

# TOWN NOTES

*News from La Plata Town Hall*



## MAYOR'S CORNER

A recent event in one of our housing developments brings to mind an adage, you reap only what you sow. A young boy walking along one of our streets was invited into a stranger's car on the promise of receiving candy. He did not take the bait but went straight to a neighbor and reported the incident, and the neighbor immediately notified the police. The strong police response prompted the two teenagers in the car to surrender to the police and state that the incident was a prank. No harm was intended. Nevertheless, the boy knew what to do in this situation and the neighbors responded accordingly. I commend the adults and the boy for doing the right thing at the right time.

We all have a major stake in keeping our neighborhoods safe and secure and we should feel proud that our Town is well-managed and incidents, when they occur, such as the one identified above, are responded to quickly and efficiently. The safety and security of our Town and its residents are a daily concern of our local police, fire, and medical emergency agencies. We are well served by these agencies whose primary concern is our welfare 24/7. Unfortunately, the critical services these first-responders provide often go unnoticed or fall into that broad category, all in a day's work. If you are ever the recipient of any emergency services you will not feel that it is just routine but will be very appreciative of the skill and dedication of these brave men

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## Town of La Plata General Election

**Election of Mayor and Wards I, II, III and IV Councilmen**

**Tuesday, May 5, 2009, 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m.**

**Polling place: La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street**

The Town of La Plata will hold a General Election on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, between the hours of 12:00 noon and 8:00 p.m. The polling place for all qualified voters of the Town is the La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street.

Beginning with this election, the Mayor and Councilmen will no longer serve staggered terms, **and all qualified voters of the Town will be able to cast their vote for a candidate for Mayor and for a candidate from each of the four Council wards**, to serve 4-year terms of office. In past Town elections, qualified voters of the Town could only vote for a candidate for Mayor and a candidate from their own Council ward. That has been changed so that **now each qualified voter will be able to vote for and elect the entire five-member Town Council**.

### Candidates

The name of each candidate nominated for elective office is arranged in alphabetical order by office:

#### Mayor

Roy G. Hale

#### Councilman, Ward I

James "Jim" Goldsmith  
Ralph Wayne Winkler

#### Councilman, Ward II

C. Keith Back  
Scot D. Lucas

#### Councilman, Ward III

Paretta D. (Paddy) Mudd

#### Councilman, Ward IV

Vic Eugene Newman  
Joseph W. Norris

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# GENERAL ELECTION (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

## Eligibility to Vote and Deadline to Register or Make Changes of Name or Address – Monday, April 6, 2009

If you are a Town resident and are already registered to vote with the Charles County Board of Elections, you are eligible to vote in Town elections. **Your voter registration must include an address located within the Town of La Plata.**

**To vote in the Town's General Election on Tuesday, May 5, 2009, you must be registered to vote, or make changes to your voter registration name or address, with the Charles County Board of Elections or with the Town Board of Elections by Monday, April 6, 2009.** (Charles County Board of Elections, located at 201 East Charles Street, La Plata, Md., office hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: 301-934-8972 and 301-870-3167.)

## Voting Machines

The Town will be using touch screen voting machines provided by the Charles County Board of Elections.

## Absentee Ballots

According to Town Code § 17-7 *Procedure*, a qualified voter desiring to vote at any election as an absentee voter shall make application, in writing, to the Board for an absentee ballot, which application must be received not later than seven (7) days before the election. [See Town Code § 17-5 *Qualifications*, for information regarding voting by absentee ballot.]

## Deadline for Making Application for Absentee Ballot 4:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 28, 2009

Written application for an absentee ballot for the General Election to be held on May 5, 2009 must be in the office of the Board of Elections

**by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 28, 2009.** Applications are available at the La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street, and at the Charles County Board of Elections, 201 East Charles Street, La Plata, Maryland. After verification has been made that the applicant is a qualified voter, an absentee ballot will be mailed to the applicant. **The absentee ballot voter is responsible for assuring that the ballot is received by the Town of La Plata Board of Elections prior to the closing of the polls (8:00 p.m.) for the General Election on Tuesday, May 5, 2009.**

*For additional information, you may call the Town Hall during normal business hours of 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday: 301-934-8421.*

## Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following day:

**Good Friday** Friday, April 10, 2009  
**Memorial Day** Monday, May 25, 2009

If you have a **water or sewer emergency** after hours, call 301-934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

## CHANGES TO HOW WE ADDRESS UTILITY BILLS

The Town has had problems assuring that Town utility bills get to residents of rental properties. In an effort to alleviate this problem, the Town is changing the way it addresses its bills. The bill will no longer include the name of the renter; it will be addressed to the owner in c/o Resident. This will allow the postal carrier to deliver it to the service address no matter who is residing in the rental dwelling.

## TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

Council:

Jim Goldsmith ..... Ward 1  
Scot D. Lucas ..... Ward 2  
Paddy Mudd ..... Ward 3  
Vic E. Newman ..... Ward 4

Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Town Clerk: Judith T. Frazier

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

Director of Inspections: Jorge A. Thompson

Director of Municipal Development:

David M. Jenkins

Director of Planning and Zoning:

Catherine N. Flerlage

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

305 Queen Anne Street,

La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Telephone: 301-934-8421 / 301-870-3377

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: mminer@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

# COUNCIL COLUMN

## Councilman Jim Goldsmith Ward 1

We just had the "Big" snowfall for the year. From what I could see the Town crews did a great job in getting the roads cleared. They did some prep the night before and had the plows out early. If you agree, please tell them "thanks" when you see them.

We have just finished our budget planning based upon our priorities, and are awaiting the report from our Treasurer as to the projected income and the projected expenses based upon our priorities. We will be making the final decisions in the near future. You will all have a chance to attend our meeting to voice your opinion on our proposed budget. Even in these turbulent times our Town is still secure in its financial structure. We owe much of that to the staff and their initiatives to seek out means to save money and make the changes.

We have given a lot of attention to conserving our water resources. We have initiated tiered water billing, standards for new irrigation systems, and sought out means to conserve our own water use. We are surprised and pleased with the latest results for our water consumption from last year to this year. We had a 7.5% reduction in average water consumption. The true test will be this summer when our normal water use would increase to 50% above the winter months. We are on the right track and need to remember that our actions can save these limited resources for our grandchildren.

Spring is around the corner and the Town will be starting its summer concert program. I encourage all of you to come join us on the Town Hall lawn and listen to some good music. Come enjoy the music and view the landscaping around the Town Hall. Your Town staff has done much to make your Town a more enjoyable place to live.

If you have any issues that concern you, feel free to contact me and voice your opinion. [jgoldsmith@townoflaplata.org](mailto:jgoldsmith@townoflaplata.org)

## Councilman Scot D. Lucas Ward 2

The Town Council recently completed its facilitated budget sessions. We used the Citizen Survey and Town staff input as guidance to outline the priorities for the coming year. Completing the water

monitoring system, implementing a pay scale for employees, and adding new parks are among our goals. The Council is confident that we can accomplish these goals without raising tax rates. In today's environment, you expect continued and improved services while minimizing costs and I will vote to maintain our current tax rate.

During the last two years, the Town Council has accomplished many goals. Some of those accomplishments are establishing the Green Building Committee, the members of which were instrumental in reviewing and recommending Irrigation System regulations; requiring Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) certification for all Town-owned or Town-funded buildings; a new Town personnel system; and installing a state of the art monitoring system for wells and water towers, to name just a few.

Another goal that we continue to work on is a Community Center for the Town. The Community Center would be a place where teenagers could go for tutoring and parents could go for counseling. Other activities would include sporting programs and arts and crafts, and others. It is my vision that we can build the center without using a single penny of taxpayers' money. Even with diminished charitable giving, I believe we can accomplish this task.

## Councilwoman Paddy Mudd Ward 3

Think spring! I'm writing this in the middle of a beautiful snowstorm. Economically, things have almost come to a halt in our town but we can count on our strong financial base to make it through these times. Our current Council has a conservative outlook when spending your tax dollars and from the results of our Citizen Survey and website polls I believe the majority of you believe we are on the right track.

Please let your opinions be known all the time, but especially by coming out to vote on Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. We work for you.

## Councilman Vic E. Newman Ward 4

### *Despite Recession*

**Financial Responsibility:** At the beginning of each year for the past four years this Council held budget sessions

facilitated by a remarkable consultant. These sessions produced a sense of fiscal responsibility that has kept La Plata in the black while continuing to provide excellent service, and increased spending on much needed infrastructure. This Council has held property taxes over the last 4 years at its current level and has pledged to continue that effort despite rising costs. This has a lot to do with additional retailers wanting to invest in a quality/premier community that has set its foundation for growth in the retail sector. La Plata is set to weather this downturn.

**Citizen Survey:** During 2008, the Council authorized the Town Manager to accomplish an independent citizen survey so that the Council could be provided with a statistically valid survey of resident opinions about community and services provided by your local government. This survey was conducted by The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS) which is a collaborative effort between the National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Please take the time out to view this survey by going to the Town's website and clicking on "National Citizens Survey Results". Your Town has done a tremendous job in providing tangible solutions to each of these topic areas.

**Infrastructure:** The Council approved the purchase of land south of La Plata for the new Public Works facility. The move has already taken place and the Town is applying for LEED certification of the facility. This opens up the old public works property for the potential La Plata Community Center that is currently being discussed.

Over the past four years your Council has been committed in fixing years of neglect on the sewer system. We have reduced a tremendous amount of I&I that impacted our sewer capacity, accidental spills, and backups/overflows along certain streets.

La Plata is taking the lead in water management by installing and operating a SCADA system so that the Town can remotely monitor and control its wells and water tanks. Along with this system the Council has instituted an irrigation ordinance to require permits for new irrigation system installation to promote water conservation.

# LA PLATA TOWN SERVICES

## Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Minimum fee: \$11.75 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.10. A fee of \$6.00, or the current Landfill disposal fee, shall be charged for each tire collected. *Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.*

## Yard Waste Pickup

**Effective April 1, 2009, residential yard waste pickups will only take place on Mondays and Fridays.** Containers of yard waste ONLY - leaves, grass

and shrub clippings, brush or branches - may be put out on Mondays and Fridays. The containers must be marked "Yard Waste." Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 inches in diameter or more than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed - if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

## Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Charles County Sanitary Landfill accepts household hazardous waste products the **first Saturday of each month during April through December, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.: April 4, May 2, June 6, July 11 (2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday due to July 4 holiday closing of the Landfill), August 1, September 5, October 3, November 7 and December 5.**

The landfill is located at 12305 Billingsley Road East, Waldorf. For driving directions from your location, visit the Landfill's web page at <http://www.charlescounty.org/pt/sw/landfill/default.htm>. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, fluorescent lights, expired prescription medicines and other poisons that are around your house. They advise that you should keep the materials in their original labeled containers whenever possible, and bring the items to the collection site in cardboard boxes for ease in unloading. *If you need more information, please call the Charles County Dept. of Public Facilities at 301-932-3599 or 301-870-2778, or the Landfill information service at 301-932-5656.*

## Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:  
Monday, May 25

Trash will be picked up on:  
Tuesday, May 26

## MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

and women, often volunteers, who serve our community every day.

Take the time to show your appreciation to all police, fire, and medical personnel when the opportunity arises. I recently had the opportunity to recognize two La Plata police officers who placed their lives at risk by entering a burning building and saving the life of one of the tenants. This form of recognition is something we can and will do more often.

I attended the recent Maryland Mayors Conference in Annapolis. It was an opportunity to meet with other Mayors throughout the state and discuss issues and problems that affect cities and towns, large and small. The recent stimulus package presented by President Obama was a hot topic as well as the management of natural resources and the "Going Green" concepts that are at the forefront of all communities across the entire nation. I also recently met with Congressman Hoyer and Lieutenant Governor Brown, along with Mayors from Prince Georges, Charles, St.

Mary's and Calvert counties to discuss the stimulus package and its impact, if any, on our local towns. La Plata submitted a priority list of projects to the State for consideration for stimulus funding; the projects are principally associated with upgrades and improvements to our waste water treatment plant and its collection system. We will have to wait to see how our projects fair with all other projects submitted in Maryland by state, county and local government agencies. We are ahead of many cities and towns in the move to "Go Green." Our Green Building Committee is staffed and working and Green concepts are finding their way into new commercial development. The new PNC Bank branch on Route 301 is an example of a Green building in which recycled materials and environmentally friendly construction concepts were applied.

As your Mayor, I will always welcome your comments be they positive or critical. You can reach me at the Town Hall (301-934-8421) or at home (301-934-4850).

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### The Port Tobacco Players presents Anthony Zerbe in *It's All Done with Mirrors*

**Saturday, April 18, 8:00 p.m.**

This one-man program by stage, television and screen star Anthony Zerbe brings to life the poetry and the words of e.e. cummings. The performance encompasses readings, biographical sketches of both the performer and of e.e.cummings, as well as poetic interpretation and dramatic presentation. Not only will it be an excellent experience and learning opportunity for students studying literature or drama, it will be a spectacular show for all audiences.

Tickets: Adults/Seniors \$25  
Students \$15

# APRIL 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	1	2	3 4 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m., Easter Fun! Event 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
5	6 Special trash pick-up day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 4/3 to schedule)	7 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	8 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	9	10 Town Hall Closed (No change to trash schedule.)	11 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
12	13	14 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	15 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting	16	17	18 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, Phoenix Run community Spring Clean-up Day 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
19	20 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	21 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	22 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	23	24	25 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m., "Celebrate La Plata" Spring Festival 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m., La Plata Police Department Open House
26	27	28 7:00 p.m., Town Council regular meeting	29	30		

# MAY 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
3	4 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 5/1 to schedule)	5 12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m., Town General Election	6 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:00 Planning Commission meeting [rescheduled from 5/5] 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	7	8	9 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
10	11 4:00 p.m., Town Council special meeting- organization of the newly elected Council	12 4:00 p.m., Town Council work session	13 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	14	15	16 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
17	18 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	19 7:00 p.m., Town Council work session	20 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting	21	22	23 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
24/31	25 Town Hall Closed (Monday's trash will be picked up on Tuesday, May 26.) 11:00 a.m. Memorial Day Ceremony	26 7:00 p.m., Town Council regular meeting	27 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	28	29	30 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market

## Conservation Corner



For over a year *Town Notes* has featured ideas, tips, and information to encourage all La Plata community members to conserve our natural resources.

In particular conserving water and limiting pollution of our natural environment. Conservation is an emphasis

for the Town, and the recent Citizen Survey showed 82% of residents agreeing that the Town is on the right track. In the past year the Town has installed a non-potable water irrigation system at Town Hall which utilizes captured rainwater. It also instituted a tiered water bill which charges customers who use more water higher rates. It has adopted a resolution requiring LEED certification of new Town buildings, and is currently pursuing LEED certification for its Public Works Facility.

La Plata's new Green Building Committee would like to identify residents and businesses who are doing their part to conserve, and share their stories of what is being done in Town to help inspire others. Selected conservation stories will be profiled in *Town Notes*, and on the Town's website. To share your conservation success, simply write down what you have done and how it benefits the community's natural environment and mail it to the attention of the Town Manager, Daniel Mears at Town Hall, or send via email to [dmears@townoflaplata.org](mailto:dmears@townoflaplata.org).

La Plata's Green Building Committee recommended the La Plata Town Council adopt two pieces of legislation related to irrigation. In January, the Town Council unanimously adopted legislation that would

require new irrigation systems to be permitted and inspected, when they had previously been unregulated. Requirements for new irrigation systems include having a plan be submitted to the Town showing a backflow preventer, a rain control sensor, an irrigation automatic control system, and the water tap after the water meter. Additionally, all new irrigation systems would be inspected and part of the inspection would be to verify the system is scheduled to irrigate between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m.

The second item of legislation was introduced at the Town Council's February 24<sup>th</sup> business meeting and is scheduled to be considered for adoption at the March 24<sup>th</sup> business meeting. The legislation restricts the time of day that irrigation could occur. By limiting outdoor watering and irrigation between 6:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. those who choose to irrigate would reduce their water waste because less of the water applied would be lost to evaporation. Individuals and property owners who do water during the restricted time of day would be faced with an infraction and fines for not complying with Town Code. This restriction does not apply to the application of water to outdoor planted material by means of a hand-held hose or by a watering device, such as a hand-held watering can.

These steps are the latest in a series of efforts made by the Town to help curb the amount of seasonal water use. The Town has seen water use increase 55% during summer months, with much of that water being used for irrigation. La Plata is the third municipality in the State of Maryland to consider restrictions on the time of day for irrigation. Irrigation of landscaping is discouraged in the Town to conserve potable water in our aquifers. The community is reminded to use native and drought resistant landscaping that does not require irrigation.

## NOW OPEN IN LA PLATA AND COMING SOON TO LA PLATA

[This information is current as of March 4, 2009.]

The following businesses were issued Building Permits and/or Commercial Occupancy Permits during January and February 2009: (No Commercial Building Permits were issued.)

### **Occupancy Permits**

**Soli Deo Gloria Church**  
403 Charles Street

### **Hair Cuttery**

218 Rosewick Road

### **Capital Area Orthopedic Associates**

16 North La Plata Court

### **Custom Kitchens by Design**

relocated to 6750 Crain Highway

### **Orthopedic & Sport Therapy**

10 North La Plata Court

## CITIZEN ACADEMY

The Town of La Plata is proud to again offer a Citizen Academy for La Plata's Water and Sewer Systems. The Citizen Academy brings interested members of the community together to learn about a particular government service. Last fall, community members participated in the Town's first Academy. They were impressed with the complexity of providing water and sewer to the Town and what they learned by attending this program.

The Citizen Academy will help residents of La Plata better understand how these vital public services work and the resources it takes to provide them. The next session will begin on Wednesday, April 22. Space is limited in the Academy. **To sign up for**

**the Academy please call Town Hall at 301-934-8421 or email Donna at [dshorter@townofaplata.org](mailto:dshorter@townofaplata.org).**

Sessions will all start and end at La Plata Town Hall. Session dates are set for:

**Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 PM:** Session - Public water systems in general and La Plata's system in particular.

**Saturday, May 2, 10:00 AM:** Field trip - Tour of La Plata's wells and water storage tank. Maintenance demonstration.

**Wednesday, May 13, 7:00 PM:** Session - Sewer treatment facilities, collection systems, and Sanitary Sewer Overflows.

**Saturday, May 23, 10:00 AM:** Field trip - Tour of La Plata's sewage treatment plant and at least one pump station.

**Wednesday, May 27, 7:00 PM:** Session - Operation and Maintenance of La Plata's water and sewer systems

**Wednesday, June 3, 7:00 PM:** Session - Budgeting, capital expenditures, long range planning.

At the time of registration, please advise if any special accommodations are required for your participation. This program would be most effective if participants can attend all six sessions, but there is something to be gained by attending any of the sessions. The Town looks forward to your participation, and the opportunity to share one of a kind insight into the Town's operations. You will not be disappointed.

## HOMEOWNER INSURERS MUST OFFER COVERAGE FOR SEWER BACKUP LOSSES

*[Information provided by Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) – Claims Bulletin, January 2009]*

During the 2008 legislative session, Maryland's General Assembly enacted HB 72 regarding homeowner's coverage for water and sewer backup losses. For some time, §19-202 of the Insurance Article has required private insurers that sell homeowners' insurance policies in Maryland to offer water and sewer backup coverage. Unfortunately, most insurers were offering the coverage only if the homeowner requested it. Effective October 1, 2008, all homeowner insurers that sell policies in

Maryland must offer this coverage to policyholders in writing by certified mail within 7 days after the date the policy is initially placed or at the time of each renewal.

Sewer systems are not closed systems and are subject to vandalism, mishandling by users, and unavoidable occurrences which may cause a backup despite the most rigorous maintenance program. Local governments are not automatically liable for these losses. Homeowners can protect themselves from unavoidable backups that may occur (even if the problem is in their own line) by purchasing the coverage

which must be offered by their homeowner insurer. Unavoidable backups can occur and private insurance carriers must offer water and sewer backup coverage. Most standard homeowner policies provide replacement coverage for any loss, which is always more beneficial to the homeowner than a liability claim, which would limit the recovery to what the item was worth. If the county or municipality is at fault, the homeowner insurer may subrogate to LGIT. This coverage also helps the homeowner quickly control and mitigate the loss and return to normal activities.



### Friendly Reminders

*Please be a good neighbor and...*

...remember to clean up after your pets, both when you're out walking with your pets and in your own yard. It's the neighborly thing to do, plus there are provisions in the Town Code of Ordinances that require you (1) to have a container (such as a plastic bag) with you to clean up after your pet when you are walking the pet and to remove your pet's waste from any public property or any private property not owned by you; and (2) to keep your own property clean and free from any accumulation of matter that creates offensive smells or odors. For more information on these provisions in the Town Code, please visit the Town's website at <http://www.townofaplata.org> and click on the 'Town Code' link on the left side of the web page to go to the online version of the Code. The information is contained in Chapter 67 Animals, Section 67-5.1, and in Chapter 117 Health and Sanitation, Section 117-2 Keeping premises clean, and Section 117-3 Nuisances.

...prevent your recyclables from being blown out of your recycling container. To keep the lighter weight plastic items from being scattered, you could place your bundled newspapers or glass on top. Your neighbors will appreciate your efforts to not let your recyclables be scattered throughout the neighborhood!

## CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS

In November there were 1,200 households in the Town of La Plata that were asked to participate in The National Citizen Survey™ for the second time. The National Citizen Survey has been conducted in over 500 jurisdictions in the United States with thousands of survey questions dealing with resident perception about the quality of community life, community characteristics, perceptions of safety, community participation, public trust, services, and impressions of Town employees.

Survey questions covered the spectrum of Town services. With last year's survey as the benchmark, the Town was proud to see an improvement in scores of its services and perception throughout the survey. The Town Council uses these survey responses to help evaluate service provision and assist in the development of Council priorities and to guide the elected body in making decisions in regards to the Fiscal Year 2010 budget that they are currently developing.

The Overall Community Quality ratings for La Plata showed 87% of respondents rating the Town from good to excellent as a place to live, compared with 85% in the 2008 survey. When evaluating safety in the community, a high percentage of respondents felt somewhat to very safe in La Plata. In our downtown 90% of respondents felt somewhat to very safe, and in our neighborhoods, 92% felt safe, both well above the national norm.

Individual services ranked high as well. Garbage collection was again the Town's top rated service, which was ranked as good or excellent by 87% of the community, 1% higher than the 2008 survey. Snow removal was another high scoring service with a score of 81% this year.

In the 2008 survey the Town identified areas in need of improvement; Parks, Water, and Sewer received relatively low scores compared to other jurisdictions. All three of these areas showed significant improvement based upon the attention paid to these important services. Town Parks ratings for La Plata showed 65% of respondents rating the Town from good to excellent in the 2008 survey. That score increased 7 points to 72% in the current survey.

Both water and sewer services received ratings well below national norms in the 2008 survey. Drinking water was only in the 35th percentile as compared to the nation, and sewer services were only at the 25th percentile. The Town focused significant resources toward improvements in both of these areas, with substantial investment in the Town's infrastructure and education about the services. Drinking water scores increased by 8 points, and Sewer services increased 13 points. Investments in these two areas continue, and there is still much to accomplish.

La Plata is not immune from perceptions affected by the global economy. The perception that jobs growth in La

Plata is too slow increased from 61% to 64% in the past year. Additionally, the Town asked a policy question relative to employment. When asked how important it is for the Town to encourage the development of more employment opportunities in the community, the survey has 78% of respondents stating it is very important or essential for the Town to focus on employment opportunities.

Another policy question asked to what extent residents support or oppose reducing access from some downtown streets to Charles Street as part of the effort to reduce congestion and increase safety. The survey showed 72% of respondents somewhat or strongly supporting the concept.

The third policy question sought to identify what extent residents agree or disagree that the Town of La Plata is on the right track with conservation and green building initiatives. The survey showed 82% of respondents somewhat or strongly agreeing the Town is on the right track. Initiatives over the past year have included a LEED building requirement for new Town buildings and the formation of a new Green Building Committee to make recommendations on green initiatives.

If you would like to view the survey results in their entirety, they are available on the Town's website, <http://www.townoflaplata.org>. Follow the link on the left to "National Citizen Survey Results."

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### **Easter Fun!**

**Saturday, April 4, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.  
Inside La Plata Town Hall**

Create your own Ice Cream Sundae to eat with the Easter Bunny, and when you are done, enjoy making a variety of Easter crafts to keep or share.

### **"Celebrate La Plata" Spring Festival Saturday, April 25, 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m.**

12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m.: Craft Fair, Food Vendors, Children's activities will include moon bounces and a 20' rock wall.

12:30 p.m.: Port Tobacco Players  
Encore Kids

1:30 p.m.: Judy's Studio of Dance

2:30 p.m.: "Parade of Beds"

3:00 p.m.: La Plata Bed Races

### **Memorial Day Ceremony Monday, May 25, 11:00 a.m.**

The Town will host the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial Monument at the La Plata Town Hall. There will be guest speakers, a wreath laying ceremony, and musical entertainment. Refreshments will be provided following the ceremony.

*For information on any of the above events, please contact Amy Peña at 301-934-8421, ext. 142 or via email at [apena@townoflaplata.org](mailto:apena@townoflaplata.org).*

## KENT CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP

The Kent Corridor Partnership began several years ago as a “take back our neighborhood” venture to promote families living without fear in a clean, healthy environment. It originally was a combined effort of the Town of La Plata, the La Plata Police Department, and the Charles County Sheriff’s Office. LifeStyles, Inc. has joined the effort with their staff’s leadership and community organizing skills. Anyone of any age who lives in the area, provides supportive services to the area or is just interested in the community is invited to join us at the La Plata Police Department, 101 La Grange Avenue, on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. The Partnership sponsors neighborhood clean up days each spring and fall. We also hold a back to school day – usually in combination with National Night Out – in August. Last May we held a very successful non-violence rally with police, an attorney, and Rod Milstead, former

Redskins guard, giving the kids advice on combating violence and bullying. This rally was a successful turnout of the kids; however, we would like to get more of the parents involved in all our activities.

The Town Council has tentatively committed to building a Community Center in the old public works building on Potomac Street. The Partnership began planning for this center in early 2007 with lots of enthusiasm and a good turnout for meetings. However, this group has dwindled as progress slowed. Planning funds for the Community Center in this year’s Town budget have not been used and additional funds will be added to the 2010 budget. **Please come out with all your ideas and support your community!**



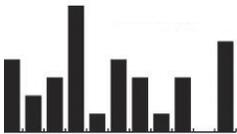
Town residents with Rod Milstead at the non-violence rally held in May 2008.

**Monthly meetings:** April 16 and May 21, 7:00 p.m., at the La Plata Police Department, 101 La Grange Avenue

**Spring Clean-up Day:** April 18, 8:00 a.m., Caroline Drive Park

**End of School Fun Day:** June 13, Caroline Drive Park

## WEBSITE POLL



Visit the Town of La Plata’s website at <http://www.townofla-plata.org> to participate in an online poll. Click on the ‘Snap Poll’ link on the left side of the web page to go to the poll and see the results to date. The current question is:

***The Town of La Plata should show the following movie during its Screen on the Green this summer:***

Kung Fu Panda, rated PG

Journey to the Center of the Earth, rated PG

Madagascar – Escape 2 Africa, rated PG

College Road Trip, rated G

Hotel for Dogs, rated PG

High School Musical 3 – Senior Year, rated PG

Hancock, rated PG-13

Ironman, rated PG-13

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull, rated PG-13

Wall-E, rated G

### Website Poll Results from last issue of *Town Notes*

Below are the website ‘Snap Poll’ results from the last issue. The question and results are:

*There is the greatest need for community activities for which age group?*

Children ages 13-17 – 44%

Adults – 18%

Young Adults – 18%

Children ages 6-12 – 12%

Children ages 2-5 – 7%

Seniors – 1%

The Town of La Plata has added new events for 2009 and will be adding more events in the near future to cater to residents of all ages. The Town will host “First Fridays” on the first Friday of each month, June through October. These “mini festivals” will feature popular bands, food vendors, business displays and plenty of activities for children of all ages. The Town has also added a Chili Cook-Off in September 2009. This will be a great opportunity for families, communities, schools and businesses to come together as teams and show off their chili-cooking skills. This event will feature a popular band playing throughout the day and, of course, plenty of food.

The Town of La Plata encourages teens to participate in events such as the Veteran’s Day Parade with their school or organization, the Chili Cook-Off with their family or community, and come hang out and enjoy the concerts at the Friday Night Concert Series. The Town will be adding new and exciting events in the future that you won’t want to miss! Thank you for your participation in the last online poll.

# MEET THE TOWN STAFF



## Steve Schroeder

Steve Schroeder, Project Manager, grew up in and around the Georgetown neighborhoods of Washington, D.C. In 1985 Steve purchased a farm west of La Plata and moved to Charles County. He began his career with the Town of La Plata in June of 1989. His hobbies are fishing, boating, and motorcycles. Steve is very devoted to his family, church, and work.



## Jeff Garner

The Town would like to announce that Town resident Jeff Garner has accepted the position of Director of Public Works. In this role Jeff will be managing the day-to-day operations of the department, including the relocation of the Public Works facility, budgeting, and safety, as well as implementing the priorities and goals set each year by the Town Council.

Jeff began his career with the Town in 1985 as a crew member and has worked in all aspects of the department. The most recent positions he has held have been Acting Director of Public Works and Assistant Director of Public Works. After the tornado in 2002, while mourning the recent death of his father, Jeff stepped up to the challenge and was appointed Coordinator for all municipalities and agencies involved in the clean-up efforts. Through this experience, he gained valuable knowledge in managing multiple-agency response, crisis management, and FEMA coordination. Jeff is a member of the Maryland Municipal League Department of Public Works, American Association of Public Works, and Charles County Rescue Squad.

Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata.

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