

The Saunders Point Citizen

Newsletter of the Saunders Point Citizens Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 275, Mayo, MD. 21106

MAY, 2006

Welcome Sweet Springtime.

**Save The Date: May 18 Spring Membership meeting
MCA Hall 7:30 PM**

With so many newcomers to our beautiful corner of the world, it's time for us to come out of our winter shells and come together to meet each other and talk about common problems. Such as what to do when new housing construction tears up your street and drainage. One solution: Call the county department of public works, which will demand that the contractor put things right.

The meeting agenda will be wide open and there will be a speaker, but Acting President Bob Chidester will give us an update on the pending \$850,000 project to improve our roads and drainage. One problem: What to do to restore and beautify the Carvel Lane medium strip, which used to be planted with shrubs and trees and has now been turned into an ugly, unauthorized parking lot and shortcut.

Volunteers are needed to help get rid of the weeds and replant flowers in the community park - the date to be announced. But it will be done in time for the Saunders Point annual picnic in the park on Saturday, June 24. To help with the park or the picnic call Chidester, 410-798-6911, or Board Member Saul Friedman, 301-261-7916.

Arsenic in Some Wells - No Need to Panic

Three residents have reported to the County Health Department, after private testing, the presence of arsenic in their wells. Brian Chew of the Health Department, has confirmed at least one of the tests. The others are pending. In any case, the arsenic presence is minimal, over 10 parts per billion, but less than 100 ppb. Arsenic is a naturally occurring element, but it can come from treated wood and pesticides. The Center for Disease Control says there is no evidence of harmful effects from arsenic concentrations of 50 to 100 ppb. But the Environmental Protection Agency suggests that persons with wells with more than 10 ppb, should consider ways of reducing exposure.

(Over)

Chew suggests that homeowners hire a private firm to test their wells and if arsenic is found over 10 ppb, the Health Department will conduct its own tests. If the problem is widespread, the Health Department will suggest what actions need to be taken, if any.

Meanwhile, Chew may be reached at 410-222-7024.

Here is a fuller report on the problem of arsenic from the CDC's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (www.atsdr.cdc.gov/arsenic) :

Arsenic is an element that occurs naturally in rock and soil in many areas. It has been used commercially in products such as wood preservatives and pesticides. Arsenic gets into well water through natural erosion. When underground water flows over rocks or soil that contain arsenic, the arsenic slowly dissolves into the water. Arsenic gets into well water primarily in this way. Labs can do a simple test to find out whether arsenic is in the water. In most areas, the cost of testing a sample of water for arsenic usually ranges from \$20 to \$35.

What is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard for arsenic in drinking water of private wells? EPA requires that public drinking water supplies have less than 10 parts per billion (ppb) of arsenic. EPA does not set drinking water standards for private wells. However, persons who use water from wells that contain arsenic at levels greater than 10 ppb should consider ways of reducing exposure.

Can arsenic in drinking water affect my health? Studies conducted in other countries found harmful health effects in persons who regularly for many years drank water containing arsenic at 100 ppb to 300 ppb. A few studies found no harmful effects in persons in the United States who throughout their lifetimes drank water containing arsenic at levels of 50 ppb to 100 ppb. Even though harmful health effects were not found in persons who drank water containing arsenic levels of 50 ppb to 100 ppb, reducing exposure to arsenic can reduce the risk of harmful health effects.

How can I reduce my exposure to arsenic? Drink Bottled Water, Treat the Well Water with point of use devices attached to your tap remove most of the arsenic from that tap, or point-of entry devices to remove arsenic from your water before it enters the house so that all your taps provide clean water. These systems can use reverse osmosis, distillation, or special iron and aluminum units to remove the arsenic. Other systems, such as water softeners and pitcher filters, will not remove arsenic. Finally, Put in a New Well

To More Pleasant Things

Check out the county Master Gardner Open House, Saturday, June 3, from 10 AM to 3 PM in the Galleries at Quiet Waters Park. The event and park admission will be free and it will include a plant sale, horticultural presentations, landscape management, a kids gardening corner and refreshments.

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