uncle Sam, all the paraders in costume, and culminating in ice cream and prizes. Thank you to our community members who sponsored flags along the route.



This year, our **FIFTH ANNUAL 64-HOUSE COMMUNITY YARD**

SALE was held in May. We cleaned out garages, attics, and basements, selling whatever you can imagine. Everyone else was out visiting neighbors, socializing and shopping.

Thank you to our volunteers who contributed time and expertise! If you'd like to be part of our volunteer corps (so much fun!), contact our Social Committee chair, Kathy Hoffman, 240-669-3965, or katbhoffman@comcast.net.



Be Aware—Robocalls, Scam Contractors, and more...

NEXTDOOR.COM HAS COME UNDER SCRUTINY

An article in Buzzfeed, with content repeated in The Week (Aug. 9, 2019), reveals that scammers are utilizing the detailed personal information shared on the nextdoor.com listserv platform. Nextdoor has been advertising in our neighborhood as a local community-centric listserv for communications in our region. It is not specific to our neighborhood, and some of our neighbors are members of Nextdoor as well as our own GFCA listserv.

The Nextdoor platform can foster “a false sense of security,” and users can reveal that they need a specific household service and other personal details that an unscrupulous contractor or service provider can use to gain access to the user’s home. If you use Nextdoor, please be aware that other users may or may not be trusted persons within the community, and referrals that appear come from this service’s members may not be from them.

MOBILE CARRIERS’ SPAM AND ROBOCALL APPS

The FCC will require all cell carriers to use a new system called SHAKEN/STIR by the end of this year to identify and label calls.

None of the services is able to detect and stop all spam calls. This is a work in progress. The major carriers are making some effort to identify spam and the following offer their own apps to help control these calls:

Verizon Wireless: Download the free Call Filter app for iOS or android. It will block spam calls that Verizon identifies, or just “high risk” spam. There is a premium service available for \$2.99/month.

T-Mobile: Automatically labels “spam likely” calls. To use the call blocker feature, the user has to opt in to the free Scam Block service. There is a premium service available for \$3.99/month.

AT&T: The free app is called Call Protect, and can be activated in your account settings. They also have a premium service for \$3.99/month

Sprint: There is no free call blocking app available, but Sprint offers a Premium Caller ID app for \$2.99/month, which identifies the caller, (unless the number is spoofed, which is a number that looks like it is local but isn’t).

Most premium services add features such as reverse lookup, additional caller ID, and custom number or category blocking.

Info derived from USA Today article

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF FRAUD OF UNSCRUPULOUS BEHAVIOR

In Montgomery County, contact the Office of Consumer Protection (OCP).

OCP licenses certain businesses, including contractors and towing firms and investigates thousands of complaints each year involving automotive sales and repairs, new home purchases, home improvements, credit issues, retail sales, internet services and most other consumer transactions.

For more information about how to file a complaint against a contractor and other ways to protect yourself, call the OCP at **240-777-3636**, visit montgomerycountymd.gov/ocp or send an email to consumerprotection@montgomerycountymd.gov.

In Maryland, you can contact Brian Frosh’s office, MD Attorney General. This office covers vehicle warranty lemon law, immigration fraud, nursing home or assisted living complaints, landlord/tenant disputes, work-at-home scams, home builder problems, fake charity scams, and healthcare and medical billing issues. The Maryland Financial Consumer Protections Commission, <http://bit.ly/2nJa95X>, may be helpful with financial transactions and services fraud. Another resource, the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition, is a statewide alliance to advance and protect the interests of consumers.

The federal agency tasked with assisting in cases of misbehavior by financial institutions is the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), consumerfinance.org. Dedicated civil servants work to assist consumers.

If you have been defrauded or had your identity stolen, be sure to report it and make a complaint. There could be help available, either locally, statewide, or on a federal level.

NEW PESTICIDE LAW FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY

This past July, the Maryland Court of Appeals upheld the right of Montgomery County to restrict the use of lawn care pesticides more stringently than the state. It cleared the way for immediate implementation of Montgomery County's 2015 Healthy Lawns Act, which prohibits registered pesticides from being used on public and private property for cosmetic purposes.

The GFCFA Garden Club met on September 15 to hear from a representative of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection who explained this recently passed law. Here are a few pertinent points that all neighbors should know:

- The term “pesticide” includes any products that combat insects, weeds, fungus, or bacteria.
- The new law covers private and public lawns, mulched playgrounds, and childcare facilities.
- The new law states that Montgomery County residents may use only those pesticides that are “Listed,” that is, they contain ingredients that are recommended by the National Organic Standards Board. Any product with one of these labels is a Listed Pesticide and may be used.



Product is exempt from EPA registration under FIFRA 25(b)

- The new law states that Montgomery County residents MAY NOT use any “Registered” pesticides. If it doesn't have the above label, it is registered by the US Environmental Protection Agency, and cannot be applied to your lawn.
- Many of the commonly-used lawn products, such as Weed-N-Feed, are now banned. This is true for DIY home owners who tend their own lawns, as well as professional lawn companies.
- The registered products will still be available for purchase in stores, although plans for new signage this spring will inform customers which products are banned.
- Flyers with more comprehensive information will be mailed from the DEP to all Montgomery County residents. Further information can be found at montgomerycountymd.gov/lawns.

GET READY FOR THE 2020 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

October 1 begins Membership Season at GFCFA. We welcome and encourage new and renewing members to pay dues early so that we can budget for upcoming projects and events.

Dues are \$35 per year per household, and entitle member households to a printed directory, access to the online directory, and free buffet at our annual Community Day BBQ. This year we are introducing the option to pay for 1, 2, or 3 years at a time, as you choose. You may find it more convenient to pay once, then not worry about it for the next two or three years.

You can pay now, or wait for the mailing with the return envelope. Details are on our website, GreaterFarmland.org/membership and will also be included in our next mailing.

Questions? Email directory@GreaterFarmland.org.

STATE DELEGATE MARC KORMAN'S NEW COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

One of our state delegates, Marc Korman, has been active in Annapolis in the transportation field. He has recently been appointed to chair the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Environment. From Del. Korman's newsletter, "The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the budget of the Department of Transportation and each of its modes, such as the State Highway Administration, Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland Transportation Authority, airports and sea port; the Maryland Department of the Environment; the Maryland Department of Agriculture; the Public Service Commission; and more." GFCFA is happy to have him in that position and wish him well in his new capacity, and we will coordinate our advocacy efforts with Delegate Korman.

GARDEN CLUB NEWS... Bee sure to read all about it!

Did you know that US bee keepers experienced a 40% collapse in honey bee colonies between April 2018 and April 2019? Montgomery County beekeepers and their honey bees are feeling this pain, and we can help!



The GFCA Garden Club's July meeting featured a presentation and local honey tasting by two local beekeepers, Dara Ballow-Giffen and Regina Kunkle, of the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association. We learned that, yes, honey bees can sting only once because their stingers pull out. Honey bees are gentle creatures and sting only when the hive or the queen is in danger. We also learned that the honey bees we see in our gardens are foraging only within two miles of their hives and rely heavily on flowering trees, shrubs, and other plants for nectar and pollen. A single honeybee produces just 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey during its lifetime.

You might have heard in the news about honeybee colony collapse disorder (CCD), in which the adult worker bees disappear. CCD devastated 40% of colonies nationwide between April 2018 and April 2019. Maryland beekeepers are experiencing rates of collapse at the national average, attributed to the parasitic varroa mite, habitat loss, poor nutrition, and pesticides. Here is where we come in; we can include some pollinator plants in our yards, and, if using insecticides plants, choose chemicals with low toxicity to bees and follow guidelines about how and when to apply them. Better yet, leave your bee-friendly plants insecticide-free. Visit the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association site for tips, montgomerycountybeekeepers.com/plants-for-bees.

Recent GFCA Garden Club meeting topics included landscape design tips from Good Earth landscapers, vermiculture, how to separate perennials. For upcoming meeting topics and dates, visit gfngarden.club. All are invited—hope to see you there!

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL WINTER-ON-THE-FARMLAND PARTY! Saturday, January 11, 2020

Our social committee has a number of new and exciting activities planned for all of us!



DO YOU WANT TO CONTACT YOUR GFCA DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES, OR YOUR BLOCK CAPTAIN?

You can get information or leave a comment for us at info@GreaterFarmland.org.
For those who prefer the phone, call Pamela Levine at 301-468-6699.

Your Civic Association is an all-volunteer effort
By Neighbors for Neighbors

FALL NEWSLETTER 2019



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