

MPNA News

The Melrose Park Neighbors Association

Volume 2 – Number 26

From MPNA President – Andy Rudin

December 6, 2006

Should Melrose Park become a Freecycle community, like 3,843 others?

We received this email from fellow Melrose Parker, Dawn Devenny. If you are interested in this project, please contact Dawn directly.

“First off, thank you for the wonderful newsletters and MPNA Alerts – you are doing an amazing job at keeping our family up to date on our neighborhood. I was wondering if anyone in MPNA has ever brought up www.freecycle.org ? It is an amazing website that helps neighbors recycle their belongings into the hands of others with a need. I had a ton of success with it when we lived in Maryland last year - I was able to give a lot of our outgrown, unused items away to neighbors who needed them and I even picked up a dog crate for our new puppy for FREE.

Anyway, if you have a chance to check out the website let me know what you think. There is currently no program in Melrose Park but I would be happy to assist in the making of one. We would need a few dedicated people to review the postings to make sure they are appropriate (only people in Melrose Park can join, no animals, X rated material, etc.). We could even open it up to the 19027 area code. The only requirement is that you have to be able to drive to the person’s house to pick up/drop off. I feel like I sound like a commercial! I just think it would be a great addition to the MPNA! Thanks!”

Dawn Devenny, 912 Melrose Avenue, 215-782-8177, dawndev@comcast.net

Results of Our Meeting with the Cheltenham Police

Bob Schaffer and I met with the Cheltenham Police on Tuesday, November 28. We met with Sergeants Powell, Slaven and Gruver, plus Chief Norris. Here is some of what we learned:

1. Crime is down.

Theft is the main problem. Chief Norris said to make sure to keep your cars locked and to not have valuables in plain sight, not even coins. Our police want to hear from you if you see anything suspicious. Don’t hesitate to report problems you see. They do not view such calls as a nuisance. On the contrary, neighbors may be the most important source of their information about problems.

2. Citizen Speed Watch Program

You are going to love this program! Sergeant Gruver explained to us that requests to the Cheltenham Township Police Department to control vehicles speeding within residential neighborhoods have increased tremendously. Speeding is the number one complaint from neighbors to the police. This increase and limited resources have prevented the Police Department from responding as quickly as we would like to determine the extent of the problem, and thereby properly allocate resources. As a solution to this problem, the Township has established a voluntary Citizen Speed Watch Program.

The Citizen Speed Watch Program provides a speed-timing device and training to citizens so they may monitor the speeds of vehicles on Township roadways. The information collected identifies specific violators and assists in determining the extent of the speeding problem. It also helps the specific violator by making him or her aware of their excessive speed, and provides the opportunity to learn from the experience, without the consequence of a fine or points levied against their license. Therefore, in the interest of public safety, the program's focus is primarily a public education effort to reduce speeding. It shall not be used for citizens to issue citations.

The following explains the steps involved for any citizen desiring to participate in the program:

1. Contact the Police Department's Highway Safety Unit to determine the availability of equipment and to establish an appointment for training on the speed-timing equipment.
2. Receive training. This will include a demonstration of how to operate the speed-timing equipment, the potential hazards associated with its use, proper placement to ensure accurate readings, and how to complete the speed-timing log sheet.
3. Review and sign the speed-timing agreement. This explains the intent of the program, the limitations imposed upon the citizen from an enforcement standpoint, the responsibilities for equipment care, and establishes the return date for the equipment.
4. Monitor the traffic. This will include noting the vehicles exceeding the designated speed limit and completing the speed timing log sheet.
5. Return the equipment and log sheet.

The following will then be accomplished by the Police Department:

1. Notify registered owners. The vehicle license plate listing will be checked, and the registered owner will be sent a letter. There is no citation, no fine and no points levied against any license. If the registered owner is not the driver, the owner is requested to notify the driver of the situation.
2. Examine the need for enforcement. Your data will be incorporated with previously known information and the appropriate priority assigned for enforcement and/or possible traffic studies by Highway Safety Unit.

For additional information on this program, please contact the Cheltenham Township Police Department, Highway Safety Unit at 215-885-1600 ext. 474 or email at jgruver@cheltenham-township.org

3. Our Police Headquarters is a 9-1-1 Call Center

Calling our local police and calling 9-1-1 is about the same thing. The Cheltenham Township Police Department is one of only three (3) municipalities in Montgomery County that answer their own 9-1-1 calls, the other two are Abington Township and Lower Merion Township. All other 9-1-1 calls are received in Eagleville, PA at the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center. Cheltenham Police have six (6) 9-1-1 Operator's working rotating / overlapping shifts covering the township 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Each 9-1-1 Operator/Police Dispatcher has gone through extensive training in many different areas of police dispatch including, but not limited to Domestic Violence calls, TDD (Hearing impaired) callers, Language Barrier callers, etc.

When someone dials 9-1-1 from a landline inside Cheltenham Township they will automatically be routed to the 9-1-1 computerized system inside the Cheltenham Township Police Station. When a call is received inside the 9-1-1 Communications Center the computer screen indicates the telephone number, name, address and municipality of the caller even before the phone starts to ring. This is called pre-ALI (ALI = Automatic Location Identifier). If an individual is able to dial 9-1-1, but is in the middle of an altercation or other situation and the phone disconnects before it ever rang, that call is still routed through the 9-1-1 system and would appear as an abandoned call. All abandoned calls are called back by the 9-1-1 Operators, if nobody answers the callback, the 9-1-1 Operator/Police Dispatcher would then dispatch two police officers to that residence/business to check and make sure everything is ok. When a 9-1-1 call is placed and the individual does remain on the line, the 9-1-1 Operator would ascertain the problem and then direct the caller as needed. For example, if an ambulance is requested that caller is then transferred, on the computerized phone system, to the Montgomery County Operations Center to the Fire/EMS Board. Cheltenham Police Department dispatches primarily police personnel, Montgomery County personnel dispatch ambulances and fire apparatus, however, the initial call comes through the Cheltenham Police Department and the Dispatchers have access to the computer system to enter all police, fire and ambulance calls as needed. Cheltenham Police 9-1-1

Operator/Police Dispatchers also have the ability to dispatch ambulances and fire apparatus in emergency situations.

If someone was to call 9-1-1 from a cell phone that call would either be routed to the Montgomery County Emergency Operations Center or to the Philadelphia Police 9-1-1 Center, it would depend on which tower the cell phone was “bouncing off “ of. The ALI screen would indicate the location of that cell phone tower. If a caller uses a cell phone and the call was answered by Philadelphia Police, they would transfer that caller to the Montgomery County Operations Center and the call would be entered into the Countywide CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch). All calls entered into this computer are automatically routed to the proper municipality by address, and the appropriate response is dispatched as well; police, fire and/or ambulance, via this CAD computer. The CAD has every address in Montgomery County as well as a five (5) mile border all the way around the County, including Philadelphia County. This is helpful when a caller is involved in an incident on the county border, or an actor is fleeing from a scene into another jurisdiction.

Having 9-1-1 calls answered locally is a great benefit, those 9-1-1 Operator/Police Dispatchers are very familiar with the area and it’s landmarks. Scheduled tours of the Cheltenham Police Department Communications Center are available by contacting the Community Policing Unit at extension 482.

4. Citizens’ Police Academy

We don’t have all the details on this just yet, but this coming March, our police department will hold a series of evening meetings to explain how police procedures work from an arrest through the courts.

5. House Numbers

The police want us to have house numbers clearly posted, with numbers that are at least 4 inches high, on the front of the house. Black numbers on a light (white) background. This will help them help us.

From Representative Lawrence Curry’s Legislative Assistant

You might want to include my contact information in a future newsletter – that I am a Legislative Assistant for Rep. Larry Curry, and that our office is glad to provide services for constituents: PA tax forms, applications for Handicap Placards and Plates, Property Tax/Rent Rebate, SEPTA Senior Transportation Pass, Birth/Death Certificates, etc. We also offer Notary Services (free).

Marcia Hougen, MHougen@pahouse.net or 215-572-5210
I live at 1220 Melrose Avenue. (Marcia is a Melrose Parker!)

More Email Addresses Would Be Great

The more neighbors we have on this email list, the better. So, please encourage your neighbors to email their addresses to me at andrewrudin@earthlink.net. We do not share our email list.

Donations Needed for Library Book Sales

What to do with all those books in the basement! Pickup is available – Just call 215-635-5000.

WANTED - CD's Video Tapes, Audio Tapes, Vintage Magazines, Comic Books, Software, LP Phonograph Records & ALL KINDS OF BOOKS.

NOT WANTED - Reader's Digest Condensed Books, Old Textbooks & Law Books, Scratched Phonograph Records, Older Encyclopedias, Underlined or Highlighted Books, Partial Sets of Reference Books, Moldy, Water-damaged Books.

All donations of books, videos & CDs are tax-deductible

The book sales are Friday through Sunday, starting on the following Fridays at 1pm on January 12, February 23, March 23, April 10 and May 18, 2007. Half price sales start June 1st and the final \$5 per bag sale starts June 8th.

This Newsletter

If you have any suggestions for items for this newsletter, feel free to email them to me at andrewrudin@earthlink.net.

MPNA memberships

Membership in MPNA helps pay for plantings, signage, and many other things. Annual dues are \$10 per individual, \$20 per household. Send your contribution to MPNA Board member Jim Muldoon, 106 Parkview Road, Cheltenham, PA 19012.

MPNA Board

Members of the MPNA Board are Andrew Rudin, Phil Kates, Gene Silver, Michael Shectman, Jim Muldoon and Albert Fried-Cassorla. If you are interested in helping out with MPNA, please email me at andrewrudin@earthlink.net. This newsletter is available or will be soon, maybe with photos, on our website – www.melroseparkneighbors.org

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