

The Hillandale Bulletin

November 2010

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Ross Sutton, Editor

HCA General Meeting November 17, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. CHI, 10501 New Hampshire Avenue

New Hampshire Avenue is Hillandale's "Main Street" along with being a major transportation corridor in this area of Montgomery County. Over the past few months, questions regarding pedestrian safety, traffic back-ups, and signal timing have been asked of state and county agencies. Now we've invited them to come and discuss the road with the community. Felecia Murphy from Maryland State Highway will be providing information on her recent assessment of the roadway through our community. And, Khursheed Bilgrami from Montgomery County's DOT, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations will be taking comments.

First on the agenda is a short discussion regarding Urban Bar-B-Que's desire to have state legislation passed to allow their restaurant to serve beer and wine. Legislation has been introduced to the Montgomery Delegation and will be acted upon this session. Currently, the restaurant is precluded from having a license because of the proximity to Church of Our Saviour. Kathie Durban from the Montgomery Department of Liquor Control along with Marc Eden and Marc Bladstein of Urban Bar-B-Que will be providing information and answering any questions.

The Hillandale Citizens Association meetings are open to all residents of Hillandale and the general area. Please come, bring your questions and participate with other community members to strengthen our neighborhood.

Prevent Stolen Vehicles

Many cars are easily stolen when left running, unattended-with the keys in the ignition! This is a very preventable crime. Please, don't be a victim, or tempt anyone to commit this crime of opportunity.

The Montgomery County Police want to remind everyone that leaving a vehicle running and unattended is a violation of the State of Maryland Transportation Code, Article 21, Section 1101. The penalty for this violation is a \$70 fine and one point on your license. If the stolen car contributes to an accident, the fine increases to \$110 with three points on your license.

The Maryland Vehicle Law requires that a driver turn the engine off, lock the ignition, remove the keys, and set the brake before leaving a car. Also, if your vehicle is stolen with the use of a key, it could result in sanctions by the vehicle's insurer. These penalties can range from a premium increase to failure to renew the policy.

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Don't forget to mark your calendar for Brookside Garden's annual "Garden of Lights" The event starts on November 26th and runs through Jan 6th of the New Year. If you have never gone then you have been missing one of our area's finest holiday treats.

Please, not down our drains...

For quite some time, bags of dog poop have been placed at and in the various storm sewer/drains at Sweetbriar and Gatewood. When washed down the drain, these bags enter the Paint Branch stream and travel, via the Anacostia and Potomac rivers, to the Chesapeake Bay. PLEASE, since you are taking the trouble to bag the dog waste, take it home and properly dispose of the bag in your trashcan. Thanks.

Home Energy Audits

In a recent HCA community meeting Steven Boie from A to Z Energy spoke about energy audits. His presentation on home energy audits inspired my wife and I to invite him to do an audit on our older Hillandale home. I thought it would be a good idea for this editor to share his experiences with this community.

Our house was built by Merritt Lockwood in 1938. Like so many homes of the era built before air conditioning, the house was built for maximum cooling in the hot Washington summers and not designed for maximum energy efficiency in the winter. The construction of our home used “balloon framing” which was typical for that era. By creating a vacuum in the house with a specially designed fan, Steven was able to show us by using chemical smoke and a thermal imaging device where cold air was penetrating our house in the winter months. The biggest problem with our home was the balloon framing that was open all the way up from the basement to the attic. This type of framing tends to act just like a chimney and draw air up to the attic. It causes air to escape through the penetrations in the walls such as electrical outlets, light fixtures and switches and any number of other small holes that the average house has in the walls.

To correct the problem, Steven referred us to “Atlas Home Energy Solutions” a local company that specialized in upgrading the energy insulation in residential homes. The two owners of that outfit came to our home and looked it over. With Steven’s input, they suggested two solutions. First they went into the crawl space that opens to our basement and completely sealed all holes to the outside before lining all the walls with one inch insulated foam board. In addition they placed black plastic sheeting over the dirt floor to seal off moisture that naturally comes up from the soil. After finishing in the basement, the contractors then headed for our attic. Our home has a layer of loose vermiculite insulation that was installed in the attic (Before they came we had to have it tested as some vermiculite contains asbestos.) The insulation had settled over the years and was no longer very efficient. Energy Solutions pulled up all of the flooring in our attic and used insulation foam to seal all of the areas of the attic where the balloon framing allowed air to rise up to the attic. They then replaced the flooring and blew in loose cellulose insulation-raising our insulation rating from about R-13 to R-41. This is about what you would expect to see in a new home built today.

The bottom line? It took them two days to do all of the work and cost us a bit of money, but we expect our house to be a lot less drafty this winter and to see our heating bill go way down. I think that we will recoup the cost of the job in about five years. I highly recommend a home energy audit for any Hillandale home that has not had one yet. It can save you a lot of money in the future.

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