

# Stratford Landing Newsletter

*Stratford Landing Mount Vernon District Fairfax County June 2011*

Bimonthly Newsletter

## Community Yard Sale on June 11th

Start clearing out those basements and closets. Stratford Landing will host a community wide yard sale from 8 AM until 1 PM on June 11th. Of course, it would also be a good time to fire up the barbeque grills and make a 'block' party out of the day. Our intent is for each household to put their wares out front of their homes; however, that does not mean streets cannot get together and "pool" their goods. In other words, we will be advertising the fact, how you go about selling your goods is up to individuals or groups. Just have fun and get rid of some of the 'clutter'.



## Membership Dues Process—WAIT UNTIL SEPTEMBER!

Many of you have been confused by our neighbor association, Stratford on the Potomac, and their recent membership drive. They posted a message to get dues to the block

captains. It was not your association. SLCA runs a membership drive in Sep-Oct every year to coincide with our annual meeting at the end of October. While we will take dues later than October, our normal process is to simply welcome new folks as members and then collect their dues during the membership drive. So, those of you who have been dropping dues to the block captains thank you but it was not warranted. If you had not paid last fall, that is good. If you did, your block captains now have the task of counting you paid when we do the drive. So, please remember that we are SLCA, not SOTP. Thank you.

## In Search of Recreation Committee Members!

Do you enjoy all of the events the SLCA puts on for the community? We need new members to keep the fun going. Organizing the events in particular, and being part of the SLCA in general, is an excellent way to meet your neighbors and be involved in your community. The current members have had a great time doing it, but it's time to get some new ideas from new members. Please contact any of us--your friendly neighborhood cruise directors--for more information.

All of our contact information is at the end of this newsletter. Thank you! Heather, Dana, and Angela

## More Committee Positions Open

In addition to the Recreation Committee needing new blood, your association executive committee will also need a president and vice president this coming election cycle. There may be others who would be willing to step aside for the right 'offer'. So, if you have any interest at all in working for your association, please contact any one of us listed on the last page and we will get you in touch with our nomination committee and get you all the answers you need to make a decision as to whether joining our fun is something you would like to do.



## Leah Chapla

703.929.4875 (cell phone & voice mail)

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## The Sweet List Update

As reported in December, the updated Sweet List is here!

To those who are new to our community, the Sweet List is a listing of businesses/

contractors whose services have been used and recommended by Stratford Landing community members. In other words, this is YOUR list – it reflects who you as a homeowner have used and would like to recommend to others in our community. Our previous list was quite dated and many businesses are no longer around. If you would like to see the name of a company you have used included, send us an e-mail and we will be glad to consider them. Likewise, it is important to note any concerns and/or



complaints. This list is available on our SLCA web site. If you would like a paper copy, call Terri and she will drop one off at your house. For any and all information about the Sweet List, feel free to contact Terri Maloney, Consumer Affairs 703-780-3454 or [t2maloney@aol.com](mailto:t2maloney@aol.com).

## Block Captain Meetings Recap

As Block Captains know, we attempted meetings this past winter at varying times to try to accommodate as many of you as possible. We did have a fair turnout at the five different times and I wanted to summarize the primary area that we covered. Recognizing that the association is currently straddling the chasm between the old methods of communication (phones and paper handouts) and the ever changing new methods (email, websites, iPhones, etc.), we decided to keep the block captains in the loop regardless of the methods. The block

captain is the best judge of whether we are reaching each of you in the community and by being able to pass along either paper or electronic messages and newsletters, they are in contact with each of you. Therefore, the mass emailings will always filter through the block captains that have email and while they may double hit some of you, at least you will be receiving the latest updates on community events, happenings, and other notices. Those block captains not on the internet will continue to receive paper updates of what is given the electronically connected ones. It will just be considerably delayed. So, for those 17 (total of 72) of you who have not given me an email address, I am assuming you do not have one and will therefore include any notices in the bag with the newsletters each delivery cycle. If you have other issues, please do not hesitate to call or email me at your convenience. Thanks again for all you do for our community. You are the very life blood of the organization and we could not begin to connect with 772 homes without you.

## Be ‘Street Smart’

Please be aware of traffic safety for all. The streets are to be shared by vehicles, pedestrians, and bikers alike. Respect your neighbors by being extra cautious this spring. Soon school will be out, and we will welcome brand new drivers. Remember to share the road! For additional information, see <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/traffic/pedestrian-safety.htm>

## Neighborhood Parking Reminders!

The majority of complaints we hear in this community relate to parking. For example, while most of us have long driveways, it seems we by far

prefer the street. While this is not against any laws, it does play havoc with driving down some of our streets. With cars parked on both sides, it can be a real chore to negotiate several of our more narrow byways. Also, please park your vehicles in front of your house. Regularly parking in others' space on your or another street is, while lawful as long as the car is properly licensed and registered, just downright rude to your neighbors. It is also noted that when we do use our parking spaces around the houses, some of us get confused as to what is and is not proper. Specifically, parking on grass is NOT allowed in FRONT of the house, but IS allowed on the side or rear of the house. This may be surprising to many of us, but it is still not a no-no in Fairfax County.

Finally, rec vehicles, boats, truck tractors and other commercial vehicles are not to be parked in the streets, except for a maximum of 48 hours to load or unload. Your neighbors are well within their rights to call the police and report the violation. So, let's continue to be considerate of one another out there. Thank you.

## Bicycle Helmets (from Virginia Department of Health)

Children under the age of 15 are five times more likely to be injured in a bicycle-related crash than older riders. 80% of all bicycle-related fatalities among children are due to rider error. Children are at particular risk because of their lack of skills, knowledge and limited perception of risk. One of the leading rider errors among children is not wearing a bicycle helmet. 75% of bicycle-related fatalities could have been prevented through the proper use of a bicycle helmet. Bicycle helmets, when worn properly, reduce the risk of a serious brain injury by almost 90%.

Bicycle Helmet Legislation in Virginia does not have a state bicycle helmet law. However, Virginia Code §46.2-906.1 enables localities to pass local ordinances requiring the use of bicycle helmets by children fourteen and younger. To view Virginia localities with bicycle helmet ordinances and learn about other Virginia bicycle laws go to [www.vdot.virginia.gov/PROGRAMS/bk-laws.asp](http://www.vdot.virginia.gov/PROGRAMS/bk-laws.asp)

## Backyard Wildlife—From the County Website

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp\\_backyardwildlife.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/nrp_backyardwildlife.htm)  
If you have any question whether you may have a rabid or dangerous animal nearby, call either the police non-emergency phone number, 703-691-2131, or 911.

Don't approach animals you don't know. Any animal can react unpredictably. For safety, just let the animal move on, then take a look at



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your backyard and consider making it animal-proof. Animals that are around people or homes could be sick or injured, which could make them act aggressively. They also could be rabid or carrying ticks. Interaction alone could be grounds for having an animal destroyed. If your goal is to get the animal to leave, don't approach it or make contact with it. Let it move along on its own.

Why not trap or relocate a nuisance beast? For one, it's against the law. It violates state game regulations, and relocation rarely works. The animal sometimes returns to the site of the problem, starts conflict problems in new areas, or doesn't survive the stress of the move. In addition, if the animal was there because the habitat was good for it, another animal of the same species may move in. It is against Park Authority regulations, state law, and sound wildlife management to release any animal, wild or domestic, on parkland.

All this is important to us as we are truly blessed to be living among such a plentiful array of flora and fauna here in Stratford Landing. Foxes, deer and coyotes roam our neighborhood every day. We can enjoy them but we must be vigilant and also teach our young ones to respect the wildlife while they enjoy it.

## **What could be wrong with a beautiful, beloved pet running free and easy, right?**

Wonderful thought but this animal is on its walk in your neighborhood and that is not its yard, its owner is out in the street thinking he has voice command over it, and there is no leash in sight.

Picture if you will, just off



child playing in his yard. Does he have a clue as to the intentions of this beautiful animal? Doubtful! Many of our pets are very loving and only see a 'salt lick' when they spy a young human—there are always crumbs of some sort near the mouth don't you know. I am kept by a beautiful Golden Retriever with a very soft mouth but loves to love people so I know all too well. They can be very traumatizing to the little ones and many others who for whatever reason have a great fear of dogs.

Yes, we still have a couple of scofflaws among us whose egos are too big to get it. It is not about them but their neighbors' peace of mind as well as the safety of their animals. So, once again, here is the Police non-emergency phone number to call to report them 703-691-2131. The information will be passed to the animal control division. A direct call to Animal Services Division can also be made at 703-830-1100. If you have specific information about the pet owner, address of the pet and any other pertinent info, that should be passed on to the call taker. Also, I would encourage the caller to leave their contact information so the animal control officer (ACO) can get in contact with them for further information.

## **After the County Budget Score, What Really Happened?**

The Board of Supervisors marked up the proposed Fiscal Year 2012 Budget, which begins on July 1, 2011. The marked-up budget includes a real estate tax rate of \$1.07 per \$100 of assessed value, a two-cent decrease from the \$1.09 rate in FY 2011. Formal adoption of the budget is scheduled to take place April 26.

The FY 2012 plan marked up by the board provides for a balanced budget based on a General Fund Revenue increase of 1.97 percent from the FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan. General Fund Disbursements are projected to total \$3.38 billion, an increase of \$69.4 million or 2.10 percent from the FY 2011 Adopted Budget Plan. The budget includes the addition of 39 positions, including 12 state-funded school nurse positions, 20 federally funded positions to support mental health services, four additional positions to replace grant staffing support for the detoxification programs and three staff for the expanded Reston Community Center.

The budget does not include funding for compensation increases for county staff. However, the board directed the county executive to identify balances as part of the FY 2011 carryover review for the purpose of providing county employees with a market rate increase, effective mid-October 2011.

The total county transfer to support School Operating and Debt Service is \$1.77 billion or 52.5 percent of total county disbursements. In its guidance on the budget, the board supports the School Board's efforts to fully implement full-day kindergarten (FDK) within existing school resources in FY 2012. To

assist the School Board with funding and reprioritizing its resources to accomplish FDK countywide, the Board of Supervisors will provide \$500,000 in savings from the elimination of kindergarten SACC, which is no longer necessary with FDK; additional cable funding in the amount of \$641,904; and the added flexibility of \$1.9 million that would have reverted to the county for existing budget requirements. In addition, the board has provided additional flexibility in the use of cable programming dollars that would need to be reprioritized.

The Board of Supervisors also increased the school bond sale program to \$155 million per year (or \$125 million in increased capacity over the five-year Capital Improvement Program period), and it has directed staff to work with the school system to identify short-term financing alternatives for energy-related improvements to accelerate construction projects.

## **Fairfax County School Board Adopts FY 2012 Approved Budget**

At its May 26 regular business meeting the School Board adopted the FY 2012 Approved Budget of \$2.2 billion, which includes a one percent market scale adjustment for all employees and step increases for all eligible employees, funding to expand full-day kindergarten to all elementary schools, and an athletic fee cap of two fees per student per school year.

The expansion of full-day kindergarten completes an earlier School Board commitment to expand the program to the remaining 36 FCPS elementary schools.

The School Board also voted to keep [www.stratfordlanding.org](http://www.stratfordlanding.org)

a reserve balance of \$60.6 million to address future obligations to the Virginia Retirement System, and designated \$0.5 million for discipline support recommendations. A total of \$4.3 million was approved to help implement mandated online testing for Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests. The Board also voted to eliminate fees for Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) tests.

FCPS projects a total enrollment of 177,629 students for the 2011-12 school year, including a 16.5 percent increase in students enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and an increase in the most intensive special education services. In FY 2012, FCPS projects that one of every four students will be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Additional information on the budget may be found on the following web site <http://www.fcps.edu/news/fy2012.htm>

## **Honors and AP/IB Course Offerings**

Some Fairfax County high school communities are discussing the topic of honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and International Baccalaureate (IB) course offerings. FCPS' goal is to ensure that all students are college- and workforce-ready. In summary, FCPS offers both rigorous standard level and advanced academic courses because offering two levels of courses (standard and advanced) provides greater access to advanced coursework for traditionally underrepresented populations. Additionally, research shows that students are more likely to be accepted to college, be more successful while in college, and earn a degree if they take AP or IB courses in high school.

To clarify questions surrounding honors, AP, and IB course offerings, FCPS posted the following FAQ's on their website:

### **What are the advanced course options at the secondary level?**

Advanced course options at the secondary level include honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and dual enrollment courses. In FCPS, a standard and advanced academic course option is offered for each of the four core subjects: English, mathematics, social studies, and science.

### **What is the difference between standard and honors courses?**

The goal of honors courses is to provide a consistent county-developed middle and high school curriculum that extends the FCPS Program of Studies (POS) in depth and complexity and meets the needs of a diverse group of learners. In standard courses, curriculum and instruction is based on a rigorous POS that goes beyond the state requirements of the Standards of Learning. In honors courses, curriculum and instruction is based on extensions to the POS that are developed through the Parallel Curriculum Model (PCM). Depending on the course, honors can be a stepping stone for AP/IB; however, standard courses also prepare students for the rigor of AP/IB courses.

### **What are the honors course options in FCPS?**

In middle school, honors courses are available in the four core academic areas of English, mathematics, social studies, and science. In high school, honors courses are available for: World

History and Geography I, English 9, English 10, Biology, Chemistry, Geosystems, Physics, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, and Precalculus with Trigonometry.

## **When are honors courses not offered?**

When there is an AP or IB course that meets FCPS content objectives, the AP or IB course is offered instead of an honors course. For example, FCPS has never offered honors courses for English 12, US Government (grade 12), or USVA History because there is an AP/IB option that meets the same content objectives.

## **Is FCPS currently phasing out all honors courses?**

No, FCPS is not phasing out all honors courses. Over the past five years only two courses have been phased out, English 11 Honors and World History and Geography II Honors. English 12, US Government (grade 12), and USVA History have never been offered at the honors level. FCPS added Geosystems Honors and Algebra I Honors to its high school course offerings in 2010. (Algebra I Honors was previously only offered in middle school).

## **Why were World History and Geography II Honors and English 11 Honors phased out?**

World History and Geography II Honors and English 11 Honors were phased out because they have AP/IB courses that meet the same content objectives. Data indicates that FCPS students are very successful in AP World History and AP English Language and Composition courses.

## **What is the rationale for only two course offerings per grade level?**

FCPS offers both rigorous standard level and advanced academic courses to ensure college readiness and success for all students. While our standard level courses are rigorous and college preparatory, some students are ready for an additional level of challenge which is provided through honors, AP, or IB. FCPS data indicates that there is an increase in the number of students from historically underrepresented groups in AP and IB courses when there are only two course options.

## **Do data and research support offering a two-tier course offering as opposed to a three-tier?**

Data indicate there are positive outcomes as a result of offering two course options. From 2007 to 2010, FCPS increased the number of students participating in AP by 11.4 percent. In addition, the percentage of students earning AP exam scores of 3 or higher (the score typically needed to earn college credit), increased from 67 percent in 2007 to 74 percent in 2010. In addition, data indicates that enrollment in at least one AP course increased for all groups with an overall increase of 4 percent. Multiple researchers support FCPS' policy to offer open access to all advanced academic courses and to offer a two-tiered course offering.

## **Do standard courses prepare students for AP and IB coursework?**

Yes, an examination of students taking a standard level course in the year prior to taking an AP or IB course yielded the following results (averaging over three years, 2008-2010): Ninety percent of students who took standard English 10 and then IB English in grade 11 passed the exam with a score

of 4 or better. Fifty-one percent of students who took standard English 10 and then AP English Language and Composition passed the exam with a score of 3 or better. Sixty-four percent of students who took standard World History and Geography I in grade 9 and then AP World History in grade 10 passed the exam with a score of 3 or better.

## **Are there differences between honors course offerings at AP and IB schools?**

Honors course offerings at AP and IB schools are different in social studies to enable students to meet Virginia graduation requirements. IB students must take government prior to their senior year when it is normally taken because of the required junior/senior IB social studies courses. Therefore, ninth-grade IB students take standard or honors World History and Geography II instead of World History and Geography I. Tenth-grade IB students take standard or AP Government. A few IB schools offer tenth-grade IB students standard or honors government. In all cases, students only have a standard or advanced academic course option to select from. There is no difference in honors course offerings for English.

Additional questions, answers, and information may be found on the following website <http://www.fcps.edu/news/advanced.htm>

You may also want to read Jay Matthews perspective on this issue which was published May 29th at [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/why-not-honors-for-all-in-high-school/2011/05/27/AGovfKEH\\_story.html?nl\\_headlines](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/why-not-honors-for-all-in-high-school/2011/05/27/AGovfKEH_story.html?nl_headlines)

## Got History?

SLCA Secretary Claire Kluskens would like to compile a complete run of SLCA Newsletters. Why? To preserve our neighborhood history. Many other Fairfax County communities have a set of their back newsletters permanently deposited in the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Library for use by future local historians. We should have a set there also. If you have any back issues, please call Claire at 703-780-3282 or email [cklusken@verizon.net](mailto:cklusken@verizon.net).

## Recycle that Old Bicycle

Donate that bicycle you no longer use to "Bikes for Tykes, Teens & Adults in need," an outreach program at Heritage Presbyterian Church that has distributed over 800 bicycles to those in need since 2006. The "bike doctor," Charles Jones, repairs, and tunes the bicycles before they go to children who would not otherwise experience the happiness of having their own bike, or to an adult who needs a 'ride' to work. For more information, or to get your bicycle picked up, or information about where you can drop them off, call Claire Kluskens at 703-780-3282 or Charles Jones at 703-780-502.

## Feathered Friends

Spring migration continues. During April and May, 58 species of birds were seen in Stratford Landing, including Canada Goose, Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Barred Owl, Chimney Swift, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Blue Jay, American Crow, Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Northern Mockingbird, Brown Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Parula, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Eastern Towhee, Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, Baltimore Oriole, House Finch, American Goldfinch, and House Sparrow. For more information about birds in our area, visit [eBird.org](http://eBird.org) and [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)



## Snakeheads-Wanted Dead or Alive

Both Virginia and Maryland ask that snakeheads not be released alive. It's illegal to possess a LIVE snakehead and a Federal Crime to transport across state lines.

They do not walk! But they do breath air! Even with the appearance of death, they will still swim away if released. Cutting the isthmus is the best way to kill them. They are good to eat and fairly safe as they grow very fast and don't store as many toxins.

Maryland is sponsoring a "contest" regarding the snakehead. Please see the poster to the right.

## Catch a Snakehead and Win



The MD Department of Natural Resources, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Potomac River Fisheries Commission are asking anglers to kill the invasive northern snakehead. The goals of the project are to reduce the number northern snakehead in Potomac River and to document range expansion.

Anglers who catch and kill a northern snakehead should post their catch on MDNR's Angler's log, which is good for one entry into the contest. There is no limit to the number of entries someone can submit. Prizes to be given in January.

Top-prizes include (1) \$200 fishing tackle package, (1) Maryland State Park Passport, and (1) Potomac River Fishing license.

### To Enter:

1. Catch and kill a snakehead [*hint*: cut the isthmus (red arrow) to kill the fish]
2. Photograph the fish with a ruler or other measuring device to show fish size
3. E-mail the photo with information on where the fish was caught to [fishingreports@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:fishingreports@dnr.state.md.us)



# Stratford Landing

## Neighborhood Notices

### Need a Nanny for the Summer?

Hello. My name is Lucas Alexander. I am a smart, responsible 19 year old college student home for the summer seeking a job as a nanny. I am CPR trained and a lifeguard. For years I babysat my two younger siblings as well as neighborhood children. I've pet sat and mowed lawns for neighbors as well. I've lived in the Stratford community since 2002. If interested, please call me at 703-254-6690.

### Interested in pick-up Adult Coed Softball games?

Please email [ddeighton@live.com](mailto:ddeighton@live.com)

### Precinct Changes

The General Assembly split more than 40 Fairfax County precincts as part of the decennial redistricting process and as a result, the Office of Elections has made recommendations for proposed precinct boundary and polling place changes that could impact Mount Vernon residents.

Supervisor Hyland invites you to review and discuss these recommended changes with staff on Wednesday, June 8 at 7 pm at the Mount Vernon Government Center (2511 Parkers Lane) in Community Room 3.

### Save the Date: SLCA Summer Party!

Please join your friends and neighbors for an outdoor party along Little Hunting Creek later this summer.

When: Sunday, August 7th, starting around 3:00pm

Where: By the creek, across the street from 8707 Stockton Parkway

What: Potluck Summer Party! The tide will be favorable to launch canoes and kayaks, so feel free to bring them (along with your paddles and personal flotation devices). SLCA will provide hot dogs, burgers, and lemonade. Please bring a side, appetizer, and/or beverage of your choice to share.

### Stratford Landing Executive Committee Officers

Ken Pribyla, President	703.619.1385	<a href="mailto:kprib@verizon.net">kprib@verizon.net</a>
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### Committee Chairs

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