

The ECA held its fall meeting at the Edgemoor Club at 7:30 PM on Tuesday, October 17. There were five topics of discussion:

1. ECA member Bob Brown gave a brief presentation on charity scams and provided his personal suggestions for ways to avoid being taken advantage of. He handed out a list of these suggestions, which is attached to this email message for your information. Someone also mentioned using charitynavigator.org to investigate charities.

2. The biannual (every two years) election of the ECA Board of Directors was held. ECA President Judy Gilbert Levey did not run for re-election. The slate of candidates consisted of:

President: David Barnes

Secretary: Susan Hendrickson

Treasurer: Josh Perelman

At Large: Jeffrey Drichta, Bridget Foist, and Joyce Gwadz

By voice vote of the ECA members present, all candidates were elected. Newly elected ECA President David Barnes thanked Judy Gilbert Levey for her many years of service on the ECA Board (including serving as President for the last 4 years) and she received a warm round of applause from the ECA members present.

3. Montgomery County Police Sergeant Warrant Jensen and Officer J.J. Jesuitas gave a presentation on neighborhood crime and crime prevention.

With regard to the recent home burglaries in Edgemoor, they noted that these crimes appear to have been committed by the same person/group. The police are working on some promising leads; however, they could not release any more detailed information about an investigation in progress. The homeowners who were the victims will be notified of any significant developments.

Recent burglaries and theft from automobiles are not indicative of an overall increase in crime in the area. Individuals or groups of thieves often target a specific area for a short time before moving on to another neighborhood, so the events tend to occur in cluster. Overall, crime in the area is low.

Home burglaries usually occur during the day (when many residents are at work). The best ways to reduce the chance of a burglary are to keep doors locked, use outdoor lighting, keep vegetation trimmed to reduce hiding places, and avoid showing evidence that you are not home (e.g., uncollected mail/newspapers). Alarms frequently don't stop a burglar, but they can speed up response time for police. Home video surveillance with an alarm is helpful, especially with real-time video monitoring (e.g., with a phone app). They also suggested residents not advertise their absence from home on social media (e.g., posting vacation information/photos) and consider having packages delivered to the back door instead of the front. The best way to protect valuables like jewelry is to use a large safe. Don't keep valuables in a sock drawer—that's the first place thieves look.

MC Police routinely perform a survey of the security of a home whenever a theft is reported. This includes advice on improved lighting, home security alarms/cameras, tree/bush trimming to improve visibility, etc. However, any homeowner can request a Home Security Survey by contacting the Community Services Officer at the Montgomery County Police Bethesda Station at 240-773-6700.

Theft from automobiles is the most frequently reported crime in Montgomery County. Generally, these crimes are committed by individual/groups who go through a neighborhood at night checking for open car doors. They don't usually break into locked cars, either by breaking a window, or forced entry using "slim Jims." Thieves also don't have or use sophisticated electronic devices or master keys to gain access. Although victims sometimes report that their car doors were locked, the Police find that this is usually not the case. Some victims report that they leave their doors unlocked for fear of having a window broken, but thieves generally move on to another car rather than break into a locked one. It's better to lock the doors. You should always lock car doors and keep any valuables out of view.

Home burglary and theft from automobiles are usually "crimes of opportunity" and the best protection is to reduce the opportunity. Police encourage residents to report all crimes and all suspicious activity. Don't be afraid to report unusual activity, even if it just a person who does not appear to belong in the neighborhood.

The Officers said that some of the streets in Edgemoor are not very well lit, due either to insufficient number of light poles or light pole outages. An ECA member noted that, if there is a street light out, you can report it to PEPCO and they will come out and repair it. To do this, copy the Pole Number (which can be found on a label on the pole) and call PEPCO at 202-833-7500. Street light outages can also be reported online using a map to find the right pole, here: <http://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-streetlight/Index.aspx>

Helpful Montgomery County Police Information and Links

Montgomery County Police emergency number: 911

Montgomery County Police non-emergency number: 301-279-8000

Information about Preventing Theft From Vehicles -

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/PDF/brochures/PreventVehTheft.pdf>

Information about Home Security –

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/PDF/brochures/HomeSecurity.pdf>

[During this presentation, there was also a discussion of the Edgemoor Security Patrol and the reasons it ended. ECA member and Security Patrol organizer Greg Doll noted that the primary reason the security patrol ceased was due to the liability issues for those who were managing it.]

4. ECA member Lois Fischbeck spoke briefly about the Bethesda Silent Auction, being held this Sunday 10/22 from noon to 2 pm at the Bethesda Presbyterian Church at Clarendon and Wilson. The purpose of the auction is to provide financial support for the first year of housing for a Bethesda Cares client suffering homelessness, in the Edgemoor neighborhood. This information was circulated in an EC-Net email message earlier this week.

5. ECA President David Barnes asked the ECA members present for suggestions on issues or activities the ECA Board might focus on for the coming year. Several suggestions were made including neighborhood beautification and tree replacement (which might include organizing help for neighbors who, for whatever reason, are having trouble keeping up their property); updates on any developments related to the Sidwell Friends School property; and looking into issues of street lighting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.

Thank you.