

6/21/04

SHCA



Sligo Headwaters Civic Association

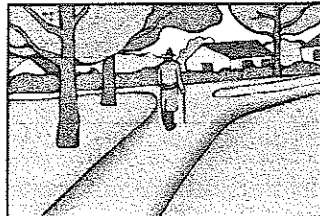
Issue 4
SUMMER, 2004

Who are we???

Neighbors who border Sligo Creek between Orebaugh, Franwall, Blueridge, Nairn and any courts, streets and terraces surrounding these streets and the park.

ISSUE IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON WALKING PATH



An alleged rape occurred on May 28, 2004 on the footpath between Orebaugh and the path leading to the Kemp Mill Giant.

Investigators are still looking for the alleged rapist, who has been described as a Hispanic male, about 25 years old, wearing a white shirt, blue shorts and a black baseball cap. An initial police report said that the rape victim noticed a tattoo of the number 13 on one of her attacker's hands.

MS-13 is a gang of El Salvadorian origin. Many of its original members were immigrants who were a part of an El Salvadorian gang known as El Mara. The second half of their name, "Salvatrucha," comes from the title of a group of El Salvadorian guerrilla fighters.

Police officials said they are investigating the possibility that the perpetrator was a member of MS-13, but they were quick to point out that there is still no evidence that prove he was.

County police are hoping that a redeployment among the police force will be able to give the community greater protection with more consistent patrols. The Fourth District will be divided into three sectors, each with its own supervisor. Officers would be assigned to the

same beats every time they patrol.

Neighbors organized an emergency meeting that was attended by both the Upper Sligo Headwaters Civic Association and the Sligo Headwaters Civic Association.

Police officials emphasized in the meeting that the best way to prevent crime in the park is still for citizens to practice common sense safety.

David McClintock of the Maryland-National Park Police stated: "Do not approach somebody. That it is the job of the police to approach. If [a situation] makes you feel uncomfortable, that's probably a situation where you need to call the police and not engage these people."

McClintock added that the best way to stay safe while walking the trails is simply to stay alert, try to walk in well-lit areas and to not ever walk alone in the dark.

He also suggested carrying a cell phone with the Park Police's non-emergency phone number programmed into speed dial so that suspicious activity can be quickly reported when dialing 911 would be inappropriate. The non-emergency Park Police phone number is 301-949-8011.

"We do encourage people to be very cautious and report any suspicious activity to the police."

**Lieutenant Gillespie
Montgomery County Police**



The SHCA list server:

To subscribe, using your e-mail program, send a message to: sligoheadwaters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

To post a message, send a message to: sligoheadwaters@yahoogroups.com

Trail Safety Tips

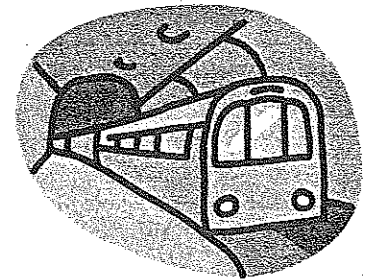
Smart trail use includes adherence to some basic safety practices. Trails are shared recreation amenities and are accessed by a variety of users at the same time. Please be courteous to all users, and remember that pedestrians have the right-of-way. Trails are available for use from sunrise to sunset each day.

- **All trail users should stay to the right on the trail.**
- **Pets should be kept on a leash, and owners must clean up after their pets.**
- **Be sure to carry identification (which includes name, phone number, and pertinent medical information), and record your bicycle serial number.**
- **Carry coins for phone calls, or take a portable phone along.**
- **Know the locations of phone booths and open businesses in the vicinity you'll be traveling.**
- **Tell friends or family the route you'll be taking, and travel with a partner when possible.**
- **Avoid unfamiliar areas when on the trails alone.**
- **Stay alert, be observant about your surroundings, avoid areas where visibility is poor, and don't wear headsets.**
- **Wear reflective material and carry a whistle or noisemaker.**
- **Use discretion when acknowledging strangers, and follow your intuition about unfamiliar people and areas.**
- **When on roadways, remember to ride with traffic, but walk and run against traffic.**

**Please call the Park Police if you notice any unusual activity or need help:
301-949-3010**

For those of you who use the Wheaton Metro station:

Metro has recently given our community a notice that there will be a public hearing that will be held by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in cooperation with the Montgomery County Government on the proposed replacement of 63 Kiss & Ride spaces and related station facilities in two levels of a six-story parking garage to be constructed at the Wheaton Metro Center. The Wheaton Metro station may soon be under going a lot of change. To find out more about what is going on or to see how you can submit comments, see www.sligoheadwaters.org . Ed Murtaugh



Who is the Sligo Native Plant Group?

The Sligo Native Plant Group is a co-op formed by members of the Sligo Headwaters and Upper Sligo Civic Associations. The purpose of the group is to help each other landscape our yards using native plants to attract birds, butterflies and to protect Sligo Creek. We've held several meetings and two work sessions converting sections of three neighbors' yards to planting beds. If you're interested in joining, please contact Leah Haygood at (301) 593-0012, Ed Murtagh at (301) 649-7266 or send an email to sligonatives-subscribe@yahoo.com.

Tips from the Sligo Native Plant Group

Concern has been expressed about the use of pesticides in the neighborhood because of the potential harm to humans, animals, and the environment. A review of the research about the impact of synthetic chemicals used in lawn and yard care reveals arguments that both support the controlled use of certain pesticides, and discourage their use in residential and other settings. There are communities in our area and elsewhere that have worked very hard to become "pesticide free zones" because of concerns about links between synthetic pesticides and serious health problems in humans and pets (see a relevant Washington Post article at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A27333-2004Mar26?language=printer>).

The Sligo Native Plant Group offers the following advice regarding alternative approaches to pesticide use provided by the Maryland Cooperative Extension Home and Garden Information Center. You can find more extensive information on this topic and many others by calling the Home and Garden Information Center at 1-800-342-2507, or visiting their web site at www.hgic.umd.edu.

GET TO KNOW YOUR PLANTS

- Know what your plants should look like and be willing to remove plants with chronic problems.
- Replace problem plants with plants adapted to this area.

BUILD A HEALTHY YARD/GARDEN

- Incorporate organic matter in flower and vegetable beds on a regular basis and fertilize only as needed to maintain vigor. Over-fertilizing can lead to pest problems.
- Use 2-3 inches of mulch in planting beds to maintain even soil moisture and prevent weed growth and soil erosion. Leave space between tree trunks and mulch as mulch stacked against a trunk encourages pests and rodent damage (think "donut" rather than "volcano").
- Select disease and insect resistant varieties of plants (a quality nursery can help you identify them) and follow instructions for placement and planting techniques.
- Newly planted trees and shrubs should be watered slowly and deeply (2" of water) every 1-2 weeks as needed. A soaker hose or even a dripping hose left on the ground does the job. Frequent, light watering is not helpful.
- Remove weeds and diseased, infested, and dead plants and plant parts.

KNOW THAT PESTS MAY NOT BE THE PROBLEM

- Many bugs are beneficial bugs and should not be associated with problem plants.
- At least one half of landscape problems are caused by something other than insects or diseases (such as extreme weather or poor soil).
- Learn to identify the pest, disease or problem before taking action. The Maryland Cooperative Extension is one source of assistance.

REGARDING YOUR LAWN

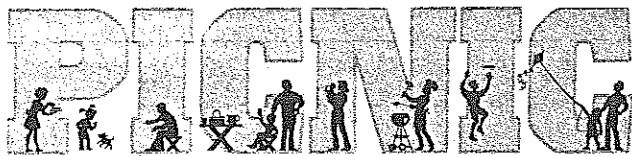
The major causes of lawn deterioration are cutting grass too short and infrequent mowing. It is best to remove no more than one-third of the length of the grass each time you mow. For example, to maintain a 3 inch height, you would not let the grass get taller than 4 inches. Mowing in this way can reduce weed problems by as much as 50 to 80 percent. It is best to leave grass clippings on the lawn because the clippings recycle nutrients and conserve water. It also saves you time.

Too much fertilizer and fertilizer applied at the wrong time can harm your lawn. Organic fertilizers with no synthetic chemicals are becoming more popular due to health and environmental concerns and are used by a growing number of low- and no-pesticide lawn service companies and are sold in stores. You may need to do a bit of research to ensure that products advertised as "pesticide/chemical-free" or "environmentally safe" actually are. Organic fertilizers are often more expensive than chemical fertilizers, but organic products supply additional nutrients and often double as soil conditioners.

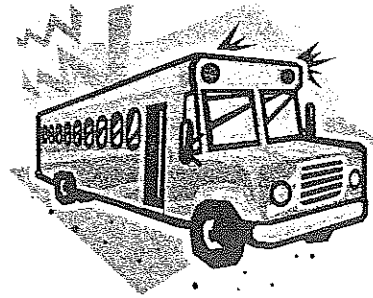
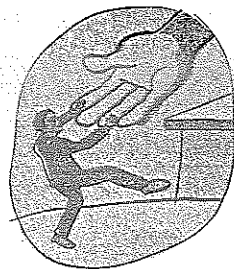
News about development at the Good Counsel Site



The Sligo Headwaters Civic Association recently received the Preliminary Plan for the proposed development of the Good Counsel site. The Preliminary Plan, which calls for building 189 new housing units and for retaining the Rafferty Gymnasium, was submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Parks and Planning for consideration and review. As you may have noticed, a large number of new housing units have been built in the Wheaton area and new developments are being planned. According to the recently published Wheaton Redevelopment Report (a copy of the report can be found on the community web site www.sligoheadwaters.org), nearly 1,000 new units have been recently built or proposed. Many in our community are concerned that large numbers of new housing units have been approved for the Wheaton area without any provisions to accommodate the new families. We are particularly concerned about the impact these new developments will have on the already overcrowded schools. If there is interest, the community can form a committee to review and comment on the proposed project at the Good Counsel site. Call Ed Murtagh at 301 649-7266 if you are interested in participating.



Interested in getting a Neighborhood Picnic together? We are looking into dates in July to hold a Sligo Headwaters Picnic. The location will most likely be at the Elementary School (Washington Christian Academy). We hope to improve upon the attendance of last year, and spend some quality time getting to know each other as neighbors and friends. We are looking for persons interested in planning this picnic, so please call Nan Martino at 301 754-1091 if you are interested in helping out.



Updates on the Community Schools

On June 8, 2004 the School Board approved the schematic design for the reopening of Arcola Elementary School (now the Washington Christian Academy on Franwall). The Montgomery County Public School Project Manager, Joe Derosa is working on the assumption that the opening will be in '06. But he and others have heard rumors the opening will be delayed until '07 due to cuts in state funding and County Council actions.

The re-opening of Northwood High School is proceeding on schedule. Bids for the construction project are due on June 22, 2004. The main construction will start during the summer of 2004 and end in the summer of 2006. During these two years, the school will be partially open. During the 2004/2005 school year, 400 students are expected to attend the school. During the second year, 800 students are expected to attend the school. Renovating and building the new additions for the re-opened school while it is partially occupied will be challenging. For example, the cafeteria will have to be closed during part of the school year. The MCPS construction office has been working with the communities to minimize the impact on the students. The construction documents include options for features, or add alternates, which are beyond the minimum work required to reopen the school. Additional alternates include replacing the windows and providing new science labs. Several community members have been working with the new staff to ensure a close working relationship between the school and the neighborhoods around it.

HELP WANTED

If you would like to help out this Civic Association, there is plenty to do! Copying, distributing, setting up meetings and gatherings, networking, writing articles for the newsletter and the website- these are just some of the ways to help out. Currently, all of this work is being done by about 5 individuals. We could sure use your help. Contact Nan Martino at 310 753-1091 if you could lend a hand.