

AGWG News

**Allanwood - Gayfields - Willson Hills - Gaywoods Estates Civic Association
Fall 2007**

‘Summertime, and the livin’ is easy ...’



AGWG Civic Association members mingled with their neighbors over drinks and desserts at the Triangle Sept. 7.



AGWG Civic Association board member Greg Marsh (l) provided musical entertainment at the Triangle event, inspiring John Johnston to get his guitar and join in.

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Association Web site

agwgcivicasociation.org

Have your own business?

Check out the Services section.

President’s Perspective: Let the good times roll!

Since our last newsletter, the Association has been very busy. Most of the community’s roads are repaved, the trash collection initiative was implemented, an evaluation of home security systems was conducted, so residents could make a wise choice in their efforts to protect their family, and an effort was initiated to slow neighborhood traffic. Thanks to the Board of Directors, Membership Committee and Neighborhood Security Task Force for their efforts in addition to our Halloween Party Planning Group and all of its volunteers. Good things have been happening.



*Joel Mazelis
President, AGWG
Civic Association*

The Association membership now exceeds over 50 percent of the residents within the AGWG boundaries; kudos to Joe Giacalone and

Continued on page 2

Bus stop added to Gayfields routes

Recently, I was contacted by AGWG area residents regarding some safety concerns and logistics as they relate to getting to and from two of our MCPS bus stops: Tierra/Merrifields and Tierra/Marymount. As a result, my office has coordinated an additional stop for Blake High School and Farquhar Middle School routes at Marymount/Merrifields.

Previously, Blake and Farquhar routes made pick-ups and drop-offs at Tierra/Marymount and Tierra/Merrifields, with no stops or drops between the two. This made for quite a hike for residents at the far end of Marymount (near Merrifields), and those along

the long stretch of Merrifields (between Marymount and Tierra), and including Merrifields Lane and Gaywoods Court.

After much discussion with families

impacted by these routes, we determined that it made sense to add a third stop between these two stops – that being the corner of Marymount/Merrifields. This new bus stop is effective immediately and will not effect the Tierra/Merrifields and

Tierra/Marymount stops.

-- Roger Manno, State Delegate (19th District)

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President's Perspective: Let the good times roll!

Continued from page 1

his efforts. We have also found a local student to deliver AGWG information, therefore saving the high cost of mailing. The Association continues to be represented on the Montgomery County Civic Federation and Layhill Alliance and supported their comments to the county on the proposed growth policy.

But as with life, clouds loom on the horizon; multiple developments will soon surround the community, which also may include an interstate highway. It is critical that the Association remains a viable, active entity in local government to protect our homes, families and lifestyle. However, the future is questionable. Other than the small group of residents who stepped forward to bring about the success of recent AGWG activities, we still need help.

At our upcoming Annual Meeting, elections will be held (see announcement) for the entire Board of Directors. Our Bylaws limit the time a resident can serve in any office. Some of the Board members have served far beyond their

terms. It is time for a change. Unless residents step up to the task, the only way the Association can continue to exist is to suspend its Bylaws. I urge everyone to consider nominating a resident or yourself for a Board position or express your interest to the Board in participating on a committee such as Membership, Neighborhood Security, County Services, Association Events, or Telecommunication Services. In last fall's member survey, only eight residents, above and beyond those already actively involved, expressed an interest in participating for the first time.

I would also like to see a better turnout for the annual meeting. At last year's Annual Meeting, Councilmember Praisner was originally scheduled to speak, but had to cancel because of a hearing. I am glad she canceled, because fewer than 20 residents out of 325 showed up for the meeting. We will have a speaker this year and I hope the community makes a good showing, but I plan to ask everyone in attendance an important question: Do we need a civic association?

State responds to Delegate Manno's ICC inquiry



Maryland Department of Transportation
The Secretary's Office

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

John D. Porcari
Secretary

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley
Deputy Secretary

June 21, 2007

The Honorable Roger Manno
Maryland House of Delegates
226 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis MD 21401-1991

Dear Delegate Manno:

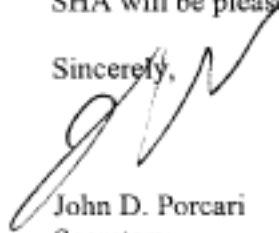
Thank you for your letter to Governor Martin O'Malley regarding the Intercounty Connector (ICC). The Governor received your letter and asked me, as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), to respond on his behalf.

Please be assured that the State Highway Administration (SHA) recognizes the sensitivities involved in acquiring land for any of its projects, and particularly the impact that acquisitions have on residents. SHA understands that both residential displacements and partial takings can be emotional and difficult, and is taking significant effort to ease the impact of the acquisition process on residents. SHA seeks to allow as much time as possible for property owners to make informed decisions and for owners' concerns to be amicably resolved.

The Record of Decision (ROD), which was approved by the Federal Highway Administration on May 29, 2006, marked the point at which detailed design and general right-of-way acquisition could begin for the ICC. While lawsuits have been filed challenging the ROD, to delay acquisitions and other work authorized by the ROD until litigation is resolved could cost millions of dollars, as a result of the escalation of construction costs and real estate values. Further, the uncertainty of any such delay would be disruptive to residents, and delaying appraisals and offers of just compensation does not benefit affected property owners. In fact, it has been our experience that many residents have welcomed recent efforts by SHA.

Thank you, again, for your letter. The Governor appreciates hearing from you, and on his behalf, I thank you for your interest in this important matter. If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Melinda B. Peters, Director, Office of the Intercounty Connector, SHA at 410-545-8829, toll-free 866-462-0020 or via email at iccproject@sha.state.md.us. SHA will be pleased to assist you. Of course, you should never hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,


John D. Porcari
Secretary

JOIN US

AGWG Association Annual Meeting

Oak Chapel (Layhill Road)
October 22, 2007
7 p.m.

Agenda topics include:

General Business Meeting
Neighborhood Security
(Montgomery County Police)
Trash Initiative
Home Security Systems
Elections
Emerging issues (development)

Call for Nominations 2008 Elections

Nominations now being accepted
for the following offices:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary

Five at-large Board of Directors positions

To submit your name or nominate another
AGWG member, contact us at
www.AGWGCivicAssociation.org or call
301.598.8553

Nominations will be accepted until closed just
prior to the actual elections.
Nominees must be AGWG members

Treasurers Report

AGWG members can request a copy of the
Treasurers report at any time by contacting the
association at www.AGWGCivicAssociation.org
or 301.598.8553

Development Update

Earlier this summer, the association sent an electronic update to the membership on all proposed development projects likely to impact our community. These proposed projects include more than 1,500 new housing units and the InterCounty Connector.

As usual during Washington summers, very little has happened, but we expect a busy fall. As it happens, the association will continue sending electronic updates.

If you are not already on our electronic mailing list, I urge you to contact us at www.agwgcivicassociation.org

For those not on our electronic mailing list, two trucks were stolen, a car vandalized and another round of mailbox destruction occurred within the last month.

Crime and what we can do about it will be discussed at the 2007 annual meeting Oct. 22 .

A word on repaving ...

Many of you are aware from a previous e-mail of the county's repaving operations on most AGWG streets. The process, known as micro-chipping, now used by the county for residential streets that are not major thoroughfares, is an improvement over the slurry that was applied some years ago, but not equal to the traditional repaving process as we know it.

I am sure that residents of Willson Hills noticed that the county did not repave your streets. I spoke to Mr. Hawkes, Chief of Operations in the County's Department of Public Works. He explained that Willson Hills streets had slurry applied within the last five years and thus is not scheduled for repaving in the immediate future, according to the County's road maintenance schedule.

-- Joel Mazelis

AGWG Civic Association prepares for FY 2008

By the AGWG Membership Committee

Roads

Since 2005 the Membership Committee has been coordinating with the membership, AGWG President Joel Mazelis and the County Government to repair our roads.

AGWG Web site

Joan Donoghue, Webmaster

AGWG established this site in 2006, inviting the community to help shape its future. Our mission is to promote and protect the welfare and interests of the subdivisions, and to keep our residents abreast of developments that affect our quality of life and property values.
admin@agwgcivicassociation.org

Membership Survey

This past year we conducted a membership survey to find the major concerns of our community. Based on that survey, which was published in the last newsletter and is also published on the AGWG Web site, the membership committee planned to solicit competitive bids from contractors that would provide discounts

on a voluntary basis, to members of the AGWG Civic Association. We are pleased to report on the progress made under Phase 3 of our committee's hard work.

FY 2008 MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT INITIATIVES

Home Trash Collection Initiative

Don MacIntyre, Project Leader.

Our first initiative was with the collection of trash since this affects all residents and would have the broadest appeal. We communicated with the three most visible contractors in our area. Please read "AGWG Talks Trash" in this newsletter.

Home Security Systems Initiative

Joan Donoghue, Project Leader.

Our second initiative was to respond to the community's concern about crime. Joan Donoghue, the AGWG Webmaster, volunteered to accept this challenge. She conducted an extensive analysis, which not only involved research but also included interviews and bids of her home security, in her home. Joan interviewed five home security alarm installers rated as some of the best by Washington Consumers' Checkbook, summer/fall 2006. Please read "Home Security Systems Initiative" in this newsletter.

AGWG Membership Committee

Joe Giacalone (Chairman), Joan Donoghue, Rodney Eng, Hank Males, Don MacIntyre, Sam Mento, Alan Plevy and David Remondini

The following two articles, "Home Security Systems Initiative" and "AGWG Talks Trash," do not constitute an AGWG endorsement of services. They only examine the opportunity to subscribe to these services at a discounted rate for members of the AGWG Civic Association. Any agreement to contract with any of these services is strictly between the subscriber and the service company.

AGWG needs team players

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

to represent the concerns
of the residents

to the AGWG Civic Association officers.

For more information,
contact Joe Giacalone.

(301) 598-6097

renman1@mac.com

Safe at home

Study of home security vendors shows disparities

By Joan Donoghue,

Membership Committee, Project Leader

Representatives of the five Maryland-based home security firms ranked highest in the most recent Consumer Checkbook came to my home in June to provide installation estimates. The background information and observations that follow were offered during assessments of my home, in response to the questions that appear in the evaluation grid at the end of the article.

None of these local firms offers low-cost, one-size-fits-all base packages, unlike many large national companies. Pricing is based on the individual customer's security needs and the labor costs associated with the house's layout and selected devices.

Hybrids are hot

All firms suggested a "hybrid" alarm system for my home, with some hardwired components and some wireless components, perhaps because there are no unfinished areas in my house.

Hardwired systems are suggested for customers who want a system that will continue functioning for a decade or more. Wireless components are more prone to failure, and rapidly evolving technology means that comparable replacement units may not be available over long periods of time. Total cost for hardwired systems is typically not much more than hybrid systems, because the lower cost of hardwired components offsets labor costs of running (and hiding) wires. Another advantage of a hardwired system is that you can mix and match components from various manufacturers.

No firm recommended tying carbon monoxide monitoring into an alarm system, although most will install if requested. These sensors must be replaced every five years at a maximum, and it's far more cost-effective to buy devices from the local hardware store.

Customers who primarily want to protect

the house from entry when they are not at home can get a system for less than \$1,500, to include keypads, door sensors, and motion detectors. Price escalates rapidly if the customer wants "perimeter protection" to prevent entry when they are home, due to the cost of contact sensors on every ground floor window or glass breakage listening devices covering likely entry points.

Key fobs: more trouble than they're worth?

Most firms cautioned strongly against the use of key fobs. If a criminal gets your key fob in addition to your vehicle (or the contents of your glove box), they'll know the location of your house from the registration and can disable the alarm system. Key fobs are also extremely easy to activate accidentally.

Monitoring services call the homeowner when a device is tripped and ask for a password. If no answer or the wrong password is given, emergency agencies are contacted. The monitoring service's response can be customized.

The firms that employ out-of-town monitoring services claim that there is no advantage in local service, since they guarantee a one-minute response time; a more important criterion is whether a service is large enough to be fully staffed on holidays. One firm claimed local service is preferable because they are familiar with local codes and laws.

Hardwiring required

Monitoring service requires hardwired installation of the control panel, which is located in an inconspicuous location, usually in the basement; remote sensors can be wireless in a hybrid system.

All firms said they could customize existing systems and take over monitoring if they're not locked out by proprietary programming, as is occasionally done by major national companies.

Maximum Security and Potomac Security
Continued on page 7

Safe at home

Study of home security vendors shows disparities

Continued from page 6

Systems appeared to be the most cost-effective (perhaps due to lower overhead associated with smaller operations). Their principals were extremely knowledgeable in the home security field, with backgrounds as an electrician and electrical engineer, respectively. I was unable to rank one above the other, although it should be noted that Potomac offers a free remote keypad in the most convenient location to enter/exit the house if the required hardwired keypad can't be installed in a convenient location. Both offered a discount in the event of multiple AGWG installations.

Interamerican could be the best choice for homeowners with higher security requirements, those fearful of being attacked in their home because of their profession or remote location of their home, or those needing to protect firearms

from theft. Interamerican claims they can design systems that will give verbal alerts or notify authorities before intruders reach the house, and have a long list of references from judges, the state attorney general, churches, Montgomery County Public Schools, retail establishments, and telecommunications companies. Their representative described the measures taken (and extra days to install) to ensure that their systems are failsafe for years, to include using bolts instead of nails, copper melding and heat-sink soldering. No discount based on multiple AGWG installations is available.

Although each of the five firms interviewed had excellent ratings in all of Checkbook's major categories, the grid contains responses from the three companies whose proposals most closely matched my individual security needs.

<u>FEATURE</u>	Interamerican Security	Maximum Security	Potomac Security Systems
Activation/disarming with one-touch button rather than numeric code	Yes; not recommended	Yes	Yes; not recommended
Alert (verbal) from system when specific door is opened when system is not armed	Yes	Yes, +\$40 for verbal-capable keypad	Yes, with more expensive keypad
Basement wetness monitoring, cost per wireless sensor	\$150	\$100; (\$60 wired)	\$120
Closed-circuit camera installation available; cost estimate	High-end equipment; \$1,000+	No	No
Carbon monoxide monitoring available; sensor cost	Yes, not recommended	Yes, not recommended; \$98	No, not recommended

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<i>Continued from page 7</i>	Interamerican Security	Maximum Security	Potomac Security Systems
Corporate presence in Washington area; year beginning	1981; selective hiring protocol	1978	1984, full-time business since 1995
Discount on cost offered for multiple AGWG installations	None; but "If you don't think you got good value, it's free!"	10% with five commitments; rebates possible	10% with two commitments
Door-Window contact sensors, cost each	\$50-\$55 wireless	\$52 wireless	\$60 wireless
Exterior (yard, deck) security options available	Yes, including noise-makers and/or police notification	No; wildlife trigger false alarms	Not recommended because of false alarms; use floor stress sensors
Fire detection monitoring; option cost	\$50-\$150 per sensor, technology dependent	\$90 per sensor	\$120; add \$20 to get low temp detection
Glass-breakage acoustic listening device (10x12 panes or >); cost each	\$100	\$85 wireless; \$65 hardwired	\$120 wireless
Keyfob device; option price	Not recommended; \$65	\$68, programmable unit	\$65; important to call to report loss
Monitoring service			
Cancel if sell home?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cost complications if switch to monitoring service using existing equipment	None	None	None
Minimum contract length	0	0	1 yr.
Location	Silver Spring, MD with 4 national backups	Hunt Valley, MD	Syracuse, NY; 1-min. callback response; GSM add \$15
Minimum monthly fee	\$24; \$34 with wireless web/camera monitoring	\$20	\$24
<i>Continued on page 9</i>			

<i>Continued from page 8</i>	Interamerican Security	Maximum Security	Potomac Security Systems
Motion detectors at major points of entry into home or with full-room range, cost each	\$100 pet immune	\$100 pet immune	\$120 pet immune
Senior monitoring pendant (medical alert); option price	\$50-\$150 depending on frequency	\$65	\$60 pendant or beltclip
Signage provided (yard signs and window stickers)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Siren Exterior, option price	\$100-\$150 (tampered)	\$60, usually included in base installation	Not recommended due to false alarms
Siren Interior; option cost if not in base-level system	\$50	included	included
Siren activation/panic button available on keypad	Yes	Yes	Yes
Waiting period (avg.) between assessment and installation	8 weeks	10 days maximum; often few days	10-14 days
Installation charge for additional devices after initial installation (wireless components)	\$0	\$0 if single/few trips	\$0
Address	7212 Righters Mill Road, Derwood, MD	1702 Picadilly Rd., Crofton, MD	9821 Kendale Rd, Potomac, MD
Phone number	301.840.0004	301.261.3600	301.767.0039

AGWG Officers & Board of Directors

Joel Mazelis, president -- 301.598.8553
Ernst Benjamin, vice president -- 301.598.2211
Mary Beth Broring, secretary -- 301.438.3554
Lynn Murphy, treasurer -- 301.598.3236

Joan Donoghue, Webmaster -- 301.438.0929
Greg Marsh, editor -- 301.438.9729
Joe Giacalone -- 301.598.6097
Roger Manno -- 301.425.6523
Dave Remondini -- 301.924.4531

AGWG talks trash

You could save more than \$300 per year

Your Civic Association initiated a project to seek discounts from current neighborhood trash collection companies to save our members' money while increasing membership in the association. We now report on this successful initiative. After receiving bids, the lowest bid that also provided the most variety of services came from Potomac Disposal Inc., a small business located in Rockville, Md.

The good news

Quarterly rates for AGWG members who contract with Potomac Disposal Inc. will be as follows:

Once-a-week curbside collection - \$21.
Twice-a-week curbside collection - \$24.
Once-a-week garage door pickups - \$55.50.
Twice-a-week garage door pickups - \$67.50.
(Optional) 90-gallon containers rented @ \$3 a month. Collections are on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Potomac Disposal will provide one free bulk pickup per year on an on-call basis. The above rates are locked in until August 2009.

Payments are due in advance on a quarterly basis. Check these quarterly rates against your last trash bill. You will discover a saving of from \$48 to more than \$300 annually. Just one more reason to be a

member of your Civic Association, the AGWG!

Membership has its privileges

Only AGWG members will receive the negotiated discounted rate. To participate, contact Potomac Disposal (301.294.9700) and identify yourself as a member of the AGWG. For just \$20 a year, you can become a member of the AGWG Civic Association and benefit from this and future discount programs. If you are not presently a member of AGWG, please fill out the enclosed membership application and return it promptly.

When you enroll (or renew with Potomac), tell Potomac you are a AGWG member. Give Potomac Disposal Inc. your street address to verify your membership and obtain the applicable AGWG discount of your choice.

Two weeks' notice

If you decide to change your trash collection to Potomac Disposal, notify Potomac Disposal approximately two weeks before your current contract expires. Also notify your current contractor that you will not be renewing your contract at the time the quarterly payment is due.

This proposal by the AGWG does not constitute an endorsement of Potomac Disposal Inc. and its services, but only the opportunity to subscribe to these services at a discounted rate for members of the AGWG. An agreement to subscribe to these services is between the subscriber and Potomac Disposal Inc. only.

Montgomery County's trash collection

In the spring 2007 AGWG News,

President Mazelis discussed Montgomery County's trash collection rate of \$66 per year, a rate lower than Potomac Disposal. However, the County provides only once a week curbside collections and

limits trash container sizes to 15-32 gallons.

If the majority voted for County collection, all residents would be bound by once a week curbside collections on Mondays. The AGWG Board of Directors decided that it should not be involved in a process that would mandate a certain type of collection service.

Don MacIntyre, as a member of the AGWG Membership Committee, coordinated this project on behalf of the AGWG. For a detailed look at the comparative analysis conducted by the AGWG visit our Web site at www.agwgcivicassociation.org.

***Just one more reason
to be a member of
your Civic Association,
the AGWG!***

**Allanwood-Gayfields-
Willson Hills-Gaywoods Estates Civic Association, Inc. (AGWG)
AGWG FY 2007 (Nov. 1, 2007 – Oct. 31, 2008)**

AGWG Membership Application

Your dues are important. You can make a difference in the quality of life in our community just with your dues payment. Our budget supports:

- * NEWSLETTER
- * WEB PAGE: AGWGCivicAssociation.org
- * EVER-POPULAR HALLOWEEN PARADE
- * WELCOME WAGON
- * MOWING THE TRIANGLE
- * ENABLES YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION TO BETTER SERVE OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

**Please remit your Annual Dues of \$20 (prorated after April 1).
THANK YOU.**

Please make checks payable to:

AGWG Civic Association
c/o Joseph Giacalone
15417 Tierra Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20906

Dues	\$ <u>20</u>
Additional Donation	\$ ____
Total	\$ ____

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone #: _____

The AGWG has a couple of openings in the following areas:

* **Committee Chairperson or Co-Committee Chairperson**

* **Serve on a Committee:**

ICC - Membership - Newsletter - Web - Roads - Welcome Wagon

Public Relations - Garden Club - Crime Watch

Comments, including special concerns or issues you'd like addressed: _____
