



See "Y' Change" article on page 10.

April, 2011
800+ Homes

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Indian Spring News

Taste of Indian Spring • April 26

Free Restaurant Samples!

Join us Tuesday April 26th for the Annual Taste of Indian Spring Evening

By Allegra Tasaki

YES, IT'S TRUE: your hard-working neighbors on the Taste of Indian Spring Organizing Committee have persuaded TEN restaurants, right here in our 'hood, to offer up some goodies for you to try. We are holding the annual ISCA Taste of Indian Spring Evening on Tuesday April 26th at 6:30 p.m. in the Highland View Elementary School All-Purpose Room.

Graciously, the following restaurants will be sponsoring our event, while you (our friends and neighbors) provide side dishes, drinks, and great company! A couple of additional restaurants may participate as well.

Addis Ababa—www.addisababarestaurant.com. In an area with the largest number of Ethiopian restaurants outside of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa Restaurant is the shining beacon of Ethiopian tradition, culture, and cuisine.

Chick-Fil-A—www.chickfila.com. Privately owned and family operated in downtown Silver Spring, the neighborhood Chick-Fil-A is the second largest of all the chain's quick-service restaurants in the United States.

El Golfo—www.elgolforestaurant.com. Since 1999, this family-owned restaurant has specialized in Latin American food, prepared fresh daily, with a menu including steaks, fresh seafood, chicken, and many other traditional dishes.

Flippin' Pizza—www.flippinpizza.com. It starts with the dough—made fresh daily with no oil, sugar, or high-fructose corn syrup and hand tossed for a crust that's authentic, thin, and airy. Add whole milk mozzarella and fresh, all-natural toppings, and you're in pie heaven.

Kao—www.kaothairestaurant.com. Here you will find fresh, delicious, high-quality Thai food never cooked with MSG and always prepared just as spicy as you like it by their expert Thai chef.

Gils—www.gilsrestaurant.com. This casual Tex-Mex/El Salvadoran restaurant features party platters and a gluten-free menu and offers space where family and friends can dine on freshly prepared meat and seafood.

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Indian Spring Citizens Association

Membership Application and Renewal

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Street Address: _____ Silver Spring, MD 20901

Email: _____

If you are not sure of your membership status you can e-mail Phyllis, fzusman@erols.com or call, 301-587-9063, and she will give you the answer.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Jill Ortman-Fouse

SPRING IS FINALLY HERE! So much to look forward to—nicer weather, seeing more of our neighbors out on walks, and the Taste of Indian Spring! Thanks to the hard work and dedication of an outstanding team of volunteers, we will have a bounty of delicious food representing the plethora of ethnic restaurants in our area—plus Flippin' Pizza and Chick-fil-A for our less adventurous eaters. I am especially looking forward to sampling the offerings from the new restaurants that we haven't been to yet. Kudos to Allegra Tasaki, Tony Hausner, Arlene Montemarano, Dave Schieber, Mary Ann Hess, Mark Locraft, and Kristy Wallmo for all their efforts securing such a great spread. Don't forget to sign up to help out—many hands ensure everyone is able to enjoy the evening—and bring a side dish or salad to share.

As more of us are out and about, pedestrian safety becomes an even higher priority. Heidi Whitesell is leading the committee tasked with addressing both pedestrian and vehicle safety along Franklin Avenue.

Our final ISCA general meeting before the summer break will be Monday, May 16

Please see her article later in the newsletter for an update on the committee's progress. Opportunities will be available for feedback on possible solutions; watch for announcements on the listserv and in the newsletter.

Our final **ISCA general meeting** before the summer break will be Monday,



President Jill Ortman-Fouse

May 16, at 7:30 p.m. at the Indian Spring Rec Center. Please mark your calendars. Our topic will be **Silver Spring development.** Our guests will be Remberto Rodriguez, director of Silver Spring's Regional Center, and Jennifer Nettles, manager of downtown Silver Spring /Ellsworth Drive for Foulger Pratt. We will hear about the latest plans for the area's development, and how the new county FY2012 budget (which will have just been approved by the County Council) might affect local plans and programs.

Also at this meeting, we will be voting on the slate of candidates for next year's ISCA Board. Happily, all board members have agreed to serve another term, but we are still looking for a **Social Committee Chair.** If you have enjoyed taking part in Indian Spring's special annual events, and value the contribution these gatherings make to our sense of community, please consider volunteering for this coordination position. We would be happy to provide you the details on what has become a well-oiled machine just looking for a driver.

I do want to mention how grateful I am to all of our board members for returning for another term. These neighbors truly care so much about our community and continue to make it a great place to live. Of course, we would always welcome new candidates—and I'm sure our volunteer leaders would appreciate a break! So if you are so moved and want to become more involved in the decision-making regarding neighborhood quality of life issues (including perhaps being president!) please contact me or any of the other board members. If you have an idea for a new board position, don't hesitate to pass it on. We heartily welcome new energy and fresh concepts. See this page of the newsletter for the list of board members and their positions.

Looking forward to seeing more of you around the 'hood and your families at the Taste! ✨

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April 26, Taste of Indian Spring!

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Update: Activities of Pedestrian Safety Committee—Franklin Ave

By Heidi Whitesell

A**FTER WITNESSING** a harrowing accident at the intersection of Franklin and Saybrook Avenue in December 2010—the third I've seen at that corner since we moved to Indian Spring 13 years ago—I was moved to act and reached out to the neighborhood network. The response was swift and intense. And so I ended up at the ISCA Pedestrian Safety Committee (PSC) meeting on December 7, discussing the community's apparently long-standing efforts to achieve better pedestrian safety and to institute traffic calming measures on Franklin Avenue. Not only were a good number of Indian Spring residents present, but representatives from the Sligo Branview Citizens Association and Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens Association also attended. We gathered to discuss our concerns, but, more importantly, to create solutions. A follow-up article appeared in the January 2011 edition of the ISCA newsletter.

I gladly agreed to take on the leadership of the Pedestrian Safety Committee, and would like to now bring you all up to date on what has taken place since that December meeting. Progress on exploring solutions has been delayed since then because warmer

weather is required for the speed tests. I plan to hold another Committee meeting around mid-May—or after MCDOT has completed the requested tests. We will notify ISCA members of the date when appropriate.

Preliminary Measures

The week of 21 March, two SMART (Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer) units were deployed on Franklin Avenue—on the western (at Caroline) and eastern (at Seminole) ends. These will remain there for at least a week. (We do not know if the SMART units will still be deployed upon publication of the newsletter.) Depending on other progress in our efforts, the Committee will decide if a second deployment is a good idea, which likely would be scheduled for about 3–6 months from now.

Before we ask the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to take final action on traffic calming measures on Franklin Avenue, we will pulse the community via the listserv and hold a community meeting to obtain the best possible consensus. In the meantime, two speed studies are being undertaken.

Speed Humps

Not everyone in our neighborhood believes that speed humps are the optimal solution to traffic safety on Franklin Avenue. Nevertheless, we need to have done our homework, should this turn out to be the only, or best, possible traffic calming solution.

MCDOT conducted a preliminary test at the intersection of Franklin and Caroline and of Franklin and Seminole in February. The Franklin/Caroline intersection passed in that more than 85% of drivers within a two-hour period travelled at a speed of 39 mph or higher. This would theoretically qualify west-

continued on page 5

Joseph E. Frew, D.D.S.

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continued from page 4

ern Franklin Avenue for speed humps; the Franklin/Seminole area didn't quite achieve the required threshold (but could during a different time of the day).

To obtain official results, the department required a letter, which ISCA president, Jill Ortman-Fouse, submitted last month.

Speed Cameras

Another study that will determine eligibility for speed cameras involves securing pressure tubes on the stretches of road of most concern. I reached out to MCDOT's Traffic Division last winter and was told that temperatures needed to be warmer for the tape/adhesives to stick. Right now, MDOT will likely consider the roads to be warm enough by mid-April, and we will then coordinate with them to determine the precise time-frame for them to conduct the studies.

Other options, including pedestrian islands, raised crosswalks, and chokers (curb extensions), will also be considered. The ultimate goal is to make Franklin both pedestrian and vehicle friendly so as not to encourage additional cut-through traffic in the neighborhood.

Indian Spring will benefit greatly from appropriate traffic calming measures on Franklin Avenue. I hope to never again witness accidents like the one I did last winter. On a final note, I share a word from our ISCA President, which expresses the sentiment of our entire Committee: "I am in favor of addressing the issue of pedestrian safety on the road comprehensively to reduce speeding, as has been done successfully on Arcola and Dale—and, most importantly, finally getting safe sidewalks on both sides of Franklin." *



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May 16, General Meeting

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Help for Folks Who Want to Stay at Home As They Grow Older

By Bob Tiller

ARE YOU EAGER to remain in your home, but uncertain about how you will manage to do so as you age, especially if you are alone? Are you caring for someone who has grown a bit older and frailer, but still wants to remain in her own home? Here are some resources that can help:

■ Montgomery County's Senior Nutrition Hotline, 240-777-1100. Anyone can call and get answers to diet and nutrition questions from a senior perspective from a registered dietician. This service is free and is available Wednesdays between 9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

■ **Seniors Today** is Montgomery County's public affairs television program for seniors. A new program is taped each month and aired several times. It can be seen on RCN channel 6 and Verizon channel 30. You can find the days and times of broadcasts at this website: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccmtmpl.asp?url=/content/cableOffice/CCM/schedule.asp> You can also watch episodes on demand on your computer by going to the county's website: <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/codtmpl.asp?url=/content/CableOffice/CCM/cod/OnDemand.asp&Pname=Seniors%20Today>

■ The State of Maryland Department on Aging recently launched a website for seniors, persons with disabilities, and caregivers. Maryland Access Point (MAP) is part of the national Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) initiative from the Administration on Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The initiative now operates in all 50 states to provide streamlined access to information and services for long-term supports. Anyone can obtain information and answers to questions via MAP at www.marylandaccesspoint.info

■ If you recently enrolled in Medicare, you are entitled to a comprehensive "Welcome to Medicare" exam from your doctor. During the exam your doctor will discuss short- and long-term steps for you to improve your health and stay well. If you are already in Medicare, you are now entitled to an annual "Wellness Exam"—a provision of the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

Also, you can go to www.mymedicare.gov to obtain free, secure, online access to personalized information regarding your Medicare benefits and services. If you don't use a computer, you can arrange for someone you trust to sign up and review your information regularly.

■ The Vital Living Committee of Montgomery County has produced a new resource guide for seniors called the Vital Living Navigator. This extensive publication is intended for those who are still active in their communities rather than those who are home-bound. The Navigator covers six areas of life: transitions, fitness, employment, volunteering, learning, and recreation. It can be found as a PDF at http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/hhs/pdf/vital_living_50.pdf.

■ Seniors who are seeking help in finding a job can attend the "50+ Employment Expo" on Tuesday, May 17, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Admission is free. The nearest Metro stop is White Flint. *

Crime Report From Joyce Stocker

Crime Report for Indian Spring from 2/24/11 to 3/25/11

The following crime was reported to Montgomery County Police from the Indian Spring community over the past month:

3/11/11 Theft from Vehicle 9300 Block of Wire Ave.

Theft from Vehicle continues to plague surrounding areas. Please continue to be conscientious in locking cars and removing valuables.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Joyce Stocker has indicated that she would be glad to facilitate the reporting of burned out street lights to PEPCO. Send an email to comit89@aol.com.

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The details are below and the application is available at www.helpmerhondarealestate.com! Best of Luck!



Samantha Lint, '10 Winner



Susie Branson, '09 Winner

The Fine Print~

- * Must be a graduating high school senior, enrolled full time, living in zip code 20901 or 20910.
- * Must be accepted to a Junior or Four year college during the 2011-2012 academic year.
- * Must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0. Please include official high school transcript with application.
- * 300 word essay question: 'How has responsibility affected your personal growth?'
- * Please include your name, address, phone number, high school and the name of college you plan to attend.
- * Three letters of recommendation (principal, counselor, teacher, employer, etc.) mailed by letter writer directly to Rhonda Mortensen at the address below.
- * Application forms along with school transcript, essay and three recommendation letters must be received at the address below by April 29, 2011.
- * Applications available at www.helpmerhondarealestate.com and via email by request to rhondamortensen1@gmail.com. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.
- * Winner to be notified by May 16, 2011.



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Northwood High School News

By Jay P. Goldman

T **HIS IS A RUNDOWN** on some happenings at Northwood High School, one of the two public secondary schools that draw students from the Indian Spring neighborhood.

No Schedule Changes

The expected change in Northwood's schedule from the eight-period block schedule to a standard seven-period day will not take place this fall as originally thought. After considerable involvement by Northwood parents who strongly backed the current arrangement (four longer class periods, one day with four more the next), the school's instructional council changed direction and has opted to continue with the block schedule for at least one more year. The school district's area superintendent for downcounty schools, who intervened in the dispute, asked the school's council to take up the matter again this fall for the 2012–13 school year.

Two-Day Yard Sale

The school's yearbook staff is conducting its 3rd Annual Community Yardsale on two consecutive Saturdays, April 30 and May 7, from 9 a.m. to noon both days. Anyone interested in having a booth at the sale must sign up by April 21. The school's website has a link to the registration form. Contact Daryl Alston, yearbook adviser at Daryl_Alston@mcpsmd.org or 301-649-8088 with any questions.

Snider's Receipts

As part of its painless fund-raising program, Northwood's PTSA collects receipts from Snider's supermarket on Seminary Road. In 2010 the school turned in nearly \$54,000 worth of receipts, earning the PTSA a \$540 gift. If you have 2011 receipts to share with the PTSA, contact Jim Burke at jaburke@erols.com for home pick-up. Or mail them to NHS PTSA, 919 University Blvd, Silver Spring, MD 20901.

Sports Rivalries

Given the quirky nature of athletic event schedulers in the school system, most Northwood's spring sports teams do not face neighborhood rival Montgomery Blair High School in head-to-head competition. The baseball, softball, boys' tennis, boys' lacrosse, and girls' lacrosse teams at the two schools don't get the chance to settle bragging rights for at least for another year, despite their close proximity.

The two schools' track and field, boys' volleyball, and coed volleyball teams competed against each other during the first week of the spring season in late March.

Northwood is the only high school in Montgomery County that maintains separate websites for every varsity sports team with game-by-game summaries. The websites are accessible from the Athletics link on the home page at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/northwoodhs>. *

SAVE THE DATE!
April 26, Taste of Indian Spring

WEB SITE: Iscaonline.com (includes services recommendations, and photo albums). We are also on Facebook under Indian Spring Citizens Association.

EMAIL GROUP (LISTSERV): To subscribe: iscaonline-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. To send messages: iscaonline@yahoogroups.com.

Editor's note: The newsletter is printed in black and white to save on costs. A color pdf is online at iscaonline.com. So if you want to see any photos, ads, etc. in color, I recommend going online. Additional photos from the ISCA events can be found in our online photo gallery.

SAVE THE DATE!
May 16, General Meeting

The Green Column

The Half-a-Tank Vacation

By Joyce Stocker

HE WAS GOOD! He was slick and convincing. He mentioned the name of a dear friend who was delighted with the island timeshare she had purchased—and I do love Williamsburg, Virginia. For only \$99, I'd get three days and two nights at a top quality hotel in the area and a \$100 gift card. I succumbed when he assured me I didn't have to purchase anything, just promise to attend a presentation on timeshares. Over the ensuing year, the certificate sat and finally was about to expire.

Memories of a past March visit, the aroma of woodsmoke on Duke of Gloucester Street, big soft ginger cookies, and hot apple cider spurred me to finally book the weekend getaway. My teenage daughter groaned at the idea of a "historic vacation," but knowing the hotel had an indoor pool and whirlpool, she agreed to go.

We left right after school on a Friday. According to MapQuest, the trip should have taken about three hours. It took us well over four, as traffic on I 95 had us crawling. But a gas guzzling 70mph speed limit helped

us catch up on time. We checked into the Crowne Plaza Fort Magruder, just in time to get to our dinner reservations at the Kings Arm Tavern in the colonial area. We passed on the special of the day, pecan-crusted salmon with cranberry orange sauce, and opted instead for peanut soup and "salat"—delicious! The historic house was beautifully decorated, and our costumed server explained its past. My daughter declared our candlelit dining experience "fascinating," and started planning a return trip to share the experience with her best friend. On our return to the hotel, we were delighted to find the pool and exercise room empty—a lovely way to end the day.

The next morning, we took advantage of the hotel's breakfast buffet before I had to leave for the timeshare presentation, a short drive away. I have to admit it was compelling, and the pressure was on with extra incentives to buy "today." But I was firm in my decision to have some time to consider the packages, and discuss the idea of owning a timeshare further with the friend

continued on page 15



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Living The Change

PHYSICAL CHANGES can actually give one a fresh perspective. Changing the physical nature of our work environment will create new energy, helping to attack those nagging issues that have occupied our “in-box” waiting for action. Working the way we always have threatens to leave us behind. A former mentor taught me there are three types of people in life. The first makes things happen, the second watches things happen, and the third simply says, “What happened?”

Complacency is the enemy of change. It is hard to escape our comfort zones. Challenge yourself to change. Learn something new, experience something different, or just hang out with new people and listen. Be open to change big and small, you might discover it is enjoyable.

This year YMCA Silver Spring puts into action the new brand name: “The Y.” We are for Youth Development, for Healthy Living, and for Social Responsibility. For us this means a real change exploring family strength and support, as well as exploring the strength and support of our community.

As summer approaches, many parents think about signing up their kids for summer activities. Come and join the YMCA Silver Spring. We are waiting for you and your family. Come experience the best changes in your life and discover our amazing 2011 summer programs! *

Julio Orellana
Executive Director
YMCA Silver Spring

Taste of Indian Spring, *continued from page 1*

Lebanese Taverna Café—www.lebanesetaverna.com. Whether you are visiting for the first time, the twentieth, or have been coming to a Lebanese Taverna for over 29 years, you will feel welcomed and like a member of the family. The menu features a wide variety of Lebanese and Middle Eastern favorites such as falafel, baba ghannouge, hommos, lebneh, kabobs, fatteh, and rotisserie chicken.

Nando Peri Peri—www.nandosperiperi.com. Home of Portuguese flame-grilled PERi-PERi chicken, here you can choose the heat level of flavoring for your serving of healthy, rotisserie-cooked chicken.

Planet Bollywood Restaurant and Bar—www.planetbollywoodusa.com. This place offers guests excellent food in a warm and friendly environment: try their curries, kebabs, biryanis, vegetarian dishes, and more.

Velatis' Famous Caramels—<http://www.velatis.com>. Velatis produces more than 20 varieties of chewy, sugary, caramel candies made from Old European recipes. Vanilla and chocolate caramels are made with marshmallow centers, with or without nuts.

Vicino's Ristorante Italiano—The authentic Italian cuisine here is simply unforgettable and will have you asking for more. They use only the freshest ingredients and treat all customers right.

To show our sponsors that ISCA means business,

event organizers suggest that all attendees also bring a dish to share. We recommend that last names beginning with **A–I bring salads, J–N serve side dishes, and O–Z provide desserts;** or you could simply bring your own favorite specialty.

Chip in and make this event a great success by **VOLUNTEERING!** Helping hands are needed for the following areas:

1. Set up: Volunteers are needed to help assemble and arrange tables, facilitate lines, and help direct our neighbors to appropriate areas onsite.

2. Food Service: The more volunteer servers we can get to help with the food, the more everyone gets to enjoy the festivities, so please contact Allegra Tasaki to make a commitment to your neighborhood!

3. Clean up: Very large garbage bags and a few brooms will be provided to help with this effort. Volunteer today to ensure that we will be able to leave the Highland View Elementary School All-Purpose room in great condition, so that we may have future opportunities to use the facility in the future.

Email Allegra Tasaki today at tasaking@verizon.net or call at 301-565-8377 (TERP) to sign up. This is a really fun neighborhood tradition celebrating good food and good friends. Mark your calendar, and we look forward to seeing you there! *

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ISCA Entrepreneurs at Home: Monica Bridgewater

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part 5 of a series in the ISCA newsletter focusing on individuals in the neighborhood who run businesses out of their homes.)

By Jay P. Goldman

IMAGINE MOVING INTO A JOB that supports your personal interests and helps your customers protect, preserve, and record their own life stories.

That's the role Indian Spring resident Monica Bridgewater finds herself in. For 2½ years she has served as a consultant with Creative Memories, an international firm offering guidance on scrapbooking and photo collecting. (The company's motto is "Your life, Your story, Your way.")

Monica has a dedicated area in her home but typically performs much of her work in customers' houses.

While many of her 50 customers to date have been one-timers, she especially enjoys seeing scrapbooks develop from start to finish.

"Being around other scrapbookers offers so much inspiration and joy," says Monica. "The project I dearly love that many people might think is unusual is the scrapbooking evenings I have for parents who currently have babies in the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) at Holy Cross Hospital. It is so important for these parents to make beautiful keepsakes of their tiny little ones. Most of these parents have no idea if their babies are going to survive or not." Monica can appreciate their yearnings, as her son Roy was born three months prema-

turely. He's now 5 and a kindergarten pupil at Highland View Elementary School.

A native of Los Alamos, NM, who spent her formative years in Madison, WI, Monica and her husband have called Indian Spring their home since 1995. She admits to a varied work history. She spent years in the retail and restaurant fields, usually working her way up from entry level to senior management. She managed a start-up coffee house in Takoma Park and then worked for the Economic Strategy Institute but left that job when her son was

born. As a stay-at-home mom, the Creative Memories post fit just fine. (Her website: www.mycmsite.com/monicabridgewater.)

Before she attended a Creative Memories party 12 years ago, Monica concedes she had no notion what scrapbooking was. "To me, it meant putting pictures in one of those old magnetic albums and never looking at them again," she says. "At first, I thought scrapbooking had to be fancy and fussy, and I was a little intimidated. It took a while for me to fully understand that scrapbooking is actually a way of recording and passing on your history." *



photo by Jay P. Goldman

ANNOUNCEMENTS: (This section for announcements about new neighbors, births, deaths, weddings, graduations, etc. Send announcements to thausner@gmail.com.)

Our deepest sympathies to Celeste Raker-Dillen on the death of her father, Bob Raker.

Insulating an Old House with Modern Spray Insulation

By Beth Pulsifer-Anderson

I'M A LIVING POPSICLE. I get cold easily, and I really, really don't like to be cold. It makes me whiny and unproductive. It turns my fingers numb and my brain to slush. So, while I may fight thermostat wars in my house, I concede that it's really hard on the wallet.

I work at home as a freelance writer in a house built in 1937. A previous owner had replaced the windows, so my husband, and I thought we were buying a cute old house, not an old cold house. It is adorable, but the drafts in some rooms used to send the dust bunnies skittering.

During the first winter in our new house, my fingers would get so cold that I couldn't type. My first solution was to turn up the heat. Thousands of dollars later, I started dragging a space heater from room to room. After the record snowfall and bitter cold last winter, it was time to learn why my house was so cold and figure out how to get warm without breaking the bank.

Step 1—The Energy Audit

I consulted Angie's List and found companies that do energy audits. (If you haven't joined this amazing service, you should.) We contacted several companies that diagnose energy problems but don't try to sell you the solutions. We chose GreeNEWit because they had an opening later that week.

The energy audit process was fascinating. They checked the efficiency of the furnace and hot water heater. They found leaks in the air ducts, and told us how to tape them up. They checked our gas lines for leaks. We discussed energy efficient light bulbs and got some brownie points for using so many already. And then they shared a long list of small things to consider like unplugging computers at night and pulling phone chargers out of the wall when not in use.

GreeNEWit set up a huge fan in our back door and blew all of our heat out into the yard in order to see where cold air would creep back into the house. They



photo by Beth Pulsifer-Anderson

walked from room to room using a thermal camera and took pictures of all of the drafts coming into the house.

I have a room-by-room photo album of all of the air leaks. I knew we were overdue for new weather stripping around all of the doors, so the purple streaks blasting from every door were no surprise. But many drafts were caused by the

window installer forgetting to insulate and seal around the fancy new windows. Nice. The thermal camera also showed a lot of cold air entering from behind the baseboards and crown molding. I used four tubes of caulking just taking care of the biggest leaks around the windows.

The most important part of analyzing the energy efficiency of a house is to look at the insulation. We had already had this discussion with the inspector when we purchased the house. We knew that the house had exactly one piece of insulation—a scrap that somebody tossed into the attic years ago.

At the time, we did learn something critical. The auditor explained that insulating our house would be tricky because it was made using “balloon framing.”

What is Balloon Framing and Why Should You Care?

Modern houses are built floor by floor. Vertical wall studs, then horizontal floor joists, then the plywood subfloor are all put together to make one story before the next layer is added. This is called platform framing. Balloon frame houses were built as a tall shell, and then the floors were hung from the outer walls. This means that the studs on a two-story house can be over 30 feet long and stretch from the basement to the roof.

Balloon framing is very dangerous in the case of fire. The tall studs from basement to attic create dozens of mini chimneys that funnel heat and flames into the attic in record time. I know at least one of my neighbors learned this the hard way—a small fire in her basement spread to her roof in just a few minutes.

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Balloon framing was common at least through the 1930s. If you have a two-story house, go up into the attic and try dangling a small weight on a string down into the tops of the outer walls. How far does it drop? Down into the next floor? If your attic is finished, try dangling the string down into the plumbing access panel in your upstairs bathroom. The strong breeze that flows when you open the plumbing hatch is good clue that a lot of air is traveling freely inside your walls. If you have a wall open to install a window, you can do the string experiment then. Or you could cut a hole in your plaster for the string, but that is a drastic move.

If the weight can be lowered down into the next floor, you should consider installing fire stops. Any time you open up a wall, put in fire blocks while you can. If you remodel, they will probably be required. See http://www.askthebuilder.com/544_Fire_Stop_Construction.shtml

Connecting Balloon Framing and Insulation

While I was exploring different types of insulation, I learned that one type of insulation could help reduce the fire hazard of my balloon framing, warm me up, and reduce my ridiculous heating bills—spray foam: www.sprayfoam.com

When most people think insulation, they think of the pink blanket versions or the newer yellow variety. It is applied in sheets to the attic floor and the walls. The goal is to separate your living space from your attic. The attic stays outside the envelope of your house, which is builder-speak for keeping your attic cold in the winter and hot in the summer. You don't heat or cool the attic because it isn't important space. Attics are designed to be leaky—they have vents and windows that work to keep the attic close to the outdoor temperature.

My old house originally had radiators, and the retrofitted central heat and AC ducts run through the attic. If your furnace replaced a boiler, you may have ducts running through your attic. The ducts likely have a small layer of insulation, but in our house it was clearly not enough. The air coming through the vents running over the attic floor was barely warm, while the rooms closer to the furnace received toasty hot air. My furnace is also in the attic, and the poor thing was working doubly hard because it was sitting in a freezing cold attic.

While exploring insulation options, I learned

about something called spray foam. It has been used for decades in new construction, especially houses with cathedral ceilings. But using spray foam to retrofit older houses is a fairly new idea.

Spray foam insulation had early detractors, but none of the early objections turned out to be justified. My father was worried that the house wouldn't be able to "breathe." But the results of the blower door test clearly showed that the walls of our house are letting in plenty of fresh air. Houses this age are far from airtight. There were also concerns about overheating the roof shingles, but testing by construction engineers showed this didn't happen. Their tests also showed that the foam strengthens the roof so it can withstand higher winds. The type of spray foam called "closed-cell" doesn't retain moisture like other types of insulation. So any leak in the roof won't cause as much damage.

I found several spray foam installers in the DC area, but the only licensed one I found was Hottel Energy Services, a division of Hottel Plumbing, which has a good reputation. In December we had them seal and insulate our attic with 2 inches of closed-cell spray foam. In the process of spraying the attic, they sealed off the tops of the walls. This means they capped off the dozens of vertical spaces that would have let a fire spread quickly. They also sealed off all the attic vents.

The process took about 4 hours, and the results have been amazing. The drafts in the house are GONE—even the baseboard drafts that I never did seal. The resident dust bunnies are now free to multiply in peace, and I don't feel like I'm peering into a howling wind tunnel when I open the plumbing hatch. Our house is a Cape Cod, and the knee walls in the bedrooms are no longer cold to the touch. In fact, our bedroom is now the warmest room in the house, not the coldest!

The jury is still out on the cost savings, but the comfort factor is priceless. ✨

Beth on Dearborn, 301-213-9533. Elizabeth Pulsifer-Anderson is the owner of Clarity Writing and Editing. Her specialties are explaining complex topics in easy-to-understand prose and translating legalese, legalese, and other types of geek speak into Plain English. Whether you need help explaining pharmacogenomics, editing a menu, or writing an important letter, you can reach her at Beth@ClarityWritingAndEditing.com; www.claritywritingandediting.com. She is a neighbor who loves to work with both small businesses and individuals and is eagerly awaiting new clients.



Horse carriage often seen in the colonial parts. All accompanying photos by Bridget Stocker.

Green Vacation, *continued from page 9*

who had referred them to me. Before leaving, I was given my \$100 gift card with an extra \$50 promised if I booked before March 31st. Lunch and a box of Girl Scout cookies sweetened the deal.

We strolled around the historic district, ducking into shops that sold pewter and pottery, soaps and yarns, colonial toys and fifes, teas and coffees. We had not purchased tickets, so were somewhat restricted in what we could see and do, but we did stumble upon street theater depicting the growing conflict between the new “Americans” and the British. We learned that while the early settlers were loyal to England, the next generation of those born in America began to chafe at British rule. After the play, we treated ourselves to the cherished ginger cookies and hot cider of our memories. A perfect treat for a chilly, but sunny, day. We were delighted at the fife and drum corps—all the young boys marching down the street.

Outside of the historic district there are many stores and restaurants. We very much enjoyed our Berrybody chocolate frozen yogurt smothered in our choice of three toppings—my healthy picks were blueberries, strawberries, and walnuts—absolutely delicious! Williamsburg is home to the College of William and Mary, the second

oldest college in the nation. So that evening we enjoyed coffee at Aromas, a student hangout, while we swooned over a young man singing and playing guitar. We felt compelled to buy his CD and were rewarded with a wink and a smile while he continued his performance.

Back at the hotel, we once again enjoyed a solitary session in the pool and exercise room.

After checkout on Sunday, armed with ideas from the concierge, we once again hit the streets. We took in the Governor’s Mansion, stroked the carriage horses, munched on bags of dried apples, watched sheep graze, admired the gardens, and said a prayer for a safe return home in the old church. Leaving the historic district, we headed for the Wythe candy shop and admired the jaw-dropping array of sweets and chocolate-covered apples. Beautiful Easter basket treats tempted; little chocolate chicks and rabbits wound up in our basket, as did sea salt caramels, pastel candy corn, chocolate covered espresso beans, and sour candy eggs. The customer in front of me purchased a box of huge chocolate-covered fresh strawberries, drizzled with white chocolate. (Note to self: make these at home.) Next door at the Cheese Shop, the wine merchant pointed to some



Caramel apples in Wythe candy shop.

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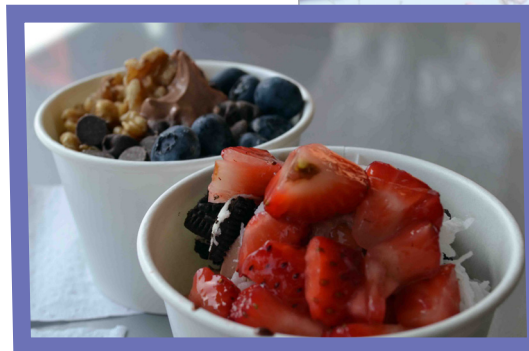
Green Vacation, *continued from page 15*

bargain wines. The cheese line was too long, but my daughter fainted when she saw chocolate-covered Oreos wrapped in green and pink foil. At \$1 a cookie, they were a bit pricey, but this didn't stop her from returning to the shop later to use her \$10 bill for more. (Note to self: try making these at home, too!)

Before leaving for home on Sunday, we had lunch on the terrace of the Trellis restaurant. I enjoyed a scrumptious, velvety cauliflower cheddar cheese soup. We made a quick trip to the Goodwill where we did our part by donating old clothes, then to Books-a-Million where I bought two Mother Earth News magazines (great gardening tips!) and \$1 reusable grocery bags, and then we reluctantly hit the road—and crawled home on I 95. But it gave us time to speculate what the life of a teenager was like in colonial times. “No cellphones” was my daughter's first observation. With all the area blackouts, we did have experience in living without electricity! But we speculated on how they stayed warm, how often they bathed (apparently not often because it was thought to dry out the skin), what provisions they had for winter meals, and how kids occupied their time without video games.

If you haven't been there before, it would be best to buy admission tickets, which opens up an entire spectrum of attractions. On a previous visit, we attended a “Cry Witch” play and took a Ghost Tour. When the kids were little, we had rented costumes (on site) to help them completely submerge into colonial life. We were surprised at the number of foreign visitors and thought it a great place to visit with exchange students.

My “reluctant” daughter took 700 photos, so enchanted was she at this gem of a “half-a-tank” vacation destination. ✱



Berry Body frozen yogurt shop, a street over from the colonial street.



Breton church on colonial street.

Calendar for Downtown Silver Spring

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

FreshFarm Market—Farmers Market

9am–1pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 16

Dance Around the World in 360

3pm

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

Earth Day at Downtown Silver Spring

11am–2pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

Easter Bunny Photos!

12–5pm

Come take a free photo with the Easter Bunny!

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

FreshFarm Market—Farmers Market

9am–1pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

FreshFarm Market—Farmers Market

9am–1pm

SATURDAY, APRIL 30

Earth Day 5K

8am

Get the blood pumping for a great cause! What could be better than celebrating the Earth!?! Yeah for Earth Day 5K!

SUNDAY, MAY 1

Fiesta Asia

11am–7pm

THURSDAY, MAY 5

Cinco de Mayo

5–8pm (continued inside Austin Grill)

We are coming back a third year with more activities, more mariachi and much more fun! Son de America band will grace the stage while Maru Montero dancers dance along! Don't forget the crowd favorite activities such as: chips and salsa eating contests, pinata smashes and sombrero toss!!! Austin Grill is serving up Mexican beer, Corona and El Diablo shots!!!! Don't miss it!!!!

SATURDAY, MAY 7 THROUGH SUNDAY, MAY 8

Downtown Silver Spring Fine Arts Festival
TBD

SATURDAY, MAY 7

FreshFarm Market—Farmers Market

9am–1pm

SATURDAY, MAY 14

FreshFarm Market—Farmers Market

9am–1pm

(See www.downtownsilverspring.com.)

Silver Chips Online

Blair concert and symphonic orchestras qualify for state festival

Orchestras receive superior marks

by Liv Jacobson, Staff Writer



photo by Molly Ellison

BLAIR'S SYMPHONIC ORCHESTRA and concert orchestra both received

superior marks at the District 2 Orchestra Festival at Walter Johnson High School on March 15, qualifying both ensembles to compete in the Maryland Orchestra Festival from April 26 to April 30 at a location to be announced.

The concert orchestra and symphonic orchestra both received superior marks at the District 2 Orchestra Festival. Here, concert orchestra teacher Daryl Clark conducts the symphonic band.

This is the first time that the concert orchestra has received an overall superior rating. It is also the first time the symphonic orchestra has received all superior marks and "A" ratings on their written captions, which the adjudicators write after the orchestras receive oral judgments.

The symphonic orchestra received straight superior ratings while the concert orchestra received an overall superior rating. By receiving straight superior ratings, the symphonic orchestra received superior marks in all areas of judgment. Concert orchestra received an overall superior rating by having a high enough combined score to qualify for an overall superior rating. Each orchestra played three selections and then sight-read music. The orchestras were judged as a whole both orally and in written captions.

In addition to their rating achievements, both concert and symphonic orchestras performed pieces of higher difficulty than they have in past years. "They played the hardest level of music [we've ever] played," symphonic orchestra teacher Michelle Roberts said.

In preparation for the district festival both Roberts and concert orchestra teacher Daryl Clark chose their music carefully and pushed their students. "It's a lot of hard work," Roberts said.

As the statewide competition approaches, Roberts and Clark expect students to maintain the same level of performance in class but will take extra steps to prepare. "We'll get others to be guest adjudicators for practice adjudications before the state level," Roberts said.

From April 15 to April 17, the music department will also sponsor a trip to the National Freedom Festival at the College of Staten Island, New York. Students from all of the music ensembles will combine to form a singular orchestra, band and jazz band. "It will be a combined effort," Roberts said.

The music department has traveled to competitions in the past but this will be its first time in several years participating in the Maryland Orchestra Festival and its first time ever competing in the National Freedom Festival. Clark expressed how important it will be for students to participate in such festivals. "It's a good way to motivate students and showcase our talent on a larger scale," Clark said.

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SAVE THE DATE!
April 26, Taste of Indian Spring

SAVE THE DATE!
May 16, General Meeting

“It’s Academic” hosts countywide tournament

Blair’s trivia team hosts competition for the first time in a decade

by Alison Kronstadt, Staff Writer

BLAIR’S “IT’S ACADEMIC” quiz bowl team hosted its first tournament in 10 years this past Saturday. Twelve teams competed in the tournament, with Richard Montgomery High School’s A team taking first place, Quince Orchard High School’s team taking second place and Richard Montgomery High School’s B team taking third place. Blair did not compete.

Winners of It’s Academic tournaments are awarded trophies like these, which belong to the Blair team.

The tournament was structured in a pyramidal format, with each team getting three uncontested bonus questions for each question they buzzed in correctly. There were 20 questions per game.

It’s Academic teams initially formed for the “It’s Academic Quiz Show,” a televised program during which high school teams compete with each other. However, Blair’s It’s Academic team sponsor James Schafer stated that there are many other opportunities for teams to compete. “What people don’t recognize is that there are many more tournaments than the It’s Academic TV Show, he said.” There are tournaments held at schools and universities across the country.”

Hosting a tournament required a lot of work, said Schafer. “We need to write the questions, provide the buzzer system that the competitors will use. There [are] a lot of logistics that goes into it,” he said.



photo by Emma Lansworth

Team captain junior Daniel Hafner agreed with Schafer and noted that being a host school is important for building a reputation. “To a lot of people, you don’t get the full effect when you think of people reading questions and pushing buttons, but for us it’s a lot more than that. It’s getting the rooms and setting them up and

you’ve got to make sure teams want to come, that they don’t flake, and that after the tournament they want to come back. So there’s a selling aspect to it. You have to make a name for yourself,” he said.

The tournament was Blair’s first in several years, but Schafer said that it was not a problem to organize. “This is the first tournament that we’ve hosted in about a decade, and I thought it went well,” he said. “It ran smoothly, the contestants behaved, the questions were good and a good time was had by all.”

According to Hafner, this is not the case with all tournaments. “We’ve been to a lot of tournaments where Murphy’s Law happens, mainly because high-schoolers are bad at organizing things, getting people to do what they want and generally knowing what’s going on.” Hafner said.

Overall, Schafer said that he was pleased with the tournament. “It was a good experience for the kids to have,” he said. *

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SAVE THE DATE!
April 26, Taste of Indian Spring

SAVE THE DATE!
May 16, General Meeting



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Multiple Offers!



Baden Street
Sorry — No Advance
Showings



Melbourne Ave
Sorry — No Advance
Showings

TAMARA KUCIK'S 2010 TEAM STATS

SELL WITH US!

On average, our homes sold for 98.6% of list price & were on the market for 24 days. Our sellers sold their homes for 2.5% higher than the rest.

BUY WITH US!

Our buyers paid 5% less for their new homes. On average that's 1% less than the rest!



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