



SUGARLOAF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER 2005

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Sugarloaf helps launch Environmental Education Foundation

As a result of Sugarloaf's legal intervention in the Mirant power plant expansion (as reported in the 2004 newsletter) SCA has secured a number of commitments by Mirant. Most importantly, Mirant has agreed to clean up all three existing coal plants to reduce NOx emissions. Another important commitment by Mirant is the provision of financial support for the formation of the **Piedmont Environmental Education Foundation** which will sponsor environmental education projects in the schools. Annual grants will be awarded to teachers in the school systems of Montgomery and Frederick counties and the District of Columbia to conduct such projects. A request for non-profit status of the Foundation [501(c)(3)] has been made and Sugarloaf hopes to issue the first call for project proposals in time to make awards for the fall '05 school year.

The 25th Anniversary of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve

Sugarloaf has joined regional civic groups in a year-long effort to celebrate this anniversary and to raise public awareness about the Agricultural Reserve. The festivities begin officially at the Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary on Mount Nebo Road south of Poolesville April 14 with a press conference to launch the "Celebrate Rural Montgomery" campaign. While visiting with the friendly cows, sheep, goats and pigs at Poplar Spring, visitors can learn about the Ag Reserve. A family Open House is planned for April 16 as a special stop on the countryside Artisans' Spring Studio tour. Celebratory events are planned throughout the year, culminating in a final event hosted by Sugarloaf at the Linden Farm in October 2005.

For more information visit the beautiful website:
www.ruralmontgomery.org.

The Septic System Crisis

Montgomery County is issuing sand mound "septic" permits based on an executive regulation specifically issued to allow farmers to continue to live on their land after a conventional system had failed. Developers can now build in the Ag Reserve where land does not perk even though sand mound systems are unproven as to durability and safety. The March 17 Planning Board hearing favoring sand mound permits clearly demonstrated a lack of expertise on sand mound technology. It is vital for the Ag Reserve that an expert case be made against general use of such systems since failing sand mounds might destroy our ground water supply forcing the County to extend public sewers to the Ag Reserve, thus opening it up to further development.

You are invited!

Sugarloaf's Annual Meeting
Saturday, April 30th, 2005
10 a.m.

Linden Farm
20900 Martinsburg Road

Former Montgomery County
Council Member

Isiah "Ike" Leggett

will speak to us about preserving
the Agricultural Reserve

Please note that Rt 28 is temporarily closed north
of Beallsville.

To reach Linden Farm use the designated
detour through Barnesville to reach
Martinsburg Rd.

Montgomery County Solid Waste Update

The **good news** about solid waste in Montgomery County is that the County Council and the Executive have **admitted in public** that we are neither recycling nor reducing waste at sufficient rates. Although a decade late, it's encouraging to see them taking steps that they believe will increase recycling rates. In February of this year, the County Council adopted some changes to the solid waste plan, in particular a ban on the disposal of all recyclables, meaning that it's now mandatory to put those plastic, paper, cardboard, metal and aluminum items in your recycling bin. Although not aimed so much at homeowners as commercial businesses and public schools, the County has refrained from imposing fines for a year, hoping there will be a voluntary improvement in recycling. However, this would seem to require an innovative and aggressive education and information program, particularly since recycling in Montgomery County Public Schools has stagnated at

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Sugarloaf Citizens' Association, Inc.
Newsletter 2005

"Fighting to protect our rural legacy"

President: Jim Brown
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Bulk rate
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PERMIT NO. 104

SUGARLOAF NEIGHBOR

COMING UP!

Sugarloaf's Annual Meeting, April 30th

SEE INSIDE!

(cont'd)

31%, thus below the County's average recycling rate of 38% and definitely below the County goal of 50%!

The **bad news** is what the County has **not** done. The fact is that the County burns about 640,000 tons of waste at the incinerator, sends some 150,000 tons to a landfill in Virginia and recycles only about 450,000 tons per year. Despite maintaining for years that waste reduction is of the highest priority the County appears uninterested in pursuing alternatives to disposal. For **fourteen** years the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) has been evaluating, studying and considering the waste reduction concept. Furthermore, while DPWT is required to perform a solid waste composition study every three years, yet it's been nearly eight years since the last one. (DPWT has now promised to deliver one before summer of this year). Why is it that the County has not been able to devise strategies to reduce the waste stream when even the Council's own staff believes the County "could take more initiative in pursuing waste reduction programs employed in other communities"? Efforts reducing our waste and improving our recycling are not just about improving our environment and avoiding a landfill in Dickerson or an expansion of the garbage incinerator. It is also about economics - how well we do will affect the County budget and the rates we all pay for services.

Bridge & Techway Still Remain Serious Threat to the Ag Reserve

Sugarloaf continues to weigh-in at every opportunity with local, state and federal officials in opposition to proposals to build an outer beltway and a Potomac bridge connecting Virginia and Maryland. One of the most likely routes for this so called "Techway" would be near White's Ferry coming off Virginia Highway 15 and running just north of Poolsville right through the heart of the Agricultural Reserve to the foot of the Sugarloaf Mountain before connecting to Rt. 270.

In cooperation with the regional alliance Solutions Not Sprawl, Sugarloaf has helped secure a renewed commitment from the entire Montgomery County Council to oppose the bridge and the Techway. However, Virginia continues to insist on planning for these projects. We have learned that both the Democratic and the Republican candidate for Virginia Governor in 2006 support a new bridge. Our efforts on this issue will continue and we may also be calling on Sugarloaf members to write their legislators in opposition to this ill-conceived and wasteful project.

Sugarloaf Citizens Association Membership

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Donations allow us to achieve our goals!

Please send your contribution to: SCA, Linden Farm

20900 Martinsburg Road

Dickerson, MD 20842

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$250 \$300 \$500 \$1000