

NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2015

We Need Your Help to Document Street and Sidewalk Conditions

By Laura Hussey

At the October NFCCA meeting, several neighbors asked for an agenda item to be added to discuss the poor condition of streets in the neighborhood. While many of us have been calling 311 to report potholes, the condition of many neighborhood streets and some sidewalks continues to deteriorate and the entire neighborhood is overdue for resurfacing. The NFCCA Board discussed this

issue at its November meeting and would like your help to compile detailed information on street and sidewalk conditions. The plan is to compile a list of locations and document these with pictures, which we will be able to use in our discussions with the county.

Here's how you can help: If the street, curb, or sidewalk near your home has deteriorated, please send an email to nfcca@verizon.net with "STREETS" in the subject line as soon as possible, but ideally by 1 January 2016. In the email, include both the location and a description of the problem. For example, "Edgewood Avenue in front of 10301, deep pothole" or "Lockridge at Dennis, curb is crumbling." If you don't have access to email, mail or drop off the information to any NFCCA Board member (see list of Board members on page 3) or bring it to the December NFCCA meeting.

Once we receive your list of locations, volunteers will organize the information into lists that can be mapped and additional volunteers will photograph the conditions. Armed with this evidence, we

Next Meeting on December Ninth

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 9 December 2015, at 7:30 p.m. at Forest Knolls Elementary School, 10830 Eastwood Ave., just off Caddington Ave. (there's no access from other sections of Eastwood). Our representatives from the Maryland State General Assembly have been invited to speak briefly (accepted as of press time = ✓):

- Sen. Roger Manno (✓)
- Rep. Bonnie Cullison (✓)
- Rep. Ben Kramer (✓)
- Rep. Maricé Morales (✓).

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 are \$10 per household and may be paid at the meeting.)■

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Still Waiting for the Grass to Grow: Park Mgr. Answers Our Questions

By Carolyn Ibici

The new playground has brought a lot of families to the park! And many folks are taking advantage of the trails for walking, jogging, and exercising. Here's an update via questions answered (in italics) by Miriam Elsasser, the Project Manager for North Four Corners Park.

When Will the Park Open?

The official opening will be in the spring. I will send you a notice once it is prepared. The field is having additional work and will not be available for use this year.

Why does the soccer field have lines dug into it marked with different colors?

We are using this park as a test subject to provide irrigation in a local park. Also, they are presently working on the field to improve the grass. We have not taken over this area from the contractor since the grass did not meet our specifications.



What about the grass in field next to playground?

We are hoping the grass will come in more this Fall. This part of the park was taken over by our maintenance staff.

A handicapped-accessible porta-potty appeared in the neighborhood parking lot but it has been placed directly behind the handicapped parking, which impedes anyone who would need to use the parking space. Can it be moved?

The company dropped it off at the wrong location. The Park Manager has been notified and it will be moved to the enclosure near the new parking lot.

On the playground equipment, a child had a severe fall in the web structure, bouncing from rope to rope, lay stunned, but got up and seemed to be fine. Is it safe?

Thank you for the information. I have sent to the appropriate people.

All of our playground equipment is certified to be safe by IPEMA [International Play Equipment Manufacturers Association]. It seems that the piece performed as designed. The way the webbing is made, children can't fall very far until the webbing catches them. When we design playgrounds, the principle is that we remove all hazards but you need to provide risks for the children, otherwise it doesn't help them to develop. There are a number of these webs—including larger ones—in our parks and have had no problems.

Invasive plants are overtaking new landscaping.

We have already done four treatments to the park. Invasive removal has to be

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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NFCCA General List Serve

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- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): nfcca@yahoogroups.com

Northwood Parents List Serve

- Subscribe (send an email to): northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): northwoodparents@yahoogroups.com ■

NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the ~1,485 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.

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Visit Our Website

www.nfcca.org

Our Questions on No. 4 Corners Park Answered by Park Manager

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

done by highly trained people. We still have more treatments under contract. The problem is that the seeds are in the soil. I am told that they can still germinate four to five years after the plants are removed. The fencing was for deer protection. I think that the head of the weed worrier program was going to see if they can get volunteers to take over the park once we are finished with our treatments.



The base of the drains are at different heights; one of them in particular looks like an animal or small child could slip in. Why aren't the grates extending over the whole piece?

The water is supposed to stay in the area for infiltra-



tion. It goes in to the storm drain once it reaches the level of the weir (entry). Everything that was done was approved by Montgomery Department of Permitting Services, [which] inspects these facilities as used throughout the County.

There is an old bench that was dedicated to someone who lived in the neighborhood. It does not seem to have been included in the cleaning up of the park. It would be nice to have it cared for.

This area will be treated for invasives. This area is out of our contractors' limits of disturbance. Eventually, it will fall to the park maintenance staff to keep mowed. I am sure that the park staff will work on that area. ■



2015-2016 NFCCA Meeting Calendar

9 December 2015
10 February 2016
13 April 2016
8 June 2016

All dates are *tentative*, depending on space at Forest Knolls Elementary School.

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association serves for one year and meets every month except July and August. Current officers (until October 2016) are:

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Wishing you and yours a happy holiday season



Making Your Own Fermented Foods: Kombucha

By Risi Idiokitas

What is Kombucha?

Does anyone need a SCOBY? *A what??* SCOBY stands for “Symbiotic Colony of Yeast and Bacteria” and it’s the key ingredient needed to make kombucha. Kombucha is a fermented drink made from sweet tea that has many health benefits.

Thought to have originated in China centuries ago, kombucha was later popularized in Russia, and now has spread throughout the world. You can even find kombucha in the healthy beverage section in Safeway right up the street.

Why Drink It?

To be honest, most people aren’t drinking kombucha because of its great taste. Really, kombucha has grown in popularity because of its many health benefits. Through fermentation, the good bacteria and yeast in the SCOBY feed on the sugar in the tea and, in the process, create an acidic, vitamin- and probiotic-rich beverage. Kombucha contains high levels of antioxidants, B vitamins, probiotics, and glucaric acid. It has been reported to have a variety of health benefits, including cleansing and detoxification, immune support, increased energy, improved digestion, and helping the body absorb nutrients.

Making Kombucha at Home

If you want to try kombucha, you can buy a bottle, but you can also make it yourself. Making kombucha at home is

cheap and easy.

The first thing you need is a SCOBY. You can order one online, but the best and easiest way to get one is to find a friend or neighbor with a spare. The SCOBY used to make a first batch of kombucha is called the “mother.” Each time a new batch is made, a new SCOBY is created and this is the “baby” SCOBY.

So, if you know someone who makes kombucha at home they are probably very eager to find new homes for their baby SCOBYs. Once you’ve got a SCOBY, the rest is very easy. You will need:

- a gallon-size glass jar (you can stop in at Five Guys and ask if they have any empty pickle jars you can have, they usually do);
- one gallon of brewed sweetened tea (one cup of regular sugar per gallon of black or green tea);
- a SCOBY and ½ cup of liquid from a previous batch of kombucha (from the same place you got the SCOBY);
- coffee filter or thin cloth; and
- a rubber band.

Before you begin, anything that will touch the kombucha needs to be thoroughly washed and rinsed.

To start, brew a pot of tea. For one gallon of water, use one cup of sugar and six to eight tea bags. Once the tea



has cooled, pour it into your gallon jar, then pour in the ½ cup of saved kombucha and the SCOBY, which should float at the top of the jar. Do not let any metal touch the SCOBY or kombucha once it’s in the jar.

Your kombucha needs to breathe, so don’t put a lid on it, just cover the opening with

the coffee filter and secure it tightly with a rubber band. Store it in a warm place out of direct sunlight and allow it to ferment for at least 10 days. When your Kombucha is ready it will be tart and slightly sweet, the longer it ferments, the tarter it will get.

I enjoy a glass of our homebrewed Kombucha every morning. Between myself, my husband, and two kids, we drink so much that we’ve recently upgraded our one-gallon jar to a two-gallon jar with a spigot! I’ve also started making flavored Kombucha “soda” which is a big hit, especially with kids.

I’m a pediatric acupuncturist and I often recommend my patients drink four ounces (½ cup) per day, especially if they are having any immune or digestive issues. If you are curious about this fermented concoction, I encourage you to try some for yourself.

[Risi Idiokitas lives on Chiswell Lane.]

A Picture Essay of Our Four Little Free Libraries

By Jacquie Bokow

Our four Little Free Libraries are installed! Here are their locations. Please feel free to “Take a Book, Return a Book” and read!



10602 Lockridge Drive
At the Ride-On Bus stop.



1203 Caddington Avenue
Near the entrance to FKES.



115 Southwood Avenue
Near No. Four Corners Park.



The fancifully decorated LFL at 404 Hannes Street (behind Forest Knolls Elementary School) includes a quotation from W. Somerset Maugham (right) and the advice (above) that “A good book is a whole new world.” Best of all, it’s topped with a silver, winged pig (center)!



404 Hannes Street

Seven of Our Neighborhood Streets Appear on 'The 1,000 Most Popular Street Names in the U.S.'

By Jacquie Bokow

In an article in the 6 March 2015 *Washington Post*, Jeff Guo, using road data from the 2014 U.S. Census, "counted, literally, every road in America." The top name? "Park," which also is number one in Maryland. (In Virginia, it's "Lee.")

"Out of over a million roads in the United States, 9,640 are named "Park." Only 8,232 are named "2nd," or "Second," which had been considered the most popular from the 1993 Census report." But "Second" is still a more popular road name than "First," probably, speculates Guo, because so many towns

call their primary thoroughfare "Main" instead of "First."

Trees, numbers, and presidents are the most popular names for streets. Guo thinks this is understandable, given that these "are practical, inoffensive choices." Surnames are common too, he says. "Or else we name our streets after landmarks: Hill (3,942) or School (2,610) or Airport (2,393)."

Road names, says Guo, are "pieces of history. They encode the culture and geography of America. In Arizona, popular street names are Apache, Palo Verde, Mesquite. In New Mexico, Cedar and Pinon top the list; in Colorado,

it's Aspen and Spruce." In the South, "Magnolia" and "Dogwood" are popular, while "Maple" heads lists in the North.

In the West and Midwest, the most common street name is a number, usually either "First" or "Second."

Hawaii's state flower is the Lehua; it's also the most popular street name there.

"Jackson" is in the Top 10 in Alabama, Mississippi, and Virginia, "but not any other president, not even Washington," says Guo. "In his home state of Illinois, Lincoln makes the top 10, but Washington doesn't."

Compare our neighborhood streets below. ■

Top 10 St. Names in U.S.			Top 10 St. Names in Md.			Our Neighborhood Roads Appearing on the U.S. List		
RANK	STREET	NUMBER	RANK	STREET	NUMBER	RANK	STREET	NUMBER
1.	Park	9,640	1.	Park	108	121.	Edgewood	2,332
2.	2nd/Second	8,232	2.	Oak	93	245.	Pinewood	1,588
3.	Oak	8,191	3.	Maple	91	479.	University	1,079
4.	1st/First	8,151	4.	Cedar	80	603.	Eastwood	943
5.	3rd/Third	7,748	5.	Holly	77	670.	Woodridge	907
6.	Maple	7,608	6.	Pine	76	723.	Northwood	857
7.	Pine	7,013	7.	Washington	72	884.	Dennis	743
8.	4th/Fourth	6,914	8.	Church	70	<i>These are the only roads in our neighborhood which appear on the U.S. list.</i>		
9.	Cedar	6,805	9.	Walnut	65			
10.	Main	6,472	10.	1st/First	63			

Help Us Document Street and Sidewalk Conditions

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

will be in a better position to work with county staff and elected officials to get appropriate action.

We need as many neighbors as possible to identify locations with poor conditions. If you can spare a little

time to help, we could use additional help with: (1) compiling organized lists of locations to be photographed, and (2) photography. For the first task, you will need access to a computer and basic spreadsheet skills. For the second, experience with technical

photography would be excellent but is not required. If you are willing to assist with either of these additional tasks, please contact an NFCCA Board member. (See the list of Board members on page 3, or send info to the main email at nfccca@verizon.net.) ■



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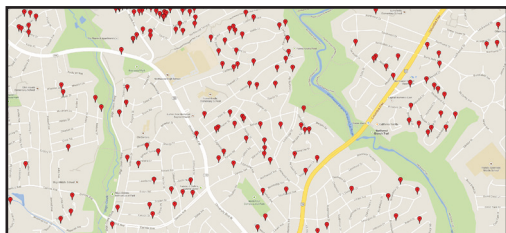
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My Neighborhood Transactions

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The Race to Recycle: MoCo, PGCo in Competition

By Carole A. Barth

This past April 22 we celebrated the 45th anniversary of Earth Day. So here's an Earth Day trivia question: *Which NFCCA resident was involved with the very first Earth Day in 1970?* (See the end of the article for the answer.) In 1970, with the emergence of Earth Day, 3,000 drop-off centers were started. By the late 1970s, these grew into curbside recycling programs demanded by citizens that now serve every city in the country. More people recycle than vote in the U.S.

That's all well and good, but, as you put out your blue bins of recyclables every week, do you ever wonder how much we're recycling as a county? Recently, the Maryland Department of the Environment released the official numbers for waste diversion and recycling in calendar year 2013. Prince George's County (PGCo) ranks number one in the state for waste diversion with a rate of 64.53%. MoCo is number two, with a waste diversion rate of 60.18%.

The waste diversion rate is a measure of how much waste is kept out of the landfill (or incinerator) through recycling and source reduction activities combined. Source reduction means stopping waste before it happens. Source reduction activities include practices such as:

- bringing your own travel mug instead of using a disposable cup;
- using containers to store leftovers and pack lunches instead of disposable wrap;

■ using rags or towels to clean spills instead of paper towels; and

■ bringing your own reusable shopping bags instead of getting disposable paper or plastic bags.

Each County receives a source reduction credit based on how much waste they have avoided. Both MoCo and PGCo received the maximum source reduction credit of 5%. The source reduction credit added to the recycling rate equals the waste diversion rate. Thus, PGCo's waste diversion rate is 64.53% (59.53% recycling rate plus 5% source reduction credit).



Looking at only recycling, neither County has the number one recycling rate in the State. That honor goes to Washington County, with a recycling rate of 61.89%. PGCo is number two at 59.53%, and MoCo is number three at 55.18%. You can see all the counties' numbers at www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Land/RecyclingandOperationsprogram/StateAgencyRecycling/Documents/recyclables%20by%20commodity%202013.pdf.

So what's next? MoCo has

adopted a goal of recycling 70% of waste generated by the end of calendar year 2020. Key to achieving that rate will be increasing recycling by the commercial sector. Historically, residential recycling rates in MoCo have far outstripped commercial recycling rates, even though businesses in MoCo are required to have recycling programs.

Meanwhile, PGCo is pursuing the goal of zero waste. PGCo is quickly scaling up its pilot food waste composting program with the target of providing food-scrap composting countywide by 2016. PGCo is also reviewing proposals for a new resource recovery park that would replace the landfill and consolidate recycling, waste-stream mining, composting, and energy generation activities into a single location.

Technologies successfully producing energy outputs from waste including pyrolysis, gasification, anaerobic digestion, plasma torch, or other conversion methods producing a fuel or energy product, such as electricity, syngas, synfuel, steam, and/or usable heat at a municipal scale will be considered by PGCo. This technology may be used in concert with other high- or low-tech resource recovery systems.

Finally, in order to be sure that PGCo employees "talk their talk and walk their walk," our offices have been stripped of the usual desk-side trashcans. The large cans have been replaced by minia-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)

County Executive Continues Pursuit of Multi-Billion Dollar BRT Projects Despite Public Opposition

By Jim Zepp

As previously reported in this newsletter, the County government has adopted a plan that would build nine Bus Rapid Transit routes on many of the major roadways. Because of the expense and complexities of construction, only three of these routes (Rockville Pike, Viers Mill Road, and Colesville Road) and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), which also involves buses, are being currently studied.

Following his withdrawal of a hurriedly proposed state legislation enabling the creation of an Independent Transit Authority (ITA) last January, the County Executive reconvened his Transit Task Force in April to study financing options for constructing and operating this BRT system. With the addition of some new members (including myself) and a majority from the original 2012 Task Force that recommended the BRT system, the 33 members met almost weekly through the beginning of October.

The Task Force's final report was issued on 29 October 2015. Among its findings were:

- The capital costs to build and equip a Phase 1 of the three BRT routes and the CCT would be **\$2.3 billion**. However, these are very general estimates since no actual engineering/design studies have been done for any of the BRT routes and the CCT is at 30% of its design studies.

- The total financing costs



County Executive Ike Leggett

(principal plus interest) for the Phase 1 development of these routes over 30 years would be **\$5.7 billion**. This assumes a 3.86% interest rate, but the actual rate would be whatever the prevailing rate is at the time that the bonds are sold to pay for the BRT.

- The annual operating costs are estimated as being **\$93 million**.

- No additional costs were estimated for subsequent Phases of the three BRT routes and the CCT as well as the other six BRT routes planned for an undetermined future date.

- This assumes a frequency of a BRT vehicle with a total capacity of 115 passengers every five minutes during rush hours and every 10 in nonrush hour periods. This is despite an estimate that Colesville Road has only 60% of the demand set as the BRT minimum standard by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Rockville Pike and Viers Mill Road having only 25% of the FTA minimum demand.

- If funded only through property taxes, the cost of the initial BRT Phases would mean an increase of **\$381 a year** for 30 years for a home with an average value of \$440,000.

- Since the Task Force leadership considered \$300 to be the maximum acceptable property tax increase, various combinations of a local sales tax, an excise tax on commercial and multifamily rental properties, and \$40 million a year from an undetermined Federal or State source were calculated for the amount over \$300 to develop a politically acceptable financing plan for the BRT. No specific tax plan was recommended.

- Although the Task Force envisioned the taxes to pay for the BRT would start in 2017, actual BRT service would not begin until 2021 to 2027 depending on the route and assuming nothing goes wrong in the design and construction phases.

- The Task Force recommended the ITA as the only alternative for building and operating the BRT system.

At its 7 October 2015 meeting, 12 of the Task Force members voted to approve the final report, three members voted against, and 18 members were absent. Three minority reports were submitted. The County Chamber of Commerce also issued a statement opposing the Task Force's recommendation for creating an ITA. The final report

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The MoCo, PGCo Race to Recycle

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

ture trash cans (a little smaller than a one-pound coffee can) emblazoned with the slogan, "This is all the trash I make."

On the state level, the Department of the Environment has announced a state-wide zero waste goal. The state plan aims to divert 85% of what's now being buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, and to recycle 80% of it by 2040. Planned actions include: enhanced waste management reporting; new source reduction requirements; augmented composting, recycling, and reuse guidance and mandates; clean energy recovery incentives; expanded materials and process bans; numerous government lead-by-example initiatives; and market and job creation inducements. You can download the plan at www.mde.state.md.us/programs/Marylander/Documents/Zero_Waste_Plan_Draft_12.15.14.pdf.

(Answer: Jim Zepp was involved in the very first Earth Day.) ■

Leggett, BRT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10)

and related documents are available at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/transit-task-force-2015/report.html.

In recognition of the overwhelming community opposition to his BRT/ITA proposals expressed at multiple public forums and indications from the County's State Legisla-

What the Street Markings Mean

By Sondra Katz

Wondered about the rainbow of colors and the lines and shapes you are seeing on our neighborhood streets? It turns out there is some meaning in the seeming randomness. The colors indicate which utility either has underground infrastructure or future construction and the shapes and lines give an indication of how deep and the flow direction. Here are the codes:

Yellow—Washington Gas

Blue—WSSC water

Green—WSSC sewer

Red—PEPCO









Orange—Comcast

Pink or White—proposed replacement of gas pipes (Washington Gas)

These colors were set up by the American Public Works Association. The Common Ground Alliance established the lines and shapes. Using the appropriate color, lines mark where the pipes are whether one or several in the same trench.

Montgomery 311 can tell us what the colors stand for but not which projects the colors and lines relate to.

For more information about the colors, you can read an article at Smithsonian.com entitled "Decoding" by Jimmy Stamp from April 26, 2013, at www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/decoding-the-city-the-road-graffiti-placed-by-utility-workers-42822014/?no-ist. ■

	RED Electric Power Lines, Cables, Conduit and Lighting Cables		GREEN Sewers and Drain Lines
	YELLOW Gas, Oil, Steam, Petroleum or Gaseous Materials		PURPLE Reclaimed Water, Irrigation and Slurry Lines
	ORANGE Communication, Alarm or Signal Lines, Cables or Conduit		PINK Temporary Survey Marking
	BLUE Potable Water		WHITE Proposed Excavation

The American Public Works Association ULCC Color Codes for Marking Excavations (image: LA One Call 811)

tors that any ITA bill would be unlikely to be approved, the County Executive issued a memo on 29 Oct. 2015 stating that he would not resubmit his ITA bill in the State Legislative Session that starts in January 2016, but might in the following year. He

remains convinced that the County citizens and businesses need to be persuaded that the expensive and complex BRT system is a worthwhile investment and that more affordable and immediate alternatives do not merit consideration. ■

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MoCo Pays Agency Directors, Top Executives Some Of the Highest Salaries in D.C. Region and Country

By Jim Zepp

Because the County government is expecting a \$176 million revenue shortfall for the next fiscal year (which starts on 1 July 2016) and may be raising property taxes by 10% or more to maintain current spending levels, Council President George Leventhal requested that the Council's Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) conduct a comparative analysis of the salaries paid to the County agency directors and other top executives. The OLO report was issued on 3 Nov. 2015 and featured some startling information on how well-paid our local agency directors are compared to similar officials in other local governments as well as heads of Federal agencies.

The table below lists the salaries for top MoCo officials.

Most U.S. Cabinet Secretaries are currently paid \$199,700.

Among the OLO report findings for agency directors are:

- Among 20 local governments and the two Federal classifications, Montgomery County had the third highest average salary for director positions at \$206,685. Montgomery County's average was 15.5% higher than the average for all the jurisdictions combined. The number of directors varies by jurisdiction, ranging from 13 to 54.

- Montgomery County's average director salary was highest among the D.C.-Baltimore region jurisdictions included in this report. Baltimore County was the next highest at \$186,973, 9.5% below Montgomery.

- Fairfax County's average director salary was \$169,623, 17.9% below Montgomery County. However, Fairfax had 39 positions in this category compared to 27 in Montgomery. Limiting the calculation to Fairfax County's 27 highest-paid director positions results in an average salary of \$182,526, 11.7% below Montgomery.

For top execs who are not

agency heads, the findings were:

- Among eight total jurisdictions with separate data for non-director, executive management positions, Montgomery County had the highest average salary at \$167,657 for 22 employees. The average of all the locations was \$151,956, 9.4% below Montgomery's average.

- Fairfax County, the only other jurisdiction in the region where OLO was able to obtain this data, had an average salary of \$144,205 for 58 positions, 14% below Montgomery.

The complete report is available at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2015_Reports/OLOMemorandum-Report2016-1.pdf. As the possibility of County residents and businesses having to pay hundreds more in property taxes next year looms ahead, the County's spending practices including executive compensation will be among the topics discussed. ■

Montgomery County, Maryland			
Director or Equivalent Positions and FY16 Base Salary			
Chief Administrative Officer	\$303,097.60	Director of Human Resources	\$210,121.60
Police Chief	\$239,574.40	Director of Correction and Rehabilitation	\$206,003.20
Council Administrator	\$233,001.60	Director of Housing and Community Affairs	\$206,003.20
Director of Health and Human Services	\$228,384.00	Fire Chief, Fire/Rescue Service	\$206,003.20
Acting Director of Transportation	\$223,496.00	Acting Director of Economic Development	\$198,848.00
Director of Finance	\$216,340.80	Director of Procurement	\$190,548.80
Director of Management and Budget	\$216,340.80	Director of Liquor Control	\$189,779.20
Director of Technology Services	\$215,113.60	Director of Public Information	\$187,761.60
Director of Intergovernmental Relations	\$212,555.20	Director of Recreation	\$184,308.80
County Attorney	\$210,142.40	Administrative Hearing Examiner	\$169,915.20
Director of General Services	\$210,142.40	Director of Office of Consumer Protection	\$165,297.60
Director of Permitting Services	\$210,142.40	Director of Office of Legislative Oversight	\$164,257.60
Director of Public Libraries	\$210,142.40	Inspector General	\$163,072.00
Director of Environmental Protection	\$210,121.60	Average \$206,685.75	

HISTORY CORNER(S)

The Northwood Ranch House Could Be MoCo's First

By David Rotenstein

The community builders who laid out the lots and constructed the first homes in Northwood Park were skilled real estate entrepreneurs. The people who owned Garden Homes, Inc., selected an attractive and accessible site for their subdivisions. And, they built homes finished in popular styles they knew would sell quickly.

One home built in 1939 stood out from all of the Cape Cods and English Cottage period revival homes they built. It was a fully modernist home plucked from cutting-edge California. Several years before other builders were marketing their own California cottages in suburban Maryland, Northwood Park's builders completed what may be the earliest ranch-style house in Montgomery County.

Ranch houses originated in California in the early 1920s. As a distinct style, the

ranch house emerged as a regional adaptation of traditional adobe architecture and more modern architectural trends. Within two decades of their introduction, ranch houses were being built in residential subdivisions from coast to coast. By the 1960s, the ranch house was the most popular house style in the United States.

Ranch houses are distinguished by several features. They are one-story buildings that emphasize horizontality. They typically are constructed with open interior plans, low-pitched hip or side-gable roofs, and attached front-facing garages. Ranch houses frequently have large picture windows and, in later years, sliding glass doors.

Many architectural historians credit the well-known builder Carl Freeman with bringing ranch houses to Montgomery County after World War II. He called

them "brick ramblers of progressive design." The residential subdivisions that Freeman began in 1948 in Takoma Park featured what he called "California Cottages." Freeman's homes featured a "great expanse of glass," modern appliances, and radiant heating.

Although Freeman was the first to build entire ranch house subdivisions, there were isolated California-style—ranch—houses built in suburban Washington. These include a stone rambler in Arlington completed in 1942 and the Northwood Park "California-type home" completed in 1939.

According to a brief *Washington Post* article published in June 1939, Garden Homes, Inc., custom-built the California-type home for former Silver Spring residents William and Virginia Wright. The following year, U.S. Cen-

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

California Type Home in Northwood Park, Md.



Source: *The Washington Post*, 25 June 1939.



The Northwood Park ranch house on Sutherland Road. Photo by the author.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

sus enumerators found the Wrights—both in their early thirties—living in the new home with their one-year-old daughter, Beverley, and Mrs. Wright’s 62-year-old mother.

Wright was an Iowa native who worked as a watchmaker; his wife was a D.C. native. The *Post* article noted that the home’s design derived from a *Life* magazine article but it did not indicate whether the idea to build the home originated with the Wrights or the developers. The article simply described the new house as a “charming California traditional-type house” with the same all-gas appliances that were being installed in the New York World’s Fair Home being built one block away. [See the October 2009 *Northwood News* for that story.]

The Wright house was a typical early ranch-style

home. It was a one-story building with a low-pitched hip roof, an interior chimney, a recessed front entry, and a projecting attached garage. The 1939 photograph published in the *Post* shows double-hung windows and wood shutters. Seventy-six years later, the only significant changes to the home’s exterior appear to be a new garage door and the removal of the shutters.

This was the first truly contemporary home built in Northwood Park. After the Second World War ended, new homes continued to be built that reflected earlier aesthetics, i.e., brick Colonial Revival homes. By the early 1950s, however, ranch houses had penetrated housing markets nationwide and the ranch house replaced the Cape Cod as the most popular American home.

In the Washington area and in other Eastern communities, many architects and builders abandoned the early associations with California by calling their homes “ramblers” instead of ranch houses. The local preference for “rambler” rather than “ranch” first appeared in the 1940s and it is reflected in the sales ads for homes in Northwood Park subdivisions developed in the 1950s and 1960s.

Located on Sutherland Road, initially known as “Maplewood Ave.,” the early ranch house was an inconspicuous hint at architectural changes that swept through the neighborhood during the Cold War. Like the 1939 World’s Fair Home and the other model homes that the developers built between 1936 and 1939, the former Wright home is a modest yet enduring link to our neighborhood’s past. ■



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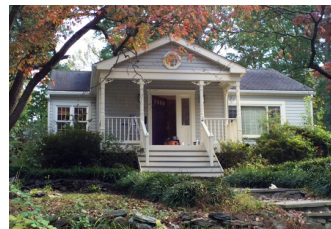
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