

KPCA News

Newsletter of the Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.

Volume 20, Issue 1 • April 2014

Board of Directors' Corner

For this issue "President's Corner" is becoming "Board of Directors' Corner", a collective expression of the KPCA Board. President Ken Rubinson is off on a well-deserved vacation. The Board wishes to share its thoughts on the state of our Association and coming challenges.

Over the last year there has been a decline in subscribers to the security patrol and also the basic membership that does not include patrol services. There are probably several reasons for this, including an increasing number of rentals who don't feel a long-term commitment to our neighborhood, a belief that the crime rate is too low to justify an investment in a patrol (although there is reason to believe that the patrol presence has contributed to the low crime rate), a decline in the enthusiasm and energy levels of an aging board for recruiting new members, and the necessary increase in annual fees of the KPCA which probably caused a number of opt-outs.

Most of us have been on the Board for many years and know quite well that there is no significant requirement of time. The Board meets face to face several times a year. The organization has run smoothly for several years, but does need hands at the tiller. Operational issues are discussed through emails, so the time commitment is small.

As longer-term residents know, as recently as the period July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 the KPCA asked residents to accept an annual fee for the security patrol and KPCA membership together of \$282, and for membership only a fee of \$85. In the face of declining enrollment and increasing costs KPCA raised the dues for this year, the period July 1, 2013 to June 30 2014 to \$338, patrol and membership together, and \$100 for membership only. We presently have 200 paid security-patrol memberships, and 32 memberships only (there are 640 households in Kenwood Park). Ten years ago there were 330 security-patrol memberships.

(Continued on page 3)

KPCA Calendar

The Garden Club

See Inside

Book Club

See Inside

General Meeting of KPCA

See next issue

Scheduled for Early June

Voluntarism and The Spirit of Kenwood Park

So you have just sent your last child off to college and you are an empty nester. Or your children are becoming teen-agers and they are beginning to grate on your nerves. Or you have recently retired and are feeling relaxed, even mellow, for the first time in years. You are in the demographic we are surveying to come on our KPCA board or volunteer for any one of a number of activities that make us a sharing and giving community.

If you are gregarious and enjoy interacting with your neighbors but don't want a burdensome and time-consuming task, please consider contacting us.

Us includes your neighbors, President Ken Rubinson, and all of the other board members: Herb Stone, Richard Berney, Foroud Arsnanjani, Linda Chaletzky, Maraline Trager, Paula Whyman, and Edward and Hannah Elson. For their email addresses or phone numbers contact pres@KPCAonline.org or news@kpcasonline.org. or consult the KPCA website.

Ken Rubinson, *President* (301) 263-0452 pres@KPCAonline.org

NEW → Alpha Security: (301) 292-3000 (24/7) Patrol car: (240) 210-6580 ← **NEW**

Visit the KPCA web site: <http://www.kpcasonline.org>

Our District Police Commander Says:

While we continue to be fortunate in the 2nd District and the County with generally decreasing crime rates, the past year has had some significant events which I wanted to bring to your attention, as many closures have been made.

On November 25, 2013, homeowners behind the Wildwood Shopping Center were victims of an armed home invasion. Videos of the suspects were obtained at a nearby business immediately after the event and shared with the public soon after. One of two suspects was identified as Gary J. Lee Thomas of Upper Marlboro. Detectives obtained a warrant for his arrest and he was recently arrested in D.C. on an unrelated charge. He will be transported to Montgomery County for service of that warrant after his release from DC custody. The second suspect is still unknown.

On March 13, 2014, a resident of Chevy Chase had her car taken at gunpoint. Two days later, this car was involved in a pursuit by U.S. Park Police officers in DC where shots were fired. One of these occupants, David Joel Sutton of DC, was determined to be responsible for the original carjacking and warrants are now on file for him which will be served upon his release from US Park Police custody.

Just last week, two suspects broke into a residence in Chevy Chase. After police were alerted, the suspects were spotted nearby and one was arrested after a lengthy foot pursuit. The suspect that was captured has been identified as Michael Keith Muschette of DC. The investigation into the identification of the second suspect is continuing.

All of these suspects live outside of Montgomery County but chose to commit their crimes here. I cannot stress enough that you know your neighbors and your neighborhoods better than anyone else, and you must be our eyes and our ears. If you see someone not familiar to your neighborhood acting in a suspicious manner, please make note of a description of the person and/or any associated vehicle and call our non-emergency number 301-279-8000. Your phone call may help us prevent a crime from occurring and/or discourage these criminals from coming back to Montgomery County. As we move into Spring and hopefully warmer temperatures, there will most likely be more criminal activity especially with suspects breaking into cars. Call us immediately and we will respond as soon as possible to investigate. Please remember to lock your cars and remove any items of value or those that appear to be of value (such as a laptop case). Do not leave spare keys on or inside your vehicles.

On a traffic safety note, officers from the 2nd District are conducting aggressive enforcement of cell phone and texting laws. Traffic officers issued 31 tickets in under one hour today and will continue to do enforcement operations to make our roads safer. One crash on a major artery during rush hour makes life miserable for the rest of us using that

road. Is that text or call really that important to risk your life and the lives of other drivers? Remember – it is against the law for a driver to use their hands to use a handheld telephone while the motor vehicle is in motion. **HANDS FREE AT ALL TIMES WHEN THE CAR IS IN MOTION.** Contrary to popular belief, holding a phone in your hand and using the speakerphone is a violation if the car is in motion. **READING/WRITING/SENDING** texts or other electronic messages is against the law while the car is in the travelled portion of the roadway regardless of whether it is in motion or stopped. Please share this information with your children as I will be asking officers to step up enforcement operations near our schools also.

Thanks for doing your part to keep our neighborhoods, roads and families safe. Please call me if you have any concerns.

NON-EMERGENCY 301-279-8000
EMERGENCY 911

NEW NUMBER FOR THE 2ND DISTRICT:
240-773-6700

Captain David Falcinelli
Commander – 2nd District
301-652-9200

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Board of Directors' Corner — Continued from front page

In an effort to secure more members, the Board has resolved to reduce the fees for the upcoming year starting July 1, 2014. The new fee structure is under review. This will be done even though the KPCA is eating into its reserves at this time. A scale-back in services may be necessary in order to remain viable financially. In a first decision, the Board decided not to have a potluck this year, which normally has come at the end of April. Curtailment of security-patrol hours may become an option at some future time. If we can increase membership none of these options may be necessary. A sufficient response could even result in longer hours of the patrol operation.

The Board is not satisfied with the service provided by Alpha Security, the current security-patrol provider. There have been justified resident complaints. We want to encourage anyone who is not satisfied to contact us through pres@KPCAonline.org or news@kpcasonline.org (or by phone). Your messages are promptly made available to the entire Board. The Board is presently considering a new contractor for this service while still trying to improve Alpha's service. (Alpha has terminated employees because of our complaints.) We are re-stating the services we require the security-patrol to provide our members in another part of this Newsletter.

In accordance with our by-laws, an election for a new Board will be scheduled for June. The date will be publicized in the next Newsletter and on our website. The by-laws require that a meeting of the community open to all members for the purpose of voting be publicized at least 20 days before the vote. However, all residents are welcome to attend the meeting. There will also be an open agenda, and questions concerning KPCA will be welcome. The meeting will take place at Walt Whitman high school.

In the past Board members have been elected by acclamation. This does not have to be the case. There is great interest

in having new members. If the spirit moves you, please contact Ken Rubinson, or any of us to express your interest. As things presently stand, the positions of President and Treasurer may be empty. Ken Rubinson has indicated he will not serve beyond the June time period. The Board is very grateful for his excellent service, and wishes to convey that sentiment to the community.

We wish you a warm and happy Spring!



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The Real Estate World

Let's talk local

Kenwood Park is a community in flux. Where once it was thought that the houses and land were too expensive to become tear downs to make way for new construction, the most recent sales have proven this to be erroneous thinking. On Millwood Road alone, there have been four tear downs. And that's just on the south side of Lenox Road. And the new homes are selling.

But let's get one thing straight. Builders are looking for the best deal possible. They are only willing to pay 33-40% of what they can eventually sell as new construction. That is what enables them to make a healthy profit. End users, (who are those who will live in the house), will generally pay more because the updates, preventative maintenance, schools and curb appeal mean more to them. They are looking at the long haul not at a quick turnaround. Like me, you probably receive fishing letters from builders, or those who represent them, saying they will buy your home with no fuss or bother, and no real estate commission. Builders send these letters far and wide, hoping that someone will bite. But you should also know that if you buy into this you will be unrepresented in the process, there will be no competition for your property, and you will likely sell for less than you would otherwise realize if your home was to go on the open market.

Going on the open market is the most advantageous way to sell a house. With maximum exposure to both end users and builders through the multiple list service and other media, there is not only representation for the seller but also the likelihood for competition for the property. The recent history in Kenwood Park over the last year has shown that most of the homes that were on the open market received multiple offers with the eventual price exceeding the asking price. The market is hot because there is so little available for buyers to actually purchase. The sale of a home is often the largest single asset transaction most people make. It is important to know what matters most to you – just getting rid of the home or maximizing your home's value.

As of this writing in Kenwood Park there are two homes for sale: 5816 Plainview Road (new construction) for \$2.399M, and 6508 Kenhill Road for \$1.725M. There are 5 under contract: 6120 Plainview Road for \$1.349M, 6813 Millwood Road for \$1.945M (new construction), 5849 Marbury Road for \$950K, 7209 Marbury Road for \$1.050M and 6253 Clearwood Road for \$1.050M. The last four went under contract in ten days or less. There is one home for rent in the multiple list system at 6220 Robinwood Road for \$4,500.

*Contributed by Linda Chaletzky
lchaletzky@eversco.com*

*Statistics are taken from the Metropolitan Regional Information System for three areas: Washington, D.C., Montgomery County, Maryland, and Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church in Virginia.



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Bridge

Interested in playing bridge or starting a bridge club in Kenwood Park? Please call KP residents Gloria Fitchett at (301) 229-8400 or Christina Lobo at (301) 229-3490. We could start playing this spring.

Email Notifications

The KPCA is now sending out neighborhood information by email about four times a year and also if there is a warning needed about safety issues in the neighborhood. These include if a theft occurs, the presence of aggressive solicitations being made house to house, and if a child has been made uncomfortable by interaction with a stranger in the area.

Since all our neighbors do not have email or are not registered, we ask that the safety information be relayed by those who do receive the messages to their unconnected neighbors. If you wish to join in and have these messages delivered to you, we will encourage you to join our website.

KPCA GARDEN CLUB NEWS

So what does the garden club do? We get together to meet neighbors, share gardening ideas, beautify our neighborhood public spaces, and teach our kids about the joy and satisfaction of working with nature and making things grow.

Plans for 2014, will include a coffee hour Q & A on the use of native plants for low maintenance gardens, with the wonderful garden designers from "New Leaf Designs" and a neighborhood social at the Durbin Rd. Triangle.

There will be a plant swap social in April. The date will be set shortly.

Please Contact: sinalymroy@gmail.com or 301-229-3459 to be included in our email list and make sure you are updated on all our events.

New Security Service and Changes in Requests for Vacation Coverage

The security service that we had in Kenwood Park was bought out, and its quality deteriorated significantly. As a result, as of December 1st, it was replaced with Alpha Security. At this time we are continuing to use Alpha Security, but we have had service problems with them as well. The board is meeting in camera in a few days to decide whether to work with Alpha for a more responsive service or look for a new contractor.

As before, the security service operates on a variable schedule: either 8 P.M. to 4 A.M. or 9 P.M. to 5 A.M. on a random basis.

Note the telephone numbers for Alpha. The phone at the office of the service at **301-292-3000** is manned 24/7, although part of the time it is an answering service.

For an evening emergency when the patrol car is on duty in Kenwood Park, it can be reached at **240-210-6580**.

The emergency service is for the **whole community**, although far too few homes are supporting the patrol. Do your part and help the KPCA pay for the patrol. We all benefit from its presence.

What the Security Service Provides

The security service operates through the evening, night, and morning. A marked patrol car circulates through Kenwood Park, traversing all streets, several times a shift. There are appropriate dwell times at various locations. The patrol car can be contacted at 240-210-6580. If you want vacation coverage, call the Security Office, (not the patrol car) at 301-292-3000, during the working week. The officer on duty in the patrol car will be instructed to make a walk around your property for the dates you determine, and he will clear away accumulating newspapers or mail, placing those items in a location not visible from the street. If you have an alarm service you can inform the security service and the alarm service, so that they can contact each other. In the event of evidence of forced entry of a property, the security service can notify the home-owner and the police. If the security patrol officer witnesses a criminal-entry he will immediately notify the police.

Neighborhood Services Available

Baby Sitters

L. Sorcher (Certified)	(301) 229-2328
C. Goldman	(301) 320-1582
Michelle Dressner	(301) 652-5453
Olivia Barber	(301) 760-7535
Katie Choppin (certified)	(301) 229-9139
Carly Choppin (certified)	(301) 229-9139
Anne Charpentier (certified)	(301) 320-4310
Bailey and Hannah (sisters, H.S. students, both CPR cert., Children's Hospital, babysitting cert.)	(301) 312-8606

Leaf Rakers, Snowshovelers, Odd Jobs

Isaac Bacon (Whitman HS student) is offering to do yard work, spring clean-up, and any other odd job (240) 507-8075

IsaacBacon43@gmail.com

Shafi Noss (301) 325-8360

Amber White (301) 588-6474

apamberpower@gmail.com (loving and reliable dog walker)

Alex (10th grader at French Int'l School) acpiot@gmail.com

Ray Shao (DIY handyperson/lawn mowing) (240) 421-5095

Chris Fowler (lawns, water plants, pet care, move heavy objects) chris.fowler419@gmail.com (301) 455-8187

GET LISTED HERE FREE:

Leave name and phone number with Editor, Edward Elson, at (301) 320-2837 or email news@kpcasonline.org



Kenwood Park Book Group

The Kenwood Park Book Club will meet again on April 17 and we are reading Sandra Day O'Connor's *Out of Order: Stories from the History of the Supreme Court*. Contact sjgust@msn.com for more information.

Stories from the History of the Supreme Court. Contact sjgust@msn.com for more information.

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Edward Elson, *Editor*