

BBHCA eNews

MARCH 2012

COMMUNITY MEETING

Tuesday, March 20, 7:30 pm
Bush Hill Elementary School, Cafeteria

MEETING AGENDA:

- Board and Committee Reports
 - January Meeting Minutes (Vote)
- Old Business
- New Business

TOPIC: State of Lee District



Speaker: Mark Sickles, Lee District Delegate

Neighborhood Yard Sale Scheduled for June 2

Kathrine Dixon of Neville Court has volunteered to organize the June 2012 community yard sale. Many thanks to Katherine for taking this on.

Now's the time to start putting aside items to include in your yard sale. Select a spot and start assembling items that you no longer use or need. If you have an idea of a price, put a price on it as well to save time later. Then all you will have to do in June is haul it out.

Make sure items are clean and in working order. If they are not working, clearly mark them, "not working." Won't it be nice to have extra space and cash for items sold?

The yard sale registration form will be published in the May print newsletter. The cost for registration will be \$10 for members and \$15 for nonmembers. The registration fee covers advertising, neighborhood signage, participant maps, and balloons. If you have questions, please send an email to Katherine at yardsale@bbhca.org.



The Cure to Medical Identity Theft: Read This

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer/education/medical-identity-theft.htm>



“Medical identity theft occurs when someone uses your medical information *without your knowledge or consent* to get medical treatment, buy prescription drugs, or submit bills in your name for nonexistent medical treatment or services.

Not only does the misuse of medical information have financial consequences, but it can be hazardous to your health if information belonging to a thief ends up in your medical records.

Consider the following preventive actions to reduce the ill effects of medical identity theft:

- **Read the Explanation of Benefits (EOB)** statement carefully. This is the statement your insurance company sends to you after healthcare services have been paid by the insurance company.
 - **Make sure the claims paid on the EOB match the care you received** and you recognize the provider of the services.
 - **Challenge any inaccurate or inconsistent information**, *even if no payment is required*.
 - If you get a Medicare-covered service, you will get a **Medicare Summary notice (MSN)** in the mail every three months, or you can check it anytime at www.Mymedicare.gov. Review it carefully and *immediately dispute inaccurate information*.
 - Get your **free credit reports** from www.AnnualCreditReport.com. Look for medical debt you don't owe as well as names, addresses, or health care providers you don't recognize. Dispute all fraudulent information immediately.
 - If you have applied for individual life, health, or disability income insurance in the last seven years, the **Medical information Bureau (MIB)** may have a consumer file on you. To find out call the MIB at 866-692-6901 or www.mib.com/html/consumer_protection.html. *Review and correct any inaccurate or incomplete information in your record*.
 - **Get copies of the records maintained by your health plans and medical providers regularly**. Unlike credit reports, there is no central source for getting medical records.
 - You have the right to get copies of your medical and health records based on the **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**. *Check your records for accuracy* and request that incorrect medical or billing records be amended. Make sure to get a copy of the amended record. Information about your rights under HIPAA is available at www.hhs.gov/ocr.
 - **If your medical insurance card is lost or stolen, notify the insurance provider right away** and request a new card and number.
 - **Do not provide medical information to telephone marketers, door-to-door solicitors or online** unless you initiated the contact and you are sure you know who you are providing information to.
 - **Be suspicious of accepting “free” medical services** or if you are offered gifts or discounts to go to designated clinics or offices.
 - **Protect and guard your health plan membership identification card and Medicare card** just like a credit card.”
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Free Tax Return Preparation for You by Volunteers

<http://www.irs.gov/individuals/article/0,,id=107626,00.html>



“The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Programs offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify.

VITA*

The VITA Program generally offers free tax help to people who make \$50,000 or less and need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free basic income tax return preparation to qualified individuals in local communities. They can inform taxpayers about special tax credits for which they may qualify such as Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Credit for the Elderly or the Disabled. VITA sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. Most locations also offer free electronic filing.

Find a VITA site near you or call 1-800-906-9887.

TCE*

The TCE Program offers free tax help for all with priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement issues unique to seniors. IRS-certified volunteers who provide tax counseling are often retired individuals associated with non-profit organizations that receive grants from the IRS.

Find an AARP Tax-Aide, site near you or call 1-888-227-7669 for more information on TCE

Facilitated Self-Assistance

In addition to traditional face-to-face tax preparation, the IRS is launching a self-assistance service at select locations. If individuals have a simple tax return and need a little help or do not have access to a computer, they can visit one of the participating tax preparation sites and an IRS-certified volunteer will guide them through the process.

Find a Facilitated Self-Assistance site near you, go to:

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-utl/fsa_list_irsgov_20120202_v5.pdf

*Items you need to bring to the VITA/TCE sites to have your tax returns prepared:

- Proof of identification – Picture ID
- Social Security Cards for you, your spouse and dependents or a Social Security Number verification letter issued by the Social Security Administration or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) assignment letter for you, your spouse, and dependents
- Proof of foreign status, if applying for an ITIN
- Birth dates for you, your spouse, and dependents on the tax return
- Wage and earning statement(s) Form W-2, W-2G, 1099-R, 1099-Misc from all employers
- Interest and dividend statements from banks (Forms 1099)
- A copy of last year's federal and state returns, if available
- Proof of bank account routing numbers and account numbers for Direct Deposit, such as a blank check
- Total paid for daycare provider and the daycare provider's tax identifying number (the provider's Social Security Number or the provider's business Employer Identification Number), if appropriate
- To file taxes electronically on a married-filing-joint tax return, both spouses must be present to sign the required forms.

It is extremely important that each person use the correct Social Security Number. The most accurate information is usually located on your original Social Security card. If you do not have an SSN for you or a dependent, you should complete Form SS-5, Social Security Number Application. This form should be submitted to the nearest Social Security Administration Office.

If you or your dependent is not eligible to get a Social Security Number, you may need an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).”

Northern Virginia Cash Coalition

The Northern Virginia Cash Coalition offers income tax assistance by IRS-certified volunteers to people who earned less than \$57,000 in 2011. The volunteers ensure that you receive the maximum tax refund and help determine if you are eligible for the earned income tax credit. Find sites and times for volunteer income tax assistance.

AARP

AARP volunteer income tax aide sites are located across the county. Most serve walk-ins, but some sites require appointments.

County sites include:

Sherwood Regional Library

2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria

Mon. & Wed. 1-4 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.

Tues. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and 5-8 p.m.

Thurs. Fri., Sat. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information, call 1-888-227-7669 or go to www.aarp.org/taxaide.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Be Alert to the Latest Scams

More and more we hear about the latest scam....a revival of past scam....the lottery scam...e-mail scams....home improvement scams.....driveway paving scams...tree trimming scams....door to door sales scams and scams against senior citizens. The list goes on and on.

A recent scam I have heard about:

A grandparent gets a call, from purportedly a grandchild, who states they are in jail in another state/country and need bail money to get out. I have heard people say the person even really sounds like their grandchild. They are told the child is embarrassed and does not want to tell mom and dad, but needs a few thousand dollars wired to western union at such and such a place.



This type of incident recently occurred in the Mount Vernon District (January 2012):

Scammers go around contacting residents, generally seniors, telling them stories about how they have worked for them in the past and notice all this work that needs to be done on their home. These crooks talk/cajole /convince the victim that it is imperative to have this work done on their home/yard/roof/chimney/etcetera. They write up a contract or verbally agree on an exorbitant rate, then do very minor or cosmetic work and take the cash. If the cash is not on hand, they take what they can get now and continue to come back trying to get more, or even take the victim to a bank to withdraw funds.

When it comes to fraud and scams of any kind, the best offense is always a good defense or preventative strategy.

Some tips to combat scams and fraud:

- First and foremost, educate yourself on scams that are out there and any which may be occurring in the region —keep up to date on the latest trends.
- Help educate your parents, relatives and neighbors on scams and what to look for – “an educated consumer is our best customer” (Sy Syms 1926–2009, clothier).
- Always allow for a cooling off period....never say yes when approached, even if you think you really want it. Give yourself time to research and really think about what was offered. If the pressure is on, you may make a bad decision.

- Remember the old adages—if it doesn't feel or look right, it probably is not right...or if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true...it's always better to be safe than sorry.
- Ask a friend/relative/neighbor if you are not sure. Bounce the scenario off someone you trust and get their opinion on the situation.
- Ask for references and then check them out.
- Remember con artists/fraudster are good at what they do, they have worked at their trade just like the average person works to get better at their job. They will seem nice, genuine and make it seem they are looking out for you. Do not let them talk you out of making a sound decision.
- Always remember to ask yourself—do I have to do this today or is this something I just have to have this very minute. Upon some reflection, I think we all come up with the same answer, which is NO.
- It is a good security practice not to let uninvited strangers into your home.
- Remember to always keep your home doors locked at all times, even if you are just working in the yard.
- Look out for your neighbors. If you think something is suspicious, ask them. Or call the police non-emergency number and we will check it out.
- Don't be afraid to say NO.

Fraud crimes—be it financial or identity theft are very difficult to solve and recover from. This is why prevention is so important. Don't be afraid/embarrassed to ask for help. Fraud is also a very under reported crime because victims have a sense of embarrassment, frustration, or are resigned to the fact there is nothing to be done.

It is extremely important if you or someone you know has been a victim of a scam or fraud to report it to the police. Call the non-emergency police number, **703-691-2131**.

Or if the crime is of a financial/identity nature, you can also go to the Fairfax County Police Financial Crimes On-Line Reporting site: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/financialcrimes>. There are also good resources and links to more information on this page.

Be Safe,

MPO Greg Kottemann
 Crime Prevention Office
 Mount Vernon District Station
 Fairfax County Police Department
 703-360-8928
gregory.kottemann@fairfaxcounty.gov

FRANCONIA DISTRICT STATION

Crime Summary

February 19-25, 2012



The following crimes were reported for Police Service Area 630 (the Kingstowne, Rose Hill, Brookland, and Bush Hill areas of Lee District).

- Burglary, 7200 Block of CHERWELL LN, 2/19/12. A home was burglarized; cash and electronics were stolen.
- Destruction, 7500 Block of TELEGRAPH RD, 2/20/12. Following an argument, an intoxicated individual broke a stereo.
- Larceny, 5900 Block of KINGSTOWNE TOWNE CTR, 2/20/12. Shoplifting.
- Burglary, 7900 Block of OLD CARRIAGE TRL, 2/21/12. A home was burglarized; alcoholic beverages and electronics were stolen.
- Burglary, 7400 Block of COLLINS MEADE WAY, 2/21/12. A home was burglarized; electronics were stolen.
- Burglary, 5100 Block of BALLYCASTLE CIR, 2/21/12. A home was burglarized; a laptop was stolen.

- Destruction, 7900 Block of OLD CARRIAGE TRL, 2/22/12. Screen to sliding glass door cut. Home was not entered.
- Destruction, ALFORTH AVE / BEULAH ST, 2/22/12. Following an argument, an individuals damaged each other's vehicles.
- Fraud, 6800 Block of ERICKA AVE, 2/22/12. An individual's identifying information had been used by someone to obtain employment.
- Drugs, 6700 Block of MORNING RIDE CIR, 2/23/12. An individual was found to be in possession of marijuana.
- Larceny, 5200 Block of CHAPEL GATE CT, 2/23/12. An individual's garbage can had been stolen.
- Larceny, 5800 Block of KINGSTOWNE BLVD, 2/24/12. Shoplifting.
- Fraud, 5800 Block of KINGSTOWNE BLVD, 2/25/12. An individual learned that someone was making unauthorized transactions from her bank account using a driver's license in her name.

Source: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/stations/franconia/crimesummaries/20120219crimesummary.htm>

Conserving Water Stays in Style

http://eartheasy.com/live_water_saving.htm

25 Money Saving Tips

Our water rates just went up again, so here are some tips on how to conserve water. For the details on each tip, click on the link above.

1. Check faucets and pipes for leaks.
2. Don't use the toilet as an ashtray or wastebasket.
3. Check your toilets for leaks.
4. Use your water meter to check for hidden water leaks.
5. Install water-saving shower heads and low-flow faucet aerators.
6. Put plastic bottles or float booster in your toilet tank.
7. Insulate your water pipes.
8. Take shorter showers.
9. Turn off the water after you wet your toothbrush.
10. Rinse your razor in the sink.
11. Use your dishwasher and clothes washer for only full loads.
12. Minimize use of kitchen sink garbage disposal units.
13. When washing dishes by hand, don't leave the water running for rinsing.
14. Don't let the faucet run while you clean vegetables.
15. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the fridge.



Water conservation in the yard and garden...

16. Plant drought-resistant lawns, shrubs and plants.
17. Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants.
18. Don't water the gutter.
19. Water your lawn only when it needs it.
20. Deep-soak your lawn.
21. Water during the early parts of the day; avoid watering when it's windy.
22. Add organic matter and use efficient watering systems for shrubs, flower beds and lawns.
23. Don't run the hose while washing your car.
24. Use a broom, not a hose, to clean driveways and sidewalks.
25. Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, faucets and couplings.



EVENTS

- **Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting**

Wednesday, March 21

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Helen Wilson Community Room, Lee District Government Center, 6121 Franconia Road

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/stations/franconia/franstacac.htm>

Topic: TBA

What is CAC? The purpose of the CAC is to:

1. Provide a forum for obtaining citizen input about the delivery of police services.
2. Provide a formalized process that will facilitate citizen and community cooperation with the police.
3. Identify specific and potential problem areas concerning the police.

- **BBHCA Community Meeting**

Tuesday, March 20

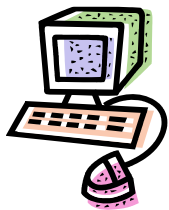
Bush Hill Elementary School, Cafeteria

www.bbhca.org



Topic: State of Lee District

Speaker: Mark Sickles, Lee District Delegate



LINKS TO KEEP

Tag for Main Water Line

<http://www.fairfaxwater.org/current/Main%20Line%20Water%20Valve%20tag%20for%20Web.pdf>

Print out this tag to mark the main water line in your house. If your house is like ours, the shutoff for the main water line may be in an obscure place and look like any other valve. Now you can mark it with this tag. Print it on a bright colored paper to make it more visible.

Take 12 Steps for Health

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/rec/Take12/>

The Take 12 program is free and anyone can participate at any time. This program is designed to:

- Help you accomplish healthy goals each month, with tips to keep you going for the duration.
- Give you access to information - free workshops are available each month on different healthy topics and bulletin boards loaded with information are posted at all the RECenters.
- Provide an opportunity for you to experience fitness and wellness programs offered across Fairfax County.
- Empower you to make important lifestyle changes... you can do it!
- Plus, as a Take 12 participant, you receive monthly emails from the experts on the FCPA Fitness & Wellness team with tips and opportunities to achieve your Take 12 goals!

Wild Bunch Wildlife Rehabilitation

<http://www.wildbunchrehab.org/>

Wild Bunch is a nonprofit organization devoted to helping native Virginia wildlife by sponsoring hands-on care for sick, injured, and orphaned animals, by educating the public to prevent or resolve wildlife problems, and by operating a refuge for animal care and release.

If you discover injured or orphaned wildlife, please call the Wildlife Rescue League's Hotline at (703) 440-0800. You will then be directed to one of our principals or to another area rehabilitator who specializes in that species. Note that many baby animals are not true orphans. Often, the parents are nearby and watching. If you are not sure if the animal is a true orphan, then please call us for advice.

If you have a non-emergency wildlife problem or have a question about local wildlife, then email us at wildbunchrehab@verizon.net.

BBHCA 2011–2012 Board

President: Jeannie Henry president@bbhca.org

VP Newsletter: Rebecca Johnson newsletter@bbhca.org

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This electronic newsletter is sent to current members of the Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association (BBHCA). If you do not wish to receive any e-mails from BBHCA, respond to membership@bbhca.org and enter "unsubscribe" in the subject line. The views expressed in eNews do not necessarily reflect the views of the Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association or its Board of Directors.

Brookland-Bush Hill Civic Association

Alexandria, VA 22310

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