

# The ECHO

*The Newsletter of the Randolph Civic Association*

Volume 58, Issue 4

January/February 2015

## Going Solar in RCA-Land

by *Tori Garten*

Recently I took the big step of "Going Solar" – It's been on the back of my mind for years, but I assumed it would be really expensive.

How to get started? Perhaps going solar has been on your mind too, but you haven't had time to dive in to understand the options, the costs, the value and benefits. I finally got started, spurred on by an email from Green America advertising solar quotes from Sungevity and a \$500 discount offer. Getting a quote involved providing my electricity usage from the past year. They also used satellite images to zoom in on my house to see the orientations of the house to the sun and shading from any big trees. A few days later I had a tailored quote based on my energy needs and they called to walk me through the options and the process.

What is the overall process like? The first step is calling to get a remote quote and learn about your options for buy, lease, etc. Next a home visit will be scheduled to examine your roof, measure the sun on your roof, analyze shade, etc. Any roof repairs will need to be made before installation. Next your system will be designed and reviewed with your energy needs, electrical system and local laws in mind. Paperwork is filed with Pepco and with the local building department for permits. Then your installation is scheduled. Following installation, the county does an inspection. Pepco is then contacted to schedule to switch your home to a "net-meter" and turn on your solar system. The process does take some time. I requested my quote on June 15. My system was installed September 10th. I am currently waiting for Pepco to schedule my net-meter upgrade, the estimate was 6 weeks, so by the time this article goes to print hopefully we'll be running on solar! If I am running on solar by end of October it will have taken 4.5 months.

What are the options? There are several options for

going solar to meet your financial and energy needs. You can either buy the system or lease it. When leasing you can either pay up front or pay by the month. Leases are generally for 20-25 years. Some other companies, like Solar City offer different options, such as a PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) where you pay for the power produced by the system on your roof, but not for the system itself. In addition to companies like Sungevity and Solar City, there are smaller local companies that also design and sell solar systems. For example, 21st Century Power Solutions was contracted by Sungevity to install my system, but they also work independently as well. I went with the lease option from Sungevity, which will include maintenance for the system for 20 years. There are tax credits still available for installing a solar system. When you buy the system, you take the tax credit; when you lease, the company leasing you the system takes the tax credit. In my case the total amount was essentially the same whether I leased or purchased. Most systems can recoup their initial cost in 6 -10 years, with continued savings for the rest of the life of the system. If your house is too shady but you are interesting in supporting solar power, there are new crowdfunding options starting up to support solar for special projects such as schools and other positive community projects.

So, how does it work? Maryland is a "net-metered state" meaning that your solar panel system will feed into the grid through a "net-meter." If during the day you generate more power than you need at that moment, it will feed into the power grid and your meter will run backwards. At night you will pull power from the power grid and your meter will run forward. At the end of the month you will pay for the "net" difference. If you produced more than you used, you will have credits to use the next month. Once a year there is a "true-up" and if you generated more than you used in those 12 months, you may receive some money in the form of Renewable Energy Credits. Your net balance is reset to zero and the process is started over. Even if you produce enough

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## Upcoming Events

### **RCA General Meeting**

Special Presentation: Renovations and Additions in Randolph Hills - Lessons from the Professionals  
February 5th, 2015 8:00pm-9:30pm, Viers Mill Recreation Center

### **RCA Executive Board Meeting**

March 5th, 2015 8:00pm-9:30pm, Viers Mill Recreation Center

## RCA Executive Committee and Committee Chairs for 2014-2015

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Dan Hoffman  
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## President's Message

by Brian Hooker, RCA President

I don't know about the rest of RCA-land, but about this time during winter, I am ready for spring to be here. Not just for the warmth, but for the lengthening of the days. I feel too many days have been spent outside only at dawn and dusk or under a moody winter sky. With the long, slow winter on my mind I will limit my update to a few long-term, slow moving projects; the traffic calming measures on Boiling Brook Parkway, and the Montrose Baptist Church development.

The RCA has solicited feedback from the community regarding the traffic calming measures on Boiling Brook at the Rocking Horse Road and Schuylkill Road intersections. The RCA has communicated those concerns to the County. In response to concerns that were raised, the County narrowed the bump-out at Rocking Horse and Boiling Brook westbound. We also asked them to evaluate the bump-out at Boiling Brook and Schuylkill. In that case their analysis was that the removal of the "hot-right" turn from eastbound Boiling Brook onto southbound Schuylkill was enough to allow cars to safely navigate that turn and a narrowing of the bump-out was unnecessary. The County plans to continue to monitor these intersections a little while longer (date uncertain) before making them permanent. We have also requested better road markings to accompany these measures.

The hearing date for the Montrose Baptist Church re-zoning application has been moved back from the end of January to April 24th. This date change was not unexpected as it was anticipated by the developers when they presented their general project plan to the RCA back in October. Other than the hearing date change there is no new information regarding the development project.

Lastly, although it is shaping up to be a fairly light winter in regards to snow, please continue to keep an eye out for your neighbors due to the cold temperatures, and help out with the snow shoveling if you are able in the rare event that we do get some snow to stick around. Remember, it is the County law to shovel your walkways.

**RCA Telephone Number: (240)668-4722.**

**Recorded announcements of community events, 24 hours a day. Callers may leave messages.**

**Membership in the RCA is \$10.00 per year.**

The *Echo* is the official publication of the Randolph Civic Association, Inc., P.O. Box 2202, North Bethesda, Maryland 20852. The *Echo* is published 8 times a year and distributed free to all residents of Franklin Park, Hilltop Square, Montrose Park, Randolph Hills, and Randolph Farms. Deadline for submission of articles varies; the next deadline is noted in each issue. If you would like to send an article in for consideration, please email the article to [info@randolphcivic.org](mailto:info@randolphcivic.org).

The Randolph Civic Association was formed in 1955 and incorporated in 1958. As stated in the original Articles of Incorporation, the purposes of the RCA are "to stimulate interest in all community problems and improvements that will better the general welfare of the community [and] to pay strict attention to any attempt to lessen the value of property within its borders..."

**Web site: [www.randolphcivic.org](http://www.randolphcivic.org)**

## Think of Spring -- Sign up for a community garden plot now!

by Christian Drapkin

Maybe you've passed by our Rocking Horse Center (formerly a grade school building) on Macon Drive. If you've walked a block further where Hunters Lane ends, you've noticed a fenced-in area with a big water tank. This is the Rocking Horse Community Garden, one of the eleven community gardens that the Montgomery County Parks Department has established over the past five years all over the county.

Our Rocking Horse Community Garden has over sixty garden plots, measuring either 200 square feet, or double that size. Any Montgomery County resident can apply to rent a garden plot as they become available, one plot per person. Most applicants are looking for a garden that's conveniently located, close to home. Of course, we have a good number of constant gardeners who enjoy cultivating their veggie harvests and flowers and who renew their plot each year. But we also have quite some turnover, with people moving away, coping with unexpected life changes, or simply realizing they're in over their head with the amount of work involved (weeding, watering, controlling pests, and just the careful regular tending that even a little plot requires).

Application for 2015 garden plots opens on February 2. If you've been on a waiting list in 2014, you'll have to apply again, as no old waiting list is being carried over. The annual garden plot rental fee

is low, to make it possible for pretty much anyone who wants to grow healthy produce (only organic gardening practices are permitted!) and save money. The small plot rents for \$35 for the year, and the 400 sq. ft. plot rents for \$55. What you are spending a lot of is your time and your sweat-equity; your down-time, your muscles and your patience are your investment. The payoff can be most rewarding: nothing beats the taste of a sun-kissed home-grown tomato in July! Early sugar snaps and snow peas are your first bounty in the spring; and your garden will explode with summer squash, cucumbers, and bushels of tomatoes until you cry "uncle." Within our garden community, we like to co-ordinate a couple of harvest drives, where we collect our surplus bounty and bring it to a local soup-kitchen. The fresh herbs, veggies -- and even flowers that will grace tables -- are always welcomed; and the staff and volunteers in the soup kitchen know how to lovingly prepare meals with the fresh produce.

If you've never grown your own veggies, or you want to explore doing this with your own kids, it can truly be a marvelous experience. You notice the weather changes, the lengthening days; you gain patience and practice hopefulness; you learn to cope with setbacks and challenges (Bugs! Hail! Drought!); you discover the nearby birds nesting, the honeybees, butterflies, and other insects visiting your blossoms; and you'll discover the "community" in community garden. With a smile and a hello, you'll introduce yourself to other gardeners, feel free to ask questions, ask for help, and pay compliments in return. There is so much to learn, and with a sense of humor and an open mind, one gets to

*(Continued on Page 10)*



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## December General Meeting Minutes

By Diane LaGrega Bertocchi

- 1) Call to order by Brian Hooker: 8:00pm
- 2) Old Business:
- a) Code Enforcement – Brian Hooker is in the process of drafting a code enforcement newsletter, informing neighbors of the correct codes for Montgomery County.
- 3) New Business:
- a) Presentation: Two-years with Solar: Brian Hooker (RCA) and Chip Zenke (SolarCity): Brian Hooker, President of the RCA, board would like to note that this not an endorsement from the RCA for SolarCity. He is simply presenting his experience with SolarCity. He had 23 Solar Panels installed in November 2012. Most of his electrical usage is due to running the air conditioning in the summer. Ever since he had the panels installed the electric costs are lower and consistent each month. He paid \$500 (after a \$500 credit) to have the panels installed. He does not own the panels but leases the panels each month for approximately \$65 a month. It is a twenty year contract. Pepco charges a delivery fee for the power – approximately \$8 per month. The solar panels generate power back to the grid and credits are received for power not used. He is saving approximately \$100 per year in electric costs. Questions: Are there any maintenance issues? No, there is little maintenance and SolarCity handles the maintenance issues because the panels are leased. Solar City – Chip Zenke presents and answers questions from the audience. SolarCity is a publicly traded company and they have most of the Maryland market. They also have contracts with Wal-Mart and the Military. Solar City has about 22 sign-ups per month and the \$0 down is the most popular option. Can you buy the panels outright? Yes you can, but the cost is \$3,000/panel depending on the type of panel and even with tax credits, that is still very expensive. Chip Zenke would like to note “We have never had anyone do a full outright purchase” on solar panels. Most people lease with no money down. Also there is less risk leasing the panels than owning outright. If you own the panels, you are in charge of the maintenance. If you lease the panels, SolarCity is in charge of the maintenance. The technology is constantly improving and the panels today are better than what Brian Hooker installed two years ago. SolarCity does approximately 400 consultations a month in the Washington DC area. SolarCity is very busy. Are there situations where Solar Panels are not effective? Yes, if there are too many trees covering the house and if the roof does not face into direct sunlight it may not be worth it to have solar panels. SolarCity can perform a satellite view of the house with just the address and determine whenever it is worth it install solar panels. Houses with roofs facing south get the most direct sunlight. Is it a lease to own contract? Yes, after the lease contract is up, the owner of the house owns the panels. There are maintenance options if you still want SolarCity to cover the maintenance. What hap-

pens if you sell your house but still have a contract with SolarCity? If the owner sells the house, the contract for the Solar Panel is transferable to the next owner or you can do a buyout from SolarCity. What do you mean by energy credits? During the summer months, when there are longer days, the panels often generate more electricity than the homeowner uses, so the energy is sent back grid (Pepco) creating a credit. However, during the winter months when the days are shorter, the homeowner uses more electricity than there are getting from the solar panels. That is when the credit balance will be used to offset the costs in the winter. All homes have different electricity needs and the size of the system is often variable depending upon the goals and electricity usage of the homeowner. Do you need a new of roof before you install solar panels? Well, the newer the better but if you need to replace the roof, for \$500 they will take the panels down, wait for the roof to be done, and then put the panels back on the roof. Do the electricity rates ever increase with SolarCity? SolarCity has multiple power purchase agreements. Some offer fixed rates and some offer an escalating rate over the agreement term.

b) Music Fest Update/Fundraising – Music Fest is May 3rd, 2015. A venue has not been chosen. Matt Tifford – We need to figure out fundraising for Music Fest. AMP is too expensive and not open yet. The Strathmore Mansion may be an option, but it is not in the neighborhood. The Music Fest was at Mem Sahib last year.

c) Traffic calming update – The plastic bump outs on the “HOT right” at Boiling Brook Pkwy and Schuylkill Rd, near Marv and Mike’s, are too narrow and people have been complaining. It is confusing because there is still a sign there that says “Right Turn Allowed without Stopping.” Once the signage corrected and it becomes just a STOP Sign, hopefully that will ease the traffic issues. Some residents believe that there has been NO improvement at Rocking Horse Rd and Boiling Brook Pkwy. The plastic bump outs actually create a bottleneck and some plastic bump outs have been knocked down by cars.

Standard Business and Reports:

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes: Approved.

Committee Chair Reports:

Membership and Welcome Committee: – Katy Hall: We have 400 RCA members so far this year.

Education Committee – There is a Construction Study requested for the schools located in lower Montgomery County. A meeting will be held on November 2nd, 2015.

Safety Committee – Please be extra careful during this Holiday Season. Reports for thefts of personnel property increase during December. So lock your doors and cars!

Other Neighborhood Events:

1. Holiday Caroling:

Christiana Drap-  
kin – Despite the

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# The RCA Hotline

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Calls Received November 3rd,  
2014 through January 13th, 2015

*General Note: The RCA gets a lot of calls about code violations (untagged cars, tall grass, etc). Please note that phone numbers for agencies that handle such matters are published on the website. You don't have to leave your name or phone number. The RCA reserves the right to not publish any calls that could be viewed as solicitations, personal attacks against neighbors or calls longer than 1.5 minutes due to the time it takes to transcribe and cost to publish. You can always email the RCA at [info@randolphcivic.org](mailto:info@randolphcivic.org) or submit an article for publication to the Echo editor.*

11-08-14 (Sat) at 11:00am. Not Anonymous. Hi, I'm on Schuylkill road. I put stuff out for the Boy Scouts and they didn't seem to pick it up. I had it up on the porch and I don't see a phone number for them. I thought maybe you could help me. Thank you, bye.

11-08-14 (Sat) at 11:11am. Same Caller. Please disregard my last message. I got ahold of someone from the Scouts and they're taking care of it. Thanks!

11-08-14 (Sat) at 2:04pm. Not Anonymous. Hi – I'm calling from Wyaconda Road and we did not get our October Echo issue, as well as our November. I don't know if it was delivered but I just wanted to let you know. We're at 47xx Wyaconda Road. Thank you.

11-10-14 (Mon) at 12:06pm. Anonymous. Hi. I have a little comment that I want to put in the Echo and I'm sure that many of my neighbors will agree with me. Does the county have a lot of extra money to add all these curbs on the streets? Because I'm sure they could invest our taxpayer money into repairing the roads and whatnot and cleaning up the snow whenever the time comes. This is just ridiculous how much money they will waste on something that they will end up demolishing in a few years, probably not even a few years, maybe a few months. Just put this small comment and I'm sure that probably at least 50% of our neighborhood will agree with me.

11-12-14 (Wed) at 6:11pm. Hi, I live in Montrose Park. Officer Janney recommended I give you all a call regarding an incident in our neighborhood last night. He thought you might want to put it in the newsletter and share it with the Neighborhood Watch, if we have one. Thank you.

11-16-14 (Sun) at 11:37pm. Received via [info@RandolphCivic.org](mailto:info@RandolphCivic.org). Not Anonymous. With all my respect to your opening even Mr. Brian Hooker, President supported! This is worse than Dam and Daumier. I cannot believe what you'll did successfully. The east side of Boiling Brook and Rocking Horse. Make turn rights without stop and for

left or to Rocking Horse is what traffic laws are writing. Mr. President and follow businessmen, we were happy without the STICKS, we have to stop for people and especial in that spot where there is School, I begs and ask Mr. B. Hooker and the gentlemen to stopped by and see yourself and drop a note again, because the area looks like an bowling alley, sticks look and this caused narrowing the intersection. I look for your message to RCA Office Thanks.

11-17-14 (Mon) at 9:41pm. Anonymous. I have a 91-year old mother that I've taken care of for the last 10 years, or so, and she's had a stroke and she can't hardly walk. Sometimes she can't walk at all and I have to carry her. So, I've got two back surgeries and I have to carry her from the car to the house. So, I park the car as close to the door as possible. If the car would fit through the front door, I'd drive it into the living room. I'm sorry that you don't like the way the car looks in the front yard but it's my front yard, thank goodness, and I'll do what I please with my property, as you can do with yours. It's mine and I can do as I want to with it. But thank you for voicing your concerns about degrading the value of the property by parking cars in the front yard. I'll try to get a Ferrari. Mom likes fast cars and she likes red cars, so I'll try to get a red Ferrari and that will improve the appearance of the yard. Thank you for your concern.

11-24-14 (Mon) at 9:46am. Not Anonymous. I don't  
(Continued on Page 7)



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## Hotline Calls

(continued from page 6)

know where to get some help but I'd like to report that I live on 48xx Randolph Road. Recently, we've lost things. We've lost our lawnmower and ladder suddenly. I don't know who stole them but we need them. Since this area is not safe at all I don't know where to go to report such things. Will you please help guide me on these things?

11-25-14 (Tues) at 12:41pm. Not Anonymous. Received via Info@RandolphCivic.org, which was copied on an email to the county Department of Transportation: Seeing that leaf collection has been suspended for winter storm preparations, I am finding myself to be very frustrated with leaf collection efforts this year. If public safety is of greatest concern, why isn't the operation beginning in late October? By the time we hit November 1, plenty of leaves have fallen, and piles are building up. Not everyone has heeded requests to rake piles to (but not into) the curb and large piles have been blowing all over the road and sidewalks. Furthermore on the public safety front, I now have over a month's worth of leaves in my pile, which, after several rains and visits from local animals, has gathered plenty of mold and other not-so-lovely-to-inhale things that are health risks not only for me and my neighbors, but also your collection guys. Now we get to add snow and ice to the equation. By the time trucks get to my neighborhood (collection area 6f), it will be DECEMBER, and every single leaf will have fallen from every single tree, and there will be no need for a second/Final round and honestly, I would have preferred to have been asked to bag our leaves for the weekly lawn waste collection. They are all going to the same place anyway. Thank you for your consideration.

11-25-14 (Tues) at 1:01pm. MCDOT's Public Outreach Manager responds to the above message: Thank you for your email regarding leaf collection this season. I understand your frustration. This year's County leaf collection has went slower than we expected due to the extremely larger amount of leaves than expected and the inclement weather conditions we have faced over the past few weeks. However, MCDOT's leafing operation is one of the largest programs Highway Services offers. As a result, the coordination levels are very complex and we rely on our depots and contractors to complete the work as safely and quickly as possible. That being said, starting leafing collection in October is not advantageous for two reasons. First, in October our depot and contractor crews are still very busy with their late-season paving operations. Summer paving activities often extend as late as possible in order to wrap projects up before it gets too cold. Paving operations usually cannot take place in temperatures below 40 degrees, so October is generally the last month we have to work on the roads. As a result, Highway Services simply does not have the manpower to conduct leafing operations during that month. Secondly, we closely monitor weather conditions

to determine when the most accurate time to collect leaves is. Of course, Mother Nature is unpredictable and certain neighborhoods leaves fall sooner than others. That being said, I promise you that our crews are working as quickly as possible to get to the leaf piles that are still out there. If you have not seen crews in your neighborhood by Monday or Tuesday of next week, please feel free to contact me again and I can see what I can do.

11-25-14 (Tues) at 2:40pm. Not Anonymous. Received via info@randolphcivic.org. Good afternoon: I wanted to register a concern with the speeding on Schuylkill Road, as I know many others are concerned, yet frustrated with what one can do. I live across the street from the Rockville METRO station and after several complaints, was able to convince the county to change the number of seconds one has to cross the intersection at Rockville Pike and Church Street from 27 to 35. My mother lives on Schuylkill Road; however she does not drive very often. When I take her places or visit her, I am amazed at how difficult it is for one to back out of the driveway. I have contacted a number of people regarding this. I am not sure who the County Council is for this part of North Bethesda, Maryland; however I think speeding cameras and a light needs to be placed at the intersection of Schuylkill Road and Garrett Park Road. I understand this is a very challenging situation especially since the ambulance and police officers often use this road. I know a former neighbor had two of their cats killed due to the speeding on this street. Thank you for addressing my concern.

12-26-14 (Fri) at 9:45am. Anonymous. Hi, I'm calling in regards to a rental house at 12xxx Ashley Drive. The trash and recyclables were picked up this past Monday and the recycle bins and trash container were never moved back from the street and have since been filled back up and are sitting at the curb in front of the house. This has happened before and it's kind of an eyesore. I hope you can do something and let people know this is an eyesore and it shouldn't go out until Sunday night for Monday pickup.



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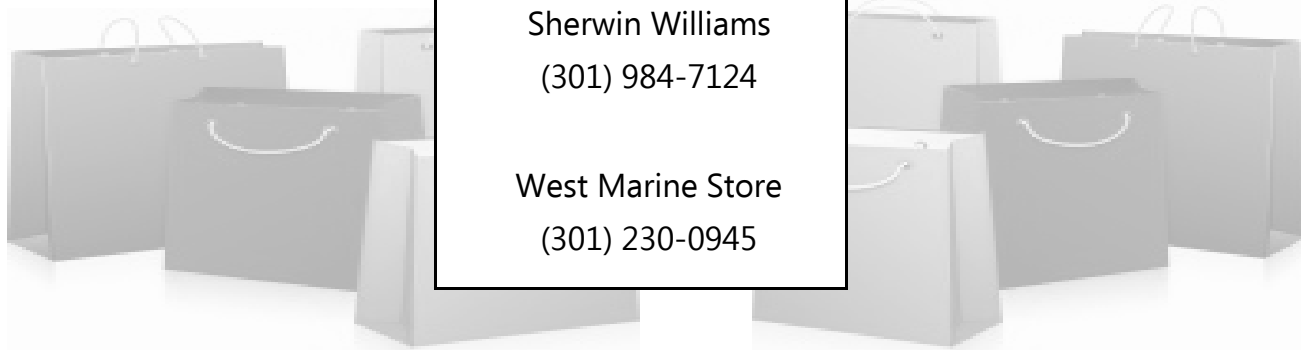
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## Community Garden

(continued from page 3)

benefit from this communal experience in unexpected ways. Come and find out for yourself.

Go to the website [www.MontgomeryParks.org](http://www.MontgomeryParks.org). You'll be surprised by the wealth of facilities, resources, and activities the Parks Department is offering, from ball field permits and building rentals for family events, to all kinds of year-round recreational opportunities. We are truly blessed and should make the best of these varied offerings. Scroll down on the website until you see the Community Gardens links and establish an online Free ParkPass account for yourself. Peruse the lengthy list of requirements and responsibilities – this kind of commitment may not be for everyone -- and check out the listings of other community gardens, for example the nearby Parklawn garden (which is only accessible via Veirs Mill Road) but can be a good alternative in case all our Rocking Horse plots are spoken for.

This will be my fifth year puttering on my little garden plot. I've saved some seeds from my favorite harvests last year, and I've already gotten more seeds from some garden-neighbors. They are as excited as I am, dreaming of spring, while Mother Earth in our hemisphere takes a breather, lying dormant under a blanket of snow.

## RCA-Land families come through again to make Christmas Toy

### Drive a Success

by Ashley Salganik

For a second consecutive year, several RCA families sponsored children from our neighborhood elementary school, Viers Mill, this holiday season. Kensington Wheaton Youth Services and Linkages to Learning reached out to the RCA in November asking if we could help local families during the holiday season. We printed a 'help a neighbor in need' article in the November Echo and received responses from several RCA families offering to help. Thanks to the generosity of our participating neighbors, we were again able to provide presents for 18 children.

Linkages to Learning sent the RCA a thank you note in recognition of our efforts. Thank you to those who participated – you helped to make Christmas special for our local families in need!

## Help Make our Community a Safer Place Become a RCA Block Captain



The RCA Safety Committee is reviving the neighborhood watch program. The goal of the program is to make our community a safer place and to increase communication regarding safety issues and other neighborhood concerns.

Becoming a Block Captain simply means joining the RCA Safety Committee email listserv and keeping an eye out for safety issues on your street.

Email [safety@randolphcivic.org](mailto:safety@randolphcivic.org) for more information and to learn how you can help.

## Understanding County Home Occupancy Limits

by Brian Hooker

During a recent RCA Board meeting, the Board discussed issues from the community that have recently come to our attention. A recurring issue in RCA-land, the overcrowding of houses, was discussed in some detail. A crowded house, in and of itself, is not usually a problem with neighbors. The problems usually arise from the indirect effects of a crowded house. If a house has a lot of people, especially if they are all adults, it often leads to issues such as limited street parking and maintenance issues associated with too many people and none of them taking ownership of exterior maintenance. In regards to parking, if a house has too many vehicles, this often results in the inability for neighboring residents to park in front of their own home, as well as adding to the abundance of vehicles on the roadsides -- making street navigation a major hassle for other cars, bikers, runners and walkers.

Although it took considerable time to understand the nuances of the County code via discussions with the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs,

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what I have below is the best summary I could arrive at. The information below pertains strictly to the renting of rooms and shouldn't be misinterpreted to be regulations regarding the number of people in a single family.

Generally, homes in RCA-land are considered single dwelling units, unless licensed to have an accessory apartment, of which there are only a few (I counted 6) licensed in all RCA-land (see [http://montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/housing/licensing/accessory\\_apartment.html](http://montgomerycountymd.gov/DHCA/housing/licensing/accessory_apartment.html)). Accessory apartments have very clear standards and a public permitting process associated with them. A home that is not occupied by the owner(s) is required to have a rental license (see County Code Section 29-16). If the home is occupied by a single person, owner or otherwise, then they are permitted to have up to 4 additional roomers without a license as long as they meet the square footage, bedroom egress (window and door to hallway), and other requirements in Section 26-5 of the County Code. If the primary occupant has multiple family members living in the house then the County only permits 2 additional roomers.

The most important thing I learned is to try to give the inspectors as much information as you have about the house that you are reporting. Just saying that there are too many people is often not enough to help the inspector understand the situation. Try to be respectful of cultures other than your own and keep the reporting to long-term issues (e.g., not family and friend visits during the holidays or special events).



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## Troop 1083 News

By Shannon Finn and Ben Pitkin

The Troop 1083 family extends its gratitude to the many friends and neighbors who supported us during our successful Christmas tree sale in November and December. It's always nice to see the familiar faces of our repeat customers, to meet new customers, and to greet old friends who stop by just to say hello. We truly appreciate the support we receive from the community!

The 2014/2015 Scouting year is shaping up to produce a record number of new Troop 1083 Eagle Scouts. Over several weekends in December, Adam Levensgard led a team of volunteers in completing his Eagle Scout service project, which involved providing bedding supplies to needy families. Adam collected donated blankets, comforters, pillows, and linens, and supplied them to A Wider Circle, a charitable organization in Silver Spring that provides furnishings for families embarking on their first housing opportunities. Adam's project included community outreach to let potential donors know how, where, and when to donate; collecting and delivering the donations; and building two large movable bins for A Wider Circle's permanent use, to store the bedding materials between donation and distribution.

Later, on December 21, the Troop was delighted when Santa Claus was able to take a break from toy making and list checking at the North Pole to visit RCA-land for his annual pre-Christmas fire truck tour. The elves from Troop 1083 and Venture Crew 1083 were thrilled to assist in the distribution of candy canes to all the good boys and girls in the neighborhood. We consider it a great privilege to join Santa and were grateful to do so this year, as last year Santa was unable to join us. Thankfully this year he let us know that the weather was cooperating and he would be on the job with the Scouts and Venturers of 1083 and the Webelos of Pack 1081!

The Troop's annual holiday party took place at the Garrett Park Town Hall that evening. Webelos II scouts joined the party and introduced themselves, and many old friends and former Scouts dropped in for surprise visits to say hello. It was a regular reunion party!

Kicking off the new year with more Eagle Scout milestones, Ben Safford passed his Eagle Board of Review with flying colors on January 9th. The Board is the final step in the climb to Eagle. Congratulations, Ben!

On January 16-18, the scouts put their winter weather scouting skills to work at the Klondike Derby campout at Little Bennett State Park in Clarksburg; and on February 15, they will enjoy the annual skiing/snowboarding trip to Ski Liberty in Pennsylvania. Be sure to check out the March Echo for details!

If you are a boy who has finished the 5th grade, you can join Boy Scout Troop 1083. We meet Monday nights at 7:30 pm at Viers Mill ES. Call Scoutmaster Dave Talbott at 301-933-0048. Check out [www.troop1083.org](http://www.troop1083.org).

## Troop 1083 2015 Spring Mulch Sale



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or email [Dave.Judi.Talbott@verizon.net](mailto:Dave.Judi.Talbott@verizon.net)*



## RCF President's Message

by Ashley Salganik

Stay tuned for the date of our big spring clean-up! We will be teaming up again with our area Scout troops around Earth Day to spruce up our neighborhood. If there are certain places in our neighborhood that could use some special attention, please let me know at [ashleysalganik@gmail.com](mailto:ashleysalganik@gmail.com).

In addition to our big spring clean-up that typically occurs in April, there are other opportunities to beautify our neighborhood. Last year the RCF adopted Boiling Brook Parkway so we are now required to clean-up this stretch of land six times a year. Also, you can always grab a plastic shopping bag or trash bag if you are out taking a walk on a sunny day when we get a break from the cold weather. Many hands will lighten the workload and make our neighborhood look great!

## Spring into Action: A call for volunteers

by Matthew Tifford

While it may be hard to think of such things in the dead of winter, before we know it Spring will be upon us! Bulbs will start poking their heads up out of the ground, buds will appear on tree branches and for those so inclined, thoughts of mulch and annuals will abound.

All around our community we have RCA entrance signs with flowerbeds in need of care. While the signs themselves look great, they won't be improved by a neglected weedy bed. By mid-May they will all be in need of light weeding, trimming of dead foliage from the perennials, and fresh mulch. Most would further benefit from the addition of colorful annuals. Aside from the large sign on Boiling Brook Parkway, these flowerbeds are small areas that don't require an enormous investment of time and energy.

While we do not have sufficient funds to hire a landscaping company to manage all of these flower beds, we do have funds available to purchase plants and mulch. For the actual gardening, we depend on volunteers generously contributing their free time. At present we do not have enough volunteers to cover all of the flowerbeds. We hope that you will consider giving a little of your time to this worthy cause.

## Venture Crew 1083 News

By Ben Pitkin

When Santa Claus visited RCA-Land on the fire truck December 21, chances are you saw some of the Venture Crew elves (along with the Boy Scouts and Webelos) riding on the truck, or walking alongside. Maybe you even received a candy cane from a Venturer! After the ride, Santa returned to the North Pole, and the Venturers attended the Troop and Crew's annual holiday party, where many of the Crew's recent graduates, home from college for the holidays, were there to greet them.

The Crew's High Adventure contingent welcomed the New Year with a jolt of excitement: 2015 is here at last—the year they'll be spending two weeks at the Philmont Scout Ranch. Their two and a half years of preparation are drawing ever closer to an end!

Exciting news came in December, when two veterans of the 2013 Philmont trek decided to join the 2015 Crew for a return engagement, increasing that group's membership to nine. Then a tenth participant signed on, this young man having just joined the Scout Troop and Venture Crew as well. On January 11th, the entire group of ten attended a "Philmont Crew Fundamentals" orientation and training session hosted by the National Capital Area Council.

More training and preparation lie ahead—including CPR and Wilderness First Aid certification for at least two of the trekkers! Keep your eye on future Echo articles for the latest developments.

Venturing is open to coed youth aged 14 through 20. Crew meetings are Monday nights from 6:30–7:30 pm at Viers Mill ES. Why not join us? Bring a like-minded friend so you'll already know someone else at the meeting! For more information, contact crew advisor Greg Skolnik at 301-942-3755.

## RCF Board of Directors for 2014-2015

### OFFICERS

#### President

Ashley Salganik  
4818 Mori Drive  
301-468-0363  
[ashleysalganik@gmail.com](mailto:ashleysalganik@gmail.com)

#### Vice President

Michelle Canick  
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[mcanick@hotmail.com](mailto:mcanick@hotmail.com)

#### Secretary

Lindsay Hoffman  
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[lindsayhoffman@aol.com](mailto:lindsayhoffman@aol.com)

#### Treasurer

Mark Nensel  
11830 Rocking Horse Rd  
301-351-1957

#### Directors

Bob Walker  
11813 Ashley Drive  
[amorworks1@aol.com](mailto:amorworks1@aol.com)

Karen Helfert  
11429 Ashley Drive  
301-468-0236

Alison Dewey  
5003 Macon Drive  
[sabaly@hotmail.com](mailto:sabaly@hotmail.com)

The Randolph Civic Foundation originated in 1996. It was formed to provide educational and charitable services to the Randolph Community. The address is: Randolph Civic Foundation, PO Box 489, Garrett Park, MD 20896-0489

[www.RandolphCivicFoundation.org](http://www.RandolphCivicFoundation.org) - Phone: 240-389-4723

## October Meeting

(continued from page 4)

rain, the Holiday caroling continued last Monday. More cookies were eaten inside.

### 2. New White Flint Name:

The new name for "White Flint" will be announced on Monday December 9, 2014 at the Marriot Hotel [the name was subsequently revealed as: "Pike District"].

### 3. Rezoning for Montrose Christian School

The rezoning hearing for the Montrose Christian School will be held in late January 2015. The RCA is on the list to testify. *[RCA Note: This has since been changed. No hearing will be held and the redevelopment is on hold until further notice.]*

Meeting adjourned: 9:09pm

## Join Your Neighbors Online

The RCA Yahoo Group is a great resource for keeping up with happenings in RCA land. Need a recommendation for a local handyman? Looking for a babysitter or dog walker? Want to learn more about local activities? Have an idea to improve our neighborhood?



Get in on the conversation at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/randolphca/>

## Going Solar

(continued from page 1)

power for the month you will still need to pay a small monthly fee to the power company for being tied to the grid, somewhere in the 9 - 11 dollar range.

How much energy will you generate? Each system is designed with your energy needs and cost in mind. I am a relatively low power user, having switched out my light bulbs; I use gas heat and a gas hot water heater, and I practice other energy saving efforts. All that being said, my solar system is relatively small, it will produce in its first year 3,940 kWh, which will offset 92% of my energy consumption (based on what I used last year).

What does it cost? Cost will vary based on the size of your system and how much electricity you are trying to generate or can generate based on the orientation of your roof. Buy vs. lease vs. other arrangements (like the power purchase agreements) will also affect your upfront costs versus long term costs. I decided to mentally treat this like any other home improvement cost. Interestingly enough, since I am a relatively low energy user saving money on electricity is not the main selling point for my going solar. My system will offset 114,150 lbs. of greenhouse gas emissions and is equivalent to planting 1,330 trees. All that being said, I did not want the system to cost more than using "regular" electricity, and the concept of some savings over time was appealing. My 3.9 kW (STC-DC) system cost just under \$10,000 and my 20 year net savings is estimated to be \$7,600.

So, you are off the grid? Well, no. Going off grid requires expensive on site battery storage. While the technology and cost for solar panels has improved and the cost has dropped, battery storage technology is still expensive. Also,

if you are leasing the system, frequently you are required to be tied into the grid. The rules and laws vary from state to state.

Does it work when the power goes out? Alas, since I do not have battery storage, I will not have power when the power goes out. However, I wouldn't be surprised if this option becomes more affordable in the future.

Solar Powered Community. A recent study (Journal of Economic Geography) shows that the number one driver for someone making the move to solar energy is peer influence - where other nearby houses had gone solar. Additionally, several companies operate referral incentive programs to encourage and support the spread of solar through communities and peer networks.

What's next? Stay tuned and I'll report back as my solar system and net-metering takes effect. I'm looking forward to watching the meter run backwards!

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## CLASSIFIEDS

*The Echo publishes classified ads free for RCA members, to a maximum of one ad per year per household. Additional ads may be purchased for \$5.00. The Echo makes no claims or guarantees regarding the quality of goods or services sold.*

**BEST BUDDIES PETSITTING SERVICE:** Going out of town? Need your dog to be walked daily? Have a cat that needs to be boarded? Well we are a home away from home providing the best loving care for your pet depending on your needs. We board cats and dogs and we do not crate them. We have a fenced-in quarter acre lot right here in Randolph Hills! Dogs get two 30 minute walks daily and all animals get breakfast and dinner; we provide the food! Between walks, there is plenty of playtime. Prices reasonable and our schedule is setup to meet your needs. Pickup and drop-off service is provided if needed. Any medications can and will be administered. We are bonded and insured. Call Danny Beigel at: 240.654.0694 or go to [www.bestbuddiespetservice.com](http://www.bestbuddiespetservice.com) email us at [bestbuddiespetsitting@hotmail.com](mailto:bestbuddiespetsitting@hotmail.com)

**WATERCOLOR CLASSES.** Learn to paint in nearby Garrett Park! Small, informal classes for adults. All levels welcome, including complete beginners. Held in teacher's Victorian home. Martha Seigel, MFA, the American University, over 30 years experience. Call 301-946-5388.

**New Parent Group** Do you have an infant under 1 year old? Are you interested in meeting up with other parents of infants from the neighborhood for walks and activities? If so, please e-mail Nikki Forry at [nikki.forry@gmail.com](mailto:nikki.forry@gmail.com).

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## Randolph Hills, Randolph Farms, Franklin Park and Montrose Park 2014 Market Review!



<b>Randolph Hills</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Average List Price	\$313,250	\$329,885	\$315,515	\$348,034	\$368,044	\$380,659
Average Sale Price	\$306,915	\$326,282	\$308,744	\$343,544	\$367,181	\$375,538
Lowest Sale Price	\$219,900	\$225,018	\$175,000	\$246,000	\$230,000	\$275,000
Highest Sale Price	\$370,000	\$400,000	\$440,000	\$405,000	\$435,000	\$450,000
Average # Days on Mkt	61	41	61	46	32	33
Sales per Year	30	33	29	43	36	36

<b>Franklin Park</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Average List Price	\$358,700	\$369,417	\$341,500	\$364,933	\$355,740	\$400,511
Average Sale Price	\$358,725	\$360,833	\$327,257	\$360,533	\$364,040	\$393,267
Lowest Sale Price	\$335,000	\$345,000	\$290,000	\$305,900	\$315,000	\$360,000
Highest Sale Price	\$400,000	\$370,000	\$379,900	\$439,900	\$414,000	\$415,000
Average # Days on Mkt	25	35	64	86	114	33
Sales per Year	4	3	7	6	5	9

<b>Montrose Park</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Average List Price	\$365,667	-	-	\$409,900	\$425,000	\$435,380
Average Sale Price	\$362,333	-	-	\$400,000	\$405,000	\$434,580
Lowest Sale Price	\$302,000	-	-	\$400,000	\$405,000	\$415,000
Highest Sale Price	\$395,000	-	-	\$009,000	\$405,000	\$450,000
Average # Days on Mkt	10	-	-	7	19	26
Sales per Year	3	0	0	1	1	4

<b>Randolph Farms</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Average List Price	\$266,633	\$329,000	-	\$353,133	\$371,333	\$383,575
Average Sale Price	\$271,633	\$328,667	-	\$345,667	\$373,000	\$379,350
Lowest Sale Price	\$245,000	\$247,000	-	\$297,000	\$347,000	\$324,900
Highest Sale Price	\$319,900	\$370,000	-	\$400,000	\$407,000	\$432,500
Average # Days on Mkt	110	21	-	21	31	37
Sales per Year	3	3	0	3	3	4

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*Happy New Year!*

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