

SUPERINTENDENT OF PARKS OFFICE

Les Straw, Superintendent

SMARTPARKS

Using innovative GIS and database technologies, SmartParks is a new program with the primary goal of providing management information to park managers and administrators in a manner that will provide opportunities for more efficient and economical operation of our park system, and improve the stewardship efforts and ethic of our workforce. Key accomplishments include:

- Implementation of the Work Order Management (WOM) System has begun. Northern Region, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Information Technology as well as the Horticulture and Arboriculture sections are using WOM for all daily tasks.
- The Park Inventory is loaded and available to users, and the park facility data is being collected, validated and entered.
- The Park Maintenance Service Center is operational and processing work orders based on calls from residents and employees.

The next phase is to begin testing the entered WOM data to ascertain that the information is being collected and entered accurately. The Department continues to work on streamlining data collection and other work processes. The GIS component is to be delivered soon and implementation will require additional training and testing.

ParkPASS

In an effort to provide greater convenience to customers wishing to enroll in park programs and services, ParkPass was created to offer customers on-line capability to request park permits, register for classes, and make tee-time reservations. During this reporting period, ParkPASS was made available to register for classes at Brookside Gardens. Staff designed a campaign to inform more than 2,000 existing Brookside customers of the new capability. Publicity for the new system was limited to direct mailings to existing customers and those visiting our website. During the first two weeks of implementation of ParkPASS at Brookside, 20% of total transactions were conducted on-line.

In October, a touch-tone phone reservation system will be in place to provide an alternative to those customers who may not have access to a computer. By February 2005, all four nature centers will be offering their programs through the new ParkPASS system. An evaluation of the new on-line registration capability will be conducted in January prior to a county-wide public awareness campaign.

CARRY-IN, CARRY-OUT (CICO)

After eight months of implementing the Carry-In, Carry-Out program, the Department has removed approximately 1,000 trashcans from the parks, except for regional and recreational parks (excluding Olney Recreational Park). Although a clear picture of the cost savings of the

program has not yet been determined, park managers are beginning to see a decrease in litter, a decrease in work hours for collection, and savings in transfer station fees. With time, increased public awareness, and education, trash collection costs may be reduced even further. Council members are reminded that an evaluation report is due in December. Additional information about the status of our CICO Program includes the following:

- Park management staff identified the ten cleanest parks participating in the Carry-In, Carry-Out Program and issued a News Release thanking residents and civic groups for their cooperative community spirit. The parks were identified as follows:
 - Bauer Drive Local Park in Aspen Hill
 - Brookview Local Park in Silver Spring
 - Cherrywood Local Park in Olney
 - College View Neighborhood Park in Wheaton
 - Highland Stone Neighborhood Park in Potomac
 - Leaman Local Park in Germantown
 - Moyer Road Local Park in Damascus
 - Norbeck Meadows Neighborhood Park in the Norbeck area of Rockville
 - Quince Orchard Valley Local Park in Gaithersburg
 - Seven Oaks Neighborhood Park in Silver Spring
- Although tipping fee costs have increased in 2004 because of a nine percent increase in fees charged, there is a declining trend in the total cost of tipping fees when May, June and July of 2004 are compared with those in 2003.
- In the spring, about one-third of the trashcans were restored in the Sligo Creek, Rock Creek and Long Branch Stream Valley Parks in accordance with a County Council resolution to protect the waters of these stream valley parks.
- Municipalities that have assumed collection and removal responsibilities in their neighboring parks are Chevy Chase for Elm Street Park and Leland Community Center, Garrett Park, Avenel, and Kensington.
- The litter control crews visit each of the 389 parks about once a week, and ballfield maintenance, trim and mow crews perform litter control prior to assuming their regular responsibilities.
- Litter control costs are balanced out by efficiencies realized in the disposal area. Dumpsters are now being emptied only when management calls for collection rather than on a routine weekly basis. Also, the number of trips to the transfer station is restricted to large trucks only when fully loaded, and to small trucks with management's approval.
- A new centralized Park Maintenance Service Center (301/670-8080 or Center.Service@mncppc-mc.org) has been established and linked to SmartParks to log, triage, and monitor park maintenance problems, including but not limited to CICO concerns. The new Service Center will be marketed widely in the fall, although community members are currently being informed of the new Service Center through responses to letters, phone calls and community events.
- More noticeable, simplified and improved translations of park signs in English and Spanish are being designed to remind citizens to carry out their trash.
- Notices about the program continue to be inserted into permits issued to users of recreation buildings and fields.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

The Volunteer Services Office works directly with staff to organize programs and events in which volunteers play a significant role. In fact, without volunteers many of these programs or events could not take place. Examples from this period include:

- Potomac River Cleanup Day involved 364 volunteers performing 1092 hours of service at eight project sites throughout parks in April.
- “Marriott Spirit to Serve Day” involved 294 employees at 7 sites, contributing 1029 hours.
- Arbor Day was supported by 24 volunteers and numerous community organizations.
- Spring Festival included 185 volunteers in 1300 hours of service.
- Wings of Fancy Butterfly Show which runs daily, May – Sept. is staffed by over 130 volunteers.
- Oakley Cabin was open weekends for the first time through the support of volunteer docents.
- OUR House, a work readiness program for at-risk youth, performed five projects over the summer for a total of over 250 hours of community service.
- A new record was set for volunteer hours at Brookside and McCrillis Gardens. For FY04, 382 volunteers and 450 group volunteers contributed 21,772 hours, which is an increase of 9% over FY03.

Data for FY04 is being collected and the preliminary numbers show: volunteers provided over 52,000 hours of service in the Department – an all time high. Over 70 projects involving episodic volunteers were coordinated including community service workdays, scout projects and civic group workdays. An additional 966 individuals volunteer regularly with the Department – working directly with staff in numerous facilities and programs.

It is important to note that the currency of volunteerism is typically expressed in hours. But that figure does not reflect the impacts volunteerism has on our ability to provide services. Our most popular and well attended events and programs could not occur without this vital support. The non-profit organization, Private Sector, provides an hourly equivalency for quantifying the dollar of volunteer labor. At the current rate, Montgomery Park and Planning received over \$911,000 in value added service from volunteers. However, even that figure does not reflect the outreach and education value inherent in volunteerism or the morale boosting effects that these community partners have on paid staff.

A programmatic assessment of volunteerism is currently being conducted as projected. A survey of staff and volunteers had been conducted and results are being analyzed by the Points of Light Foundation. This data should provide the Volunteer Services Office more insight into current attitudes about volunteerism and barriers to service and will result in the development of a strategic plan for volunteerism for the Department.

BALLFIELD INITIATIVES

- Renovation work is underway at Flower Hill Elementary School, Strawberry Knolls Elementary School, Westland Middle School and Eastern Middle School. These projects will be completed by the '05 spring season.

- Forest Oaks Middle School lost their skinned infield when the user group that created it ceased maintaining it. Staff was contacted by the school Athletic Director requesting assistance. Staff is in the process of evaluating the site for inclusion in the Ballfield Initiatives Renovation/Maintenance program.
- New lights have been installed at Olney Manor Recreational Park, Field #1. Work is progressing on fields #2 - #5.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Heart Smart Trails

The Grand Opening of the Heart Smart Trail was one of the most successful and well-attended park events during this reporting period. Brookside Gardens was chosen as the location for the first Heart Smart trail in the Montgomery County park system. As the result of a partnership between our Department and the Montgomery County Recreation Department, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Latino Health Initiative, the African-American Health Program, the Centers for Disease Control and several corporate sponsors, bronze markers embedded at 1/10th mile intervals now identify a walker's progress along the existing mile-long trail that circles these beautiful gardens. A brochure, published in English and Spanish, includes a progress log. The trail was dedicated in June in conjunction with a Health Fair held at the Visitors Center, along with fun activities for children. Recent medical reports indicate that obesity is becoming a serious health issue among adults and children at an increasingly alarming rate. The Heart Smart trail initiative is aimed at helping County residents with safe places to walk and jog as they reduce their risk of heart disease, diabetes, and related health issues. African-Americans and Latinos are two prime target groups for this initiative, and future designations of existing park trails will take that into consideration.

The Montgomery County Fair

After a three-year absence, the Department of Park and Planning returned as an exhibitor to the Montgomery County Fair. This annual outreach activity brought us in personal contact with thousands of current and new customers during the eleven-day event. With "Forever Green" as the theme, the exhibit featured the County's preservation of 47% of its land for open space, agricultural preserves and recreation. Also included were live demonstrations by staff and volunteers and colorful displays about the Butterfly Show, South Germantown Recreational Park, "The Planning Game," and, of course, natural and native plants. For the second time in six years, our exhibit earned a "Grand Champion" and blue ribbon designation by Fair judges.

PARK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Northern Snakehead Emergency

In response to the Northern Snakehead emergency, staff supported efforts to drain Pine Lake. Staff from several Divisions, including Southern Region, Natural Resources, Park Police, Community Relations, Countywide Planning, Park Development worked to respond to this urgent issue. The Department worked closely with The Maryland Department of Natural Resources, The Montgomery County Department of the Environment, and The Maryland State Highway Administration to ensure the safety of Pine Lake, the wildlife and the community.

PARK DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Michael Riley, Chief

The Park Development Division has been reorganized and is now working on various teams to improve the following:

- (1) the entire process of planning, designing, constructing and operating parks;
- (2) the procurement process;
- (3) citizen input to the budgetary process;
- (4) the homeowner's notification process for participation in the park development process;
- (5) reporting on the progress of development projects through the development of a variety of database reports; and
- (6) playground renovation streamlining improvements.

PARK ACQUISITION PROGRAM

In FY04, the Department spent \$6,464,000 to acquire properties through the Acquisition: Local and Non-Local PDFs and the Legacy Open Space program. There were no purchases through the Advance Land Acquisition Fund (ALARF Program) in FY04.

The Land Acquisition Specialist is negotiating the purchase of several properties, including but not limited to Hyattstown Forest, an addition to Watts Branch Stream Valley Park-Unit 2, an addition to Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park, and addition to Fenton Street Urban Park, Water's Gift Special Park, River Road Shale Barrens and Hoyles Mill Conservation Park. Also, negotiations are underway to acquire the Layman property as right-for-way for the Midcounty Highway. The Layman property is to be acquired using the Commission's ALARF.

In FY05, the Planning Board has approved contracts for the purchase of several properties including but not limited to: the third installment of the Piney Grove Serpentine Barrens, the third installment of Callithea Farm Park, an addition to the Great Seneca Greenway, Darby House and Store, and an addition to Woodstock Equestrian Park. Also, the Planning Board approved a contract for the acquisition of Linthicum East Elementary School site as an ALARF acquisition for the Board of Education.

Two of the above mentioned projects are pending acquisition approval by the State as Program Open Space sites. They are the third installment at Callithea Farm Park and the addition to Great Seneca Greenway. Other acquisition projects will be subject to Program Open Space acquisition applications as negotiations are completed.

PARK DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Park Development Division has over 200 active projects. This section highlights only a sample of those projects.

Facility planning is underway for the following projects:

- Germantown Center Urban Park (UP)
- North Four Corners Local Park (LP)
- Greenbriar LP
- Takoma-Piney Branch LP
- Evans Parkway LP

The following projects are in design phase:

- Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park (RP), Phase 1B
- Olney Manor Skateboard Park (in response to community request, design revision for a concrete skatepark will delay completion to late 2005)
- Concord LP Renovation
- Matthew Henson Trail
- Winding Creek LP Reconstruction
- Woodstock Equestrian Park parking lot
- Olney Manor Ballfield Lighting, fields 2-5
- Playground Renovations (6 local parks)

The following projects are under construction:

- Total park renovations: Jesup Blair LP, Montgomery Village LP
- Playground Renovations: Cannon Road LP, Fleming LP, Glen Echo NP, North Gate LP, Glenfield LP, Pleasant View LP, Cloverly LP
- Miscellaneous renovations: Paving of Sligo Creek Parkway from Colesville Road to Dennis Avenue; water and sewer work at Woodlawn Park; new lights on field #1 at Olney Manor Recreational Park; bridge replacement over Little Falls Parkway; restoration of the Woodlawn Barn

Construction of phases 1 and 2 of the Matthew Henson trail, extending from the Rock Creek Hiker-Biker trail to Georgia Avenue, is scheduled to begin in spring 2005 and completed in winter 2005. Design for phase 3, from Georgia Avenue to Alderton Road, is underway, with construction that began in summer 2005 through summer 2006.

The following projects were completed during the reporting period:

- Playground Renovations: Broadacres LP, Bucks Branch Neighborhood Park (NP), College View NP, Seven Oaks NP, Fountain Hill LP, Redland LP, Peachwood NP, Dufief LP, Greenwich NP, Stratton LP, Kensington Heights LP, and Rock Creek SVU
- Miscellaneous renovations: Rockwood Manor roof; Woodlawn offsite water; Sligo Creek Parkway/Beach Drive guardrails; Fountain Hills parking lot; Beach Drive paving from East-West Highway to the DC Line; Beach Drive paving from Stoneybrook Road to Connecticut Avenue.
- The septic system and water line at the Rickman Farm Horse Park and the renovation of the Meadowbrook Stables are private-public partnership projects that were completed during the reporting period.

NORTHERN REGION

Gordon Rosenthal, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- The Little Bennett Area staff participated in a variety of community events including Clarksburg Days and the Damascus Community Fair
- After a three-year absence, the Spring Farm Festival returned to the Agricultural History Farm Park. The Montgomery Parks Foundation underwrote the festival. Other sponsors included the Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park, Master Gardeners, and Montgomery County Association for Family & Community Education and local 4-H groups. The Friends of Oakley Cabin, Friends of Recreation, and the North American Bluebird Society also participated by adopting passport activities. Approximately 1,300 members of the public attended and about 200 volunteers participated.
- Region staff provided support for the Gas and Steam Show, Arbor Day Celebration, Draft Horse and Mule Field Day, Montgomery County History Days, Montgomery County Farm Tour and Harvest Sale and hosted the County-wide Envirothon Competition with participants from over 15 Montgomery County High Schools. All of these events took place at the Agricultural History Farm Park.
- Rock Creek Regional Park was the site of the 2004 Special Olympics Torch Run in May.
- Staff performed clean-up and tree removal on over 20 miles of trails due to a series of Fall and Winter Storm events.
- New playgrounds were opened at Redland Local Park and Fountain Hill Local Park after staff inspection and punch list completion.
- Black Hill Area Maintenance Staff finally moved into their long awaited maintenance yard.
- Maryland Department of the Environment Dam Inspections were completed at both Lake Needwood and Lake Frank..
- Nature Center staff conducted a series of Spring Break programs for students who were out of school for the week. They were very successful and helped us generate additional revenue as well as reach members of the public who had not previously participated in our nature programs.
- Staff conducted ongoing extensive Non-Native Invasive plant removal at Rachel Carson Conservation Park and other Northern Region park locations.

SOUTHERN REGION

Ronnie Gathers, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- Southern Region staff provided coordination, trail preparation, facility set-up and/or maintenance services for the following special events:
 - Mid-Atlantic Regional Baseball Tournament for players 12 and under
 - Colesville Civic Association “Strawberry Festival”
 - “National Night Out” at North Gate Park in Wheaton

- The Make A Wish Foundation Triathlon
 - The Cabin John Ice Rink “Spring Skating Exhibition”
 - Booze Allen Hamilton Foundation “Golf Classic”
 - John Gretz “Hall of Fame Classic” Fast Pitch Tournament
 - Montgomery County Road Runners and Potomac Road Runners Association running races
 - The Montgomery Soccer Institute “Pre-Season Soccer Tournament”
 - Montgomery County Schools “Bicycle Safety Course”
 - The Treatment and Learning Center’s “Sno-ball” Slow pitch Tournament
 - 5 K “Run For the Roses”
 - Community and civic association picnics, parades, events.
- **The Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor** was dedicated. Staff performed a major clean up of Burnt Mills West Park, and provided event set-up for the dedication.
 - **Environmental Improvement Initiatives** - Southern Region staff planted approximately 250 reforestation trees, at locations including: Wheaton Regional Park, Woodacres Park, Cabin John Stream Valley, Rock Creek Stream Valley, Norwood Local Park, Meadowbrook Stables, and Sligo Creek Park. Additionally, two aeration fountains were replaced at Kemp Mill urban Park. The new system is expected to provide cleaner water and improved oxygenation for aquatic life.
 - **Maintenance/Repairs** - Staff continued repairs due to hurricane damages at Wheaton Regional Train track, requiring application of over 20 tons of gravel and replaced over 170 rails at Cabin John. Region staff provided storm clean up and repairs along flooded roads and bridges, particularly along Sligo Creek Parkway, Kensington Parkway, and Little Falls Parkway.
 - **Nature Centers** - Summer camps and interpretive programs were held at the Region’s Nature Centers. These included: Locust Grove’s annual Happy Bird Day event, and Brookside Nature Center’s annual Maple Sugaring Festival. Staff also participated programs with Girl Scouts of America Career Day, Rockville Science Day, Grace Episcopal School’s Science Day, and Brookside Garden’s Children’s Day. Region staff and Potomac Appalachian Trail Club volunteers are restoring Cabin John Trail steps at Locust Grove Nature Center. Locust Grove Nature Center Staff conducted programs for hearing-impaired students from Gallaudet University.
 - **Employment Opportunities** - The Southern Region continues to work in partnership with Centers for the Handicapped, Inc. This collaboration provides supervised employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the Southern Region Parks. Additionally, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Special Park staff coordinates a program with Supported Employment Enterprise Corporation (SEEC) to provide work activities for adults with severe developmental disabilities.
 - **Seasonal Employee Increase** - The pilot program to increase the seasonal labor complement has been converted to a bi-regional program for FY05. The Regions converted career staff positions to seasonal work years for the FY05 adopted budget.
 - **Contract Services** - The Region is exploring further cost reduction strategies by expanding custodial contracts for major office buildings and evaluating the potential for contracts in other areas.

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

Carl D. Falcone, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Public Gardens

- **Reflection Terrace at Brookside Gardens**- Construction was completed in September. The memorial included a new walkway, plantings and engraved names and text. Montgomery County Government, Montgomery Parks Foundation and the Friends of Brookside Gardens contributed to the project.
- **Wings of Fancy Butterfly Show** – The show attracted over 42,000 visitors setting a new attendance mark for the show.
- **Bi-lingual Translation** – Brookside initiated Spanish translations for a variety of exhibits and brochures including Heart Smart Trail Guide, Brookside’s Rental Brochure and Brookside’s Map of the Gardens and Grounds.
- **Brookside’s School of Botanical Art and Illustration** – The school opened on September 10th at McCrillis Gardens. The school will promote and teach botanical art within a supportive, vibrant school community while pursuing excellence in both classical and innovative approaches. Internationally known botanical artist, Margaret Saul, will be the school’s director and principal teacher.
- **Children’s Day** – The program attracted over 2,000 visitors. The event was entirely sponsored by the Friends of Brookside Gardens.
- **Brookside’s Program and Events Guide** – This season’s guide received a new look and name – *Brookside Gardens Xperience*. The publication, now in color, reflects a new direction in programming. More interactive classes and demonstrations will be offered in the future.
- **Trial Garden** - A new outdoor exhibit titled “Good Plant/Bad Plant” was installed in the Trial Garden. The exhibit focuses on non-native invasive plants used in the landscape and suggests alternative plant choices.

Natural Resources Management (NRM)

- **Reforestation** – Staff completed six volunteer reforestation projects to plant 341 trees in six park locations to enhance stream buffers, protect water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. Additional plantings were coordinated plant 20 large-sized, native reforestation trees at one additional riparian site.
- **Deer Management** – Staff continued to oversee the County’s Deer Management Program. Staff published the “*Annual Deer Report and Recommendations for FY2005*” in August. This year’s park program includes two new managed hunts and will encompass a total of 11,500 acres in 13 parks. Staff continues to fine-tune these operations to make them more efficient and cost effective however, NRM is currently stretched to the breaking point without additional staff and funding.
- **Non-Native Invasive (NNI) Plants Management** – Staff worked with Friends of Sligo Creek to complete a \$4,000 grant project to treat NNIs in Sligo Creek Park. Staff coordinated additional work in several of our most important natural areas to incorporate NNI management on parkland in two non-park projects: the Long Branch Stream Restoration and widening of Viers Mill Road in Rock Creek Stream Valley Park. NRM

conducted five Weed Warrior workshops to train residents in NNI plant management. In the past five years, over 200 certified volunteers have logged over 13,000 hours removing NNIs from parkland.

- **National Pollution Discharge Elimination System** - Staff is conducting a review of the Pollution Prevention Plans program to ensure compliance with State and Federal regulations in a cost efficient manner.

Horticultural Services/Pope Farm Nursery

- **Pope Farm Nursery's Newsletter "Branching Out"** – The Summer edition of the in-house newsletter, "*Branching Out*" was published and distributed.
- **Hazard Tree Removals, Other Service Requests and Training** - The Arboriculture staff has been working to reduce the backlog of service requests that accumulated while staff focused on the cleanup and repair of trees damaged by Hurricane Isabel. This backup included requests for removal of hazard trees, requests for clearing of numerous log jams, and requests for support of Department projects.
- **Athletic Field Renovations and Tree Plantings** - The Landscape section accomplished three major athletic field renovations at Bullis Local Park, Stonegate Local Park and Aberdeen Local Park. Horticulture staff dug 417 trees at Pope Farm, planted 131 trees in parks county-wide and routinely watered 2,252 trees for establishment into the landscape. Staff de-staked, pruned and mulched trees in 40 parks.
- **Nursery Production** -The greenhouse staff produced 22,000 summer annuals for Brookside Gardens and parks countywide. In addition, 800 plants were grown for a slope-planting project at Wheaton Ice Rink, and 2,000 native perennials and grasses were grown for the Crystal Rock Trail Connector. A staff of five to six volunteers contributed 200 hours of service at the farm.

CENTRAL MAINTENANCE DIVISION

Alvaro J. Astorga, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Central Maintenance Division received an Award of Recognition from the Montgomery Historical Society for the restoration of the Woodlawn tenant house and for the restoration of the barn at the Agricultural History Farm Park.

After the first full year of having the services of the energy-recycling manager, an energy conservation and recycling program for FY05 has been developed. This is an important initiative given the unforeseen rise in the cost of fuel oil, gasoline and electricity. This increase in oil prices has significantly increased the cost of all construction materials.

During this reporting period, renovations, improvements or additions to existing facilities were made as follows:

- Olney Manor Recreational Park - constructed bulk storage sheds
- Saddlebrook Archives - lights replacement
- Parkside Headquarters - replacement of carpet and ceiling tile and painting

- Meadowbrook Stables – historic renovation of furrier shed
- Woodstock-Greenberg Park - entrance roads
- Rock Creek Hills – parking lot and path renovations
- Olney Manor Recreational Park – Parking lot paving repairs
- North Gate - basketball court repair and resurface
- Black Hill Regional Park – road way repair and resurface
- Little Bennett Maintenance Yard - pavement repairs
- Olney Mill Park - de-watering and drainage system
- Maydale Conservation Area - road repair
- English Manor Local Park - play area and equipment installation
- Kensington Heights - play equipment installation
- Rock Creek Unit 2 - play area and play equipment installation
- Woodlawn Special Park Tenant House - historical renovations
- Agriculture Farm Park - stabilization and painting of historic barn

PARK POLICE

Commander Nathaniel J. Barber, Chief

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

- **Realignment Plan Adds New Upcounty Beat Patrol** – Effective August 1st, 2004, the realignment plan was implemented, effectively partitioning the County into seven geographic patrol areas as opposed to the previous six. Each patrol area was determined by considering the volume of incidents reported, the practical aspects of navigating the County roadways, and the nature of the stream valleys and parks within that area. Some of the areas the Division will explore and review for staffing the new beat include Division reorganization, recruitment process, mandatory lapse salary and frozen positions, Capital Improvement Program Operating Budget Impact, etc.
- **New Officers/Volunteer Graduates** – In July, the Park Police welcomed two new officers after graduation from the Montgomery County Police Training Academy. The Academy is comprised of a six-month program designed to teach and prepare the candidates for their new roles as police officers. Both graduates will participate in a 14-week field-training program where they complete specific tasks while working side by side with an experienced officer. In addition, seven new volunteers recently graduated from the ten-week Park Police Volunteer Academy. The Academy covers everything from drug identification, traffic law and communications to gang activity, crime scene management and search and rescue techniques. This dedicated group will now receive additional on-the-job training from an experienced volunteer.
- **Gang Task Force** – A Park Police Detective is assigned to work full time with the Montgomery County Police Gang Task. While assisting in general operations, the Detective focuses much of his effort on gang activity both in and around Park and Planning facilities and grounds. In an effort to make the best use of information the Park Police established a system of internal gang liaison officers. Each patrol squad has designated an officer to act as a liaison between the squad and the task force. The

program is designed to facilitate the two-way flow of gang intelligence between the operations conducted by officers on the street and more directed efforts of the task force.

- **Division Officers to Undergo Special Event Response Team Training** – The Park Police have recently joined forces with the Montgomery County Police – Special Operations Section in their efforts to train a countywide Special Events Reaction Team (SERT). The goal of the unit is to provide the County with a ready reserve force of approximately 200 officers from across the full spectrum of County law enforcement. Selected officers from each agency in the County will train and practice crowd control and civil disturbance tactics to provide a cohesive and professional team of officers from throughout the County.
- **Macabbi Games** – In mid-August, the Jewish Community Center of Maryland hosted the Maccabi Games. The games drew 2,500 athletes from around the world to compete in the equivalent to the Junior Olympics. The SoccerPlex in Germantown was the venue selected to host soccer, basketball, volleyball and certain support activities. In addition to the Park Police, agencies involved in the security at the SoccerPlex facility included the Montgomery County Police and Fire Departments, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Joint Terrorism Task Force.
- **Community Outreach**
 - **National Night-Out** - Park Police were involved with activities in Olney, Rosemary Hills, North Four Corners, New Hampshire Estates, Indian Springs, the Flower Branch Apartments, Manchester Mavens and North Gate. The Division staffed the events with officers from a variety of units including canine, motorcycle, bicycle, horse mounted, patrol and command staff officers. Division staff also distributed information about our Park Watch Program.
 - **Second Annual Charity Basketball Tournament** - The Second Annual Keith Joseph Memorial Tournament, organized by Division officers, was held April 30 at the Gwendolyn Coffield Community Center. The event is held in memory of Officer Keith Joseph, who was extremely dedicated to working with youth. More than 80 children participated with from the East County, Good Hope, Coffield, Takoma Park, Wheaton, Plum Gar and Long Branch Community Centers.
- **Park Police Accreditation** – The Commission’s Park Police Divisions are preparing for re-accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). An accreditation team, representing all sections of the Division, was formed to promote participation and familiarization with the accreditation process.