



# SUGARLOAF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER 2008

**"Fighting to protect our rural legacy"**

Visit our web site: [www.sugarloafcitizens.org](http://www.sugarloafcitizens.org)

## **How to contact us:**

*Sugarloaf Citizens Association  
Linden Farm  
20900 Martinsburg Road  
Dickerson, MD 20842*

## **Sugarloaf's Mission Statement**

The Association's mission is to preserve a rural agricultural tradition in upper Montgomery County and to protect the viability of the Agricultural Reserve. Our members are committed to preserving rural open space and a healthy environment for residents in the region, and we take action when these goals are threatened.

We follow the activities at the Montgomery County Council, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and legislation before state and local government. When development interests apply for a permit that would open the Ag Reserve to industrial expansion or endanger the rural density zone, we testify on behalf of the community.

We testify at special exception hearings, County Council hearings, Park and Planning hearings, and at the Council of Governments, and we intervene legally when necessary.

## **You are Invited to the 2008 Annual Meeting**

**on Saturday April 19 at 10 a.m. at our Linden Farm Headquarters, 20900 Martinsburg Road in Dickerson to elect Board members and hear reports on recent activities**

**Our guest speaker this year will be County**

**Council Member at Large**

**Marc Elrich**

**The SCA Officers placed in nomination :**

**President: Gary Valen**

**Vice President: Ann Cinque**

**Secretary: Martha Yates**

**Treasurer: Jane Hunter**

## **MIRANT'S ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADE**

As we reported in the last newsletter, Mirant, the company that owns and operates the former Pepco coal-fired power plant in Dickerson, will comply with the Maryland Healthy Air Act of 2006 and install sophisticated new pollution control equipment to reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) by 2010. The new equipment will require major construction, **including a 400 foot high emissions stack and a 150 foot high absorber stack in addition to the existing stacks.**

The SCA board has met twice with Mirant, specifically to work out a traffic management plan to deal with the construction traffic over the next two years. Development and implementation of a traffic plan was a condition SCA insisted be part of Mirant's state permit to construct and operate the new equipment. In order to cope with the construction traffic, a traffic light has been proposed at the intersection of Rt 28 and Martinsburg Rd., which should be installed by May 1st this year when the construction will begin. Mirant also agreed that if traffic still backs up during rush hour despite the light, there will be a certified traffic coordinator (traffic cop) physically present at the intersection. If these measures do not solve the backup problem Mirant has agreed to bus the construction workers from assembly sites outside the area.

## **STATEMENT BY THE CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF THE SCA**

The Agricultural Reserve is the brightest gem in the crown of Montgomery County and the Sugarloaf Citizens' Association plays a vital role in preserving and protecting the viability of this area. My role as President would be to build on past efforts to have the people and resources to monitor development activities, intervene when necessary and maintain the area's rural tradition. It is important to promote the value of the AgReserve to County and State officials as well as to the general public to sustain our organization's political clout. These efforts require diligence on the part of the Board of Directors and the membership. As President, I will work to keep all of us committed to the AgReserve.

## **PIEDMONT ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION**

The Piedmont Environmental Foundation established by SCA as a result of our negotiations with Mirant related to their proposed plant expansion has made its 2nd round of environmental grants. A total of \$3,500 have been made to three schools to fund Earth Day activities. Grants were given to Shady Spring Elementary in Silver Spring for tree planting activities, Poolesville High for the creation of a green space and gardens to be maintained by the students next to the main school building; and to John Poole Middle School Film Club for the production of an environmental film. **A teacher from John Poole will make a presentation at the Annual Meeting.**

## **ANOTHER ATTEMPT BY THE WASCHE ROAD LANDSCAPING BUSINESS**

In our last newsletter we introduced the readers to the industrial-size landscaping business (Zelkova LLC) that applied for a special exception to locate on Wasche Road. Following the recommended rejection by Park and Planning in April last year that application was withdrawn. However, Zelkova filed notice of motion to amend its petition for a special exception. The staff in Montgomery County Planning Department made some startling recommendations that would have undermined the Master Plan of the Ag Reserve. Sugarloaf and local residents were united in their opposition to these recommended concessions and, in its meeting on March 13, the Planning Board voted to recommend denial of a special exception. The case now goes to the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings and a hearing is scheduled for April 25.

**Sugarloaf Citizens' Association, Inc.**

**President: Jim Brown**  
**Vice President: Ellen Gordon**  
**Secretary: Claire Gunster-Kirby**  
**Treasurer: Jane Hunter**

**Other Board Members:**

**Julia Bellet**  
**Tina Brown**  
**Anne Cinque**  
**Jay Cinque**  
**Eric Cronquist**  
**Jim Evans**  
**Betsy Lyman**  
**Matt McMillen**  
**Dolores Milmoie**  
**Tom Proctor**  
**Gil Rocha**  
**Anne Sturm**  
**Gary Valen**

**NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION**  
**U.S. POSTAGE PAID**  
**Barnesville, MD**  
  
**PERMIT NO. 104**

# SUGARLOAF NEIGHBOR

**COMING UP!**  
Sugarloaf's Annual Meeting, April 19, 2008  
**SEE INSIDE!**

### CALLEVA REDIVIVA

In June 2007 Calleva, Inc. was served with a notice of violation of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance for the illegal operation of a camp ground in the RDT zone. As the County did not enforce its notice of violation, Calleva told the Sugarloaf Board in the fall of 2007 that they intended to go back to the County Council with a revised 2005 Zoning Text Amendment. This amendment proposes an expansion of activities at the Martinsburg Rd. property, including commercial overnight lodging and camping which are illegal according to the Master Plan for the Agriculture Reserve. Once again the Ag Reserve, considered nationally as a truly unique area of environmental preservation, is being threatened unless Montgomery County takes appropriate steps to prevent such attempts to undermine the Master Plan.

### MURKY MERCURY AND THE URGENT NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RECYCLING

The new federal energy legislation mandates a change from incandescent bulbs to energy saving florescent bulbs. This is an environmental step in the right direction but the fact that these new bulbs contain mercury will have huge environmental consequences if timely steps are not taken by Montgomery County to handle these bulbs. There are some 325,000 households in Montgomery County and if every household throws one of these bulbs in the trash every year there will be close to 5 lbs of mercury a year for the County to handle — a teaspoon is enough to poison a lake! Most households will undoubtedly throw the bulb in the trash to end up in the Dickerson incinerator unless a determined effort is made by the County to improve recycling education and also to provide the required equipment for consumers and the County to recognize and handle mercury.

### PEACHTREE LANDSCAPER SPECIAL EXCEPTION

The illegal Peachtree Road landscaping operation which SCA strongly opposes was dealt a blow when the County Planning Board recommended denial of the application for a Special Exception. Citing several of the arguments SCA made when filing comments, the Planning Board noted previous violations of County regulations by the applicant, the environmental damage already caused by heavy equipment, lack of sanitary facilities, and the further industrialization of the Ag Reserve that would be the result of such operations. The application went to the Office of the Hearing Examiner on February 8. A Notice of New Exhibits reopening the record for a new comment period was circulated on March 24.

### THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF THE WOODSTOCK EQUESTRIAN PARK

In a public meeting in January organized by Park and Planning (MNCPPC) the staff reported on the current state of the 800 acre park and admitted that the County is now finally assessing the availability of percs and water, which most people clearly expected would have happened earlier in the process. Most speakers expressed concern about the proposed large indoor arena which is not part of the Master Plan and their suspicion that the facility might become a venue for large-scale horse shows with heavy traffic and high water usage. There were forceful comments on the need for transparency and public information and Mike Knapp, president of the County Council, affirmed that he understood this need. Oversight by our community is going to be important in ensuring that this facility fulfills its potential as an asset to the AgReserve.

## Sugarloaf Citizens' Association Annual Drive

**Donations allow us to continue our efforts to protect and enhance life and the environment**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your tax deductible contribution to: SCA, Linden Farm**  
**20900 Martinsburg Road**  
**Dickerson, MD 20842**

**\$50 \$100 \$200 \$250 \$300 \$500 \$1000 Other**