



# The Anneslie Times

## Spring 2011

### The President's Corner



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[newsletter@anneslie.org](mailto:newsletter@anneslie.org)

Editor :

**Julie Kromkowski**

As I enter my third term as President of the Anneslie Community Association, I am excited about the year ahead. Our Board has been made richer by the addition of Kate Feiring, Rebecca Klein, and Pedro Sales, elected at the Annual Meeting in November. We've got several other volunteers to thank for some great ideas and efforts, and we've got a full slate of upcoming activities and recent developments that I'd like to share.

In late April, we'll organize the Spring Yard Sale, under the guidance of past President Molly Glassman. You may have noticed we've discontinued the Fall version, as it was not well-attended. But that just creates more pent-up demand for your old books, toasters, and kid's toys. Dumpster Day will follow the next weekend, for all those treasures that didn't sell (although books are always welcomed by Kate for the Book Drive.)

This summer the Diane Schatz Memorial Home & Garden Tour will take the year off, becoming a biennial event. Our hope is to give the home and garden "exhibitors" a chance to regroup and gear up for the next year. The tour will alternate with an exciting new summer event that we hope to organize starting this year. Details to follow, as they become available. The Crab Feast, followed by the Annual Picnic, will round out the season.

We received great response to this past year's

Annual Dues Notices. We encourage all residents to become an active part of the Community Association by paying your 2011 dues, notices coming soon. We also encourage residents to check out the Community website often, and to sign up for the "Anneslie Group" on Yahoo!, which can be accessed from the site. It's one of the best ways we share information and alerts quickly and easily with the entire community.

Thanks to neighbor Gina Young, who has organized a neighborhood Food Drive, modeled after a program in Stoneleigh. Gina offered to get this going as a way to help our less fortunate neighbors in the greater Towson area. It's this spirit of unselfishness that serves as great example.

Also, thanks to Beth Miller, who will work with a group of volunteers to reinstate the Gardens Committee. Look for ways to help beautify the York Road streetscape in the Spring.

Finally, the Stoneleigh United group, including neighbor Juliet Fischer, is seeking to keep pressure on Baltimore County and the BCPS to provide an acceptable solution to the extreme overcrowding conditions at

*(continued on p. 2)*

# President's Corner (cont. from p. 1)

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Stoneleigh Elementary School. Join the group at [www.stoneleigh-united@googlegroups.com](mailto:www.stoneleigh-united@googlegroups.com) to keep informed and see how you can help. The reputation of our community schools is a major reason Anneslie is such a popular and in-demand neighborhood. The quality and condition of the school is important to all of our property values, whether you have children at Stoneleigh or not.

Please keep up the good work, keep communication open, let us know how we can help you, and how you can help us. Thanks!

## **Parking Concerns Near the Kingdom Worship Center**

A couple of months ago, I received a call from Officer Kurt Parker of the BCPD Towson Precinct, noting that a number of tickets were being written to vehicles parked at the western end of Windwood Rd. Most of the vehicles were visitors to the Kingdom Worship Center (KWC). Officer Parker suggested I meet with him and representatives from the church to discuss ongoing issues with parking along Windwood Rd. On February 23 we met with Pastor Greg Dennis, who heads up community relations issues with the KWC. We had a productive meeting at the Precinct, discussing concerns with cars blocking driveways, cars taking up spaces, and general communication issues.

The KWC is a commercial use, permitted as a Special Exemption under County zoning codes, and must follow strict guidelines regarding parking, traffic management, noise, etc. so as not to impose a burden upon the neighborhood. The streets of Anneslie are PUBLIC roads and anyone may park on them at any time. That being said, there are criteria that must be adhered to by all of us. The most obvious is that vehicles are not permitted to physically block a driveway, nor to park within five feet of the edge of the driveway apron in either direction, to allow for safe ingress and egress. Pastor Greg was very sensitive to this

issue and said they would step up efforts within their congregation to spread the word about this law and how it impacts Anneslie residents.

We also discussed parking in general, especially on busy days at KWC and holidays. Pastor Greg noted they have a reciprocal parking agreement with the Drumcastle Center. KWC visitors and congregants use the Drumcastle lot for overflow on weekends, and Drumcastle visitors may use the church's lot behind the Mobil station on weekdays. On weekends, KWC members direct drivers to the Drumcastle lot when their own two lots are full. However, during weekday church events, such as funerals or seminars, that overflow parking is not available. Infrequent visitors to the church may not be aware of the parking policies. We are asked to be understanding if and when this occurs.

We closed the meeting with promises of more open communication between the community and the KWC. The KWC will try to alert us of anticipated "high traffic events", such as their New Year's Eve Service. We can post this information on [www.Anneslie.org](http://www.Anneslie.org) and on the Listserve. Officer Parker strongly encouraged residents who have concerns with parked vehicles to FIRST contact the KWC, and THEN the BCPD if the issue is not addressed. Pastor Dennis can be reached at 410.377.3500 ext 103. If he is unavailable, explain your concerns to his assistant or leave a detailed message.

We are fortunate to live in such a diverse community, where retail, religious, academic, and entertainment opportunities exist within walking distance of our historic homes. With that, however, comes the need to be accepting of some compromise, and the need to work together as a community.

**Scott A McGovern, AIA**  
**President, Anneslie Community Association**

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## Looking for Old Photos/About the Times

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Do you have old photos of life in Anneslie? If you don't mind lending them to us, we can scan the photos and publish them in a future issue of the Times and/or on the webpage. We are looking for anything more than 25 years old. If you have old photos to share, contact a Board Member or the Julie Kromkowski, Editor ([newsletter@anneslie.org](mailto:newsletter@anneslie.org)).

Please patronize the businesses that advertise in this newsletter if you can. They help support our community!

**Phil Maher**  
FATA Inc.

(410) 578-3600 Work  
[pmaher@fataonline.com](mailto:pmaher@fataonline.com)

FATA, Inc.  
3701 Malden Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21211  
[www.fataonline.com](http://www.fataonline.com)

To place an ad,  
contact FATA at:

# Spring Events News

## Calling All Anneslie Green Thumbs!

The Anneslie Community Association Gardening Committee is blooming again and we are looking for volunteers! Co-chaired this year by Beth Miller and Kate Feiring, the Gardening Committee's purpose is to beautify the landscaping along the stretch of York between Regester and Murdock. Committee members will work together throughout the year to maintain the tree beds and planters by weeding, mulching, watering and planting perennials, annuals, and bulbs.

Whether you are a master gardener or have no experience, we welcome and encourage you to participate! To sign up or for more information, please contact Kate Feiring ([kate.feiring@yahoo.com](mailto:kate.feiring@yahoo.com), ph. 410-598-2005) or Beth Miller ([bethbonemiller@gmail.com](mailto:bethbonemiller@gmail.com), ph. 410-377-4369).

The schedule of gardening activities is still being finalized; however, our first initiative will take place in mid to late March as we spend an afternoon weeding and preparing the areas for planting. Gardening Days and other committee meeting dates will be posted on the Anneslie Community Calendar on [www.anneslie.org](http://www.anneslie.org) and the Anneslie ListServe.



So, come join the fun, get your hands dirty, and help keep Anneslie a beautiful place to live!

## April is Book Drive Month!



Over the last two years, residents of Anneslie have graciously donated over 2,000 books to support the Baltimore Reads Book Bank. April is coming and so is our 3rd annual book drive for the 2011 Books for Kids Day event held on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>. Throughout April we will again collect new and gently-used books. Drop them in the collection box on the porch at 505 Murdock, or contact Mark Feiring at (410) 598-1771 [bookbank@baltimorereads.org](mailto:bookbank@baltimorereads.org) if you would like someone to pick up books from your house.

**NEW THIS YEAR!** We can give you a tax-deductible receipt for your donation. When you drop off books, complete the participant sheet with your name, address, and number of books donated and we will send you a receipt.

Books we like— new/gently used children's fiction and non-fiction (all ages), and new/gently used adult fiction and non-fiction. The Book Bank is in critical need of children's picture books. We do not accept books that are torn, moldy or written in, or magazines, manuals, or encyclopedias.

Baltimore Reads is a non-profit organization in its 22<sup>nd</sup> year and through its Book Bank has distributed over 1.4 million books to schools and community organizations throughout the Baltimore region in an effort to promote literacy and education for our children. If you are interested in volunteering at the Book Bank or at the Annual Baltimore Reads Books for Kids Day on Saturday, May 7, contact Mark Feiring at (410) 598-1771 or [bookbank@baltimorereads.org](mailto:bookbank@baltimorereads.org). For more information, visit [www.booksforkidsday.org](http://www.booksforkidsday.org).

## Historic Designation On Track to Approval

The Anneslie Community Association has submitted the paperwork to obtain the historic designation for the neighborhood. The Maryland Historical Trust has accepted our application, and it will be presented to the State Review Board in May. If our application is approved, we will be recognized as a historic neighborhood through the National Park Service. That will allow us to be eligible for historic tax credits to renovations done to our homes and we will be able to proudly display our new status with signs throughout the community. As soon as we get word that we have been approved, we will publish some of the guidelines for receiving tax credits on home improvements. The Board members are very optimistic that we will be accepted, and it will be published on the website as soon as we get the news.

- Mark Lewandowski

## Anneslie Food Drive Helps Neighbors

Despite the wanna be blizzard conditions, Anneslie neighbors came through in a big way for the first monthly food drive! We collected over 40 bags of groceries. The entire trunk, top to bottom, with the third row seats down was filled in my Pilot (that's a big trunk)! Go Anneslie! Way to show your support!

Thank you to everyone who participated! The food drive takes place the last weekend of every month from Thursday through Monday. You can drop unopened non-perishable food at the following houses: 607 Overbrook; 627 Anneslie; 625 Dunkirk; 708 Murdock.

If you are interested in helping in any way, please email me at [fooddrive@anneslie.org](mailto:fooddrive@anneslie.org).

- Gina Young



<b>PRESIDENT</b>	Scott McGovern, president@anneslie.org, (410) 377-7948
<b>VICE PRESIDENT</b>	Wayne Schmidt, vicepresident@anneslie.org, (410) 372-0310
<b>SECRETARY</b>	Kris Strong, secretary@anneslie.org, (410) 377-6047
<b>TREASURER</b>	Rick Kiegel, treasurer@anneslie.org, (410) 372-0258

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Pedro Sales	(410) 609-4177	psales@anneslie.org
Jim Sheridan	(410) 377-3066	jsheridan@anneslie.org
Elena Varipatis-Baker	(410) 377-2449	evaribak@anneslie.org
Webmaster - Bob Swauger	(410) 377-7464	webmaster@anneslie.org
Anneslie Times-Julie Kromkowski	(410) 377-4254	newsletter@anneslie.org

## BLOCK CAPTAINS

### Anneslie Road

533 Helen Kennedy	(410) 377-0608
623 Claudine Jones	(410) 377-9422
700 Maria Brown	(410) 377-7875

### Overbrook Road

501 Kelly Shay/Jim Pannebecker	(410) 377-8424
634 Kathleen/Don Anuzis	(410) 377-9527
730 Michele/Christopher Howe	(410) 296-5388

### Dunkirk Road

501 Jean/Michael Smith	(410) 372-0519
632 Tom Aberle	(410) 377-9268
723 Gail Vernick	(410) 377-2541

### Register Avenue

531 Ellen/Jim Sheridan	410) 377-3066
611 Sue McGovern	(410) 377-7948
713 Wendy Faraone	(410) 377-0296

### Murdock Road

526 Chris/Mark Hartstein	(410) 372-0528
627 Linda Vigilante	(410) 377-9795
707 Jen Hudak	(410) 868-6100

### Windwood Road

518 Mary Carol/Bob Venanzi	(410) 377-4918
608 Stephanie Dieter	(410) 377-5168

# 2010 Holiday Decorating Contest Winners

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Commercial – 512 Anneslie (Glen and Cathy Wishchhusen)

Traditional – 625 Overbrook (Mark and Melanie Pyne)

Illuminated – 531 Overbrook (Gerald and Gina Brown)

Theme – 516 Dunkirk (Todd and Jennifer Langenberg)

Most Creative—621 Overbrook (Bob and Susan Nash)



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## Welcome Spring! Time to Get out The Garden Tools!

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Neighbors, it's almost time to walk around the yard and see what's out there after the snow and ice have melted. Many of us enjoy the "sweet" smell of mulch, arriving by truck, by Scouts, or hauled from the store in the trunk of the car. Our four-legged friends can't wait to get out and run. And the kids are everywhere—in strollers, on bikes and scooters and on foot. Let's make our sidewalks and streets as everybody-friendly as possible.

Before you start your spring projects, please look for branches that overhang the street, dead leaves that may pose a slipping hazard on the sidewalk, recycling bins blown into the yard from who knows where, and anything else that went unnoticed over the winter. If you need a deadline, perhaps the Yard Sale (April 30) would be a good one. Some say Anneslie is at its best in the spring, so let's show off our beautiful neighborhood!

# Yard Sale/Dumpster Day — Spring Cleaning x Two!

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## Yard Sale set for April 30

As you're boxing up those winter clothes and making room for spring things, don't forget to set aside a pile for the annual Anneslie Yard Sale. It will be Saturday, April 30, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Your cast-off clothes, shoes, jewelry, books, and children's toys and games can be another family's treasure.

Early birds start cruising the neighborhood at 8:30 a.m. or earlier, and they're usually on the prowl for tools, costume jewelry, and other collectibles. Other popular items include children's furniture, accessories, and small appliances. It's a good idea to run an extension cord out to the front yard to demonstrate that appliances are in good working order.

Other helpful hints: label items with prices, or color-code with round "stickies" so that shoppers don't have to ask about cost. Just list the prices on a poster: for example, red = \$.10, blue = \$.25, green = \$1, etc. Clean items sell faster, and if you display them on tables or blankets, it's easier for shoppers to browse. Start saving change and single dollar bills now. On the day of the sale, keep the money in your pocket or a "fanny pack" so it's secure. Also, keep your doors locked. Several younger residents have set up successful stands selling lemonade, coffee, or cookies in the past.

The rain date will be May 1. Use common sense to decide whether the weather is going to push the sale to Sunday. If it's just sprinkling and you see neighbors setting up their tables, you can figure that the sale will take place on Saturday. If it's a morning-long down-pour, we'll all wait until Sunday. For more information on the yard sale, contact Molly Glassman at 410-377-5834.

- Molly Glassman



## Dumpster Day set for May 7

From 8:00 am – 12:00 pm the dumpsters will be available for your trash disposal. They will be placed on Edgewood between Anneslie and Murdock. Please enter the area from Anneslie Road and follow the instructions of the volunteers assisting with traffic control and unloading. Please do not arrive early or attempt to dump items later in the day. The times will be strictly enforced to ensure your safety as the dumpsters are brought in and removed, as well as to limit any inconvenience to nearby neighbors. Volunteers will be standing by to collect unpaid Community Association dues. If you are available to volunteer on the day of the event, please contact Wendy Mundis at 410-377-0797.

Please keep in mind the following restrictions.

The following items may not be put into the dumpsters: explosives or flammable materials; acids, pesticides, and chemicals; medical/radioactive waste; liquids or liquid waste; drums or tanks; animal carcasses; large stumps; pieces of wood greater than 8" in diameter or 6' in length; tires; antifreeze; asbestos shingles or other asbestos materials; batteries; oil, paint, and household hazardous chemicals.

Baltimore County law prohibits the disposal of the following household electronics mixed with trash in the community clean-up containers: computer equipment (CPUs, monitors, keyboards, printers, laptops, scanners, cables and cord); televisions, VCRs, and DVD players; telephones including cell phones and answering machines; stereos; fax machines; and video display devices. Residents can take their recyclable electronics to any of the county's three drop-off centers during regular hours all year round.

Separate dumpsters will be available for metal items, although the following items are not permitted in those dumpsters: refrigerators, air conditioners, freezers and appliances.

Finally, to assist the county in recycling, significant quantities of the following items should be taken to any of the county's three drop-off centers for recycling: brush/yard waste; asphalt/black top; containers of glass, plastic, tin cans, and aluminum; concrete and rock; and paper/cardboard.

- Wendy Mundis

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# Would you like to make a difference in our community?

If you would like to volunteer, please send an email message to [contactCOP@verizon.net](mailto:contactCOP@verizon.net).

Our Citizens On Patrol coordinator will contact you and add you to the schedule.



## VOLUNTEER FOR CITIZENS ON PATROL!

This is a great way to get involved with a worthwhile community initiative having a **very minimal time commitment.**

Volunteers are asked to participate in one 1.5 hour shift approximately every 7 weeks.

These shifts take place on Friday and Saturday nights.

There is an early shift (9:30 PM—11 PM) and a late shift (11 PM—12:30 AM).

**Request the shift you prefer.**

If you prefer a daytime, weekday shift, let us know.

Volunteer with your spouse or another neighbor/friend! What a nice way to help the community and spend some time together!





# Anneslie Community Association Street Tree Program

Please submit by March 14, 2011 for Spring Planting



### Why plant street trees?

Trees create healthier and more attractive neighborhoods. Street trees increase property values, cool our homes, reduce street noise, clean the air, and filter and absorb rain water runoff. All of these benefits contribute to the overall health of Herring Run and the Chesapeake Bay.

### What is a street tree?

Street trees typically grow in the area between your sidewalk and the street curb within the County's right of way. The trees are free by way of a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant given to the Blue Water Baltimore (formerly Herring Run Watershed Association.) Tree planting can be performed by the homeowner or by BWB for a fee of \$50. Mulch and slow release watering bags will be provided by BWB at the time of planting.

### Minimum requirements to request a street tree:

1. Own the house at the requested location and have a 3' or wider planting area or 4' by 10'. The planting area is between the curb and sidewalk, typically.
2. Agree to water the tree weekly for its first two years between May and October.
3. Give BWB and ACA permission to plant the tree by completing this form.
4. Volunteer on the day of the planting or pay BWB to plant your tree (planting mid-April).

## ----- YES! I WANT A STREET TREE PLANTED AT MY HOUSE!

I give BWB and the ACA permission to plant a tree in the right-of-way along my house. I agree to water the street tree weekly. I understand that some locations may not be suitable for trees due to utilities, signs, or width of sidewalk, and that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources shall make final determinations of suitable locations and species. The trees, once planted, will be the property of Baltimore County. *By signing or emailing this form I request a tree to be planted at my house and in an existing planting location and agree to the requirements above to ensure its survival.*

Name (Printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (not necessary if emailing): \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address and Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h or c) \_\_\_\_\_ (w) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I will plant my own tree
- I will pay HRWA \$50 to plant my tree payment due with application
- I am interested in discounted yard trees/native nursery sales

**Please submit this form by March 14, 2011 for Spring Planting**

Your Street Tree will be chosen based on the conditions at your home and selected from the state approved list for roadside trees. Contact Darin Crew at 410-254-1577  
dcrew@bluewaterbaltimore.org

Drop off, mail or e-mail this form with payment as applicable to:  
Beth Miller  
523 Murdock Road  
Baltimore, Md 21212  
410-377-4369  
[bethbonemiller@gmail.com](mailto:bethbonemiller@gmail.com)

checks for planting should be made out to BWB



# Rain Garden Open House & Rain Barrel Workshop

## Sunday, May 15, 2011

Blue Water Baltimore is hosting a green event in your neighborhood. Join us to learn more about reducing polluted runoff, protecting our streams, and taking action on your own property.

### Overlook Park & Residential Rain Garden Open House 2:00-3:30 PM

1300 Overbrook Road, 21239  
(Overlook Park Rain Garden)

6313 Weidner Ave, 21212  
(Residential Rain Garden)

Curious to know more about the new rain garden at Overlook Park? Come by and talk with BWB staff about how the garden was designed and installed, and why it is good for the Herring Run.

Wondering what a rain garden on your property might look like? Visit a residential rain garden in Lake Walker where BWB staff and the property owner will be available to answer questions and explain the many benefits of conservation landscaping.

The Rain Garden Open House is free; just come on out.

### Rain Barrel Workshop 3:00PM-4:00PM and 4:00PM-5:00 PM

6301 Sherwood Road, 21239  
(Idlewyde Community Hall  
Rain Barrel Workshop)

After the rain garden open house, come build your own rain barrel!

Rain Barrel Workshop costs \$65. Call Stuart Campbell at 410-254-1577 ext. 106 to register. Payment by credit card, check, or cash. Checks should be made out to Blue Water Baltimore.

**\*\*Registration for rain barrel workshop must be completed by May 6th. \*\***

*Ask us if you qualify for the \$25 discount.*

*Need help installing your barrel? Check with us to see if you qualify for free installation.*

Open house and workshop  
will be held rain or shine.

Blue Water Baltimore

3545 Belair Rd  
Baltimore, MD 21213

Phone: 410-254-1577  
Fax: 443-872-8574

<http://bluewaterbaltimore.org/>



*Rain garden photo from cmmitsburg.net*

For more info call Dana Fuzey  
at 410-254-1577 ext. 106.



This activity is made possible by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

TO BENEFIT THE ASSISTANCE  
CENTER OF TOWSON CHURCHES

# ANNESLIE MONTHLY FOOD DRIVE

## DROP OFF SITES:

607 OVERBROOK RD

627 ANNESLIE RD

625 DUNKIRK RD

708 MURDOCK RD

Each site will be labeled with  
a Monthly Food Drive sign  
on the front lawn.

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Please contact  
Gina Young with  
any questions  
about the food  
drive.

[perroneyoung@gmail.com](mailto:perroneyoung@gmail.com)

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Anneslie neighbors are joining together to help the materially poor of our community by participating in a monthly food drive. Donated food items will be distributed through the Assistance Center of Towson Churches ([www.actconline.info](http://www.actconline.info)). The ACTC began in 1985, and today, 48 churches participate in the outreach effort. The ACTC serves people in 18 zip codes throughout Baltimore County and City.

If you would like to participate, simply drop off non-perishable food items to any one of the drop off sites listed to the left during the **LAST WEEKEND OF THE MONTH, Thursday through Monday**. Items may be left in the container found on the front porch of the drop off site. Thank you in advance for selflessly serving those in need.



*Examples of items needed: baby food, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, canned goods such as soup, vegetables, fruit, tuna, and pork and beans, pasta noodles and sauce, macaroni & cheese, toiletries such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, lotion, razors, etc.*

Everyone can be great because anyone can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't even have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace.

A soul generated by love.  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

## ATTENTION DRIVERS!

# New Maryland traffic ticket process begins January 1, 2011



On January 1, 2011, a new law goes into effect, and drivers who get a payable traffic ticket in Maryland will no longer be given an automatic trial date to appear in court. Here's how the new Maryland traffic ticket process works: Drivers have three choices when they get a payable traffic ticket, and they must comply within 30 days or risk having their driver's license suspended by the Motor Vehicle Administration.

The three choices:

1. Pay the traffic ticket fine.
2. Ask for a waiver hearing instead of a trial. Waiver hearings are for drivers who don't dispute the ticket, but want to have a judge hear an explanation before being sentenced.
3. Ask for a court date for a trial.

### Why did the traffic ticket process change?

In 2010, the Maryland General Assembly passed a new law that says that citizens who get a traffic ticket for an offense that does not require incarceration/jail time must ask for a trial if they want one. Law enforcement agencies asked for the new law because they think it will save money and use police officers' time more efficiently by reducing the number of hours they spend in court for traffic violations.

### What is different about the new traffic ticket process?

Before January 1, 2011, Maryland law required that a person getting a payable traffic ticket for an offense that does not require incarceration/jail time automatically receive a court trial date. Now drivers must ask for a trial if they want to dispute a payable traffic ticket.

### What kinds of traffic violations are we talking about?

Payable traffic violations. You have a payable traffic violation when the officer checks "This is a payable citation" on the traffic ticket. All payable traffic violations for which no incarceration/jail time is required are covered under the new law. Examples include speeding, failure to obey a traffic signal or sign, or failure to stop for a school bus.

### What is another type of traffic violation?

The other type is a "Must Appear" traffic violation. These include violations such as driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or driving on a suspended license. These violations are not considered as payable.



# Spring Gutter Cleaning—Helpful Hints

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## Gutter Cleaning or Gutter Guards?



Many homeowners are looking for a miracle product that will free them from ever having to clean their gutters again. Some companies are actually claiming they have this miracle product! There are some good gutter cover designs; however, every gutter guard system we have tested (and we have tested a lot of them!) has pluses and minuses.

You may have seen a demonstration at a local home show or in the mall. They look great... the water rolls around the edge of the gutter cover and into the gutter; but do they work in the real world? To some degree yes, but none of them are perfect and none of them will prevent you from ever having to clean your gutters again!

There are over 70 gutter protection products in the U.S. and over 150 companies selling these systems. Every company says that they are the best and that you will never have to clean your gutters again.... if a representative from any gutter guard company in the world makes such a claim, RUN FAST! There is no such thing as a maintenance free gutter guard!!!!

The most popular gutter guard systems today are:

- **Open Cell Polyurethane Insert** - this is specially shaped and cut to fit snugly into your gutter. Most manufacturers warranty the product to last 25 years.
- **Micro Mesh Gutter Guards** - this design combines an aluminum body and structural membrane with an integral medical grade stainless steel mesh to filter out debris.
- **Metal Gutter Cover** - this design relies on the principle that water clings to the surface on which it travels. The idea is that the 'surface tension' causes the water to cling to the gutter cover's rounded 'nose'. The water follows the curve of the nose and is deposited in the gutter below. The leaves and debris, on the other hand, are not supposed to follow the curve. They should remain on the flat surface and blow harmlessly to the ground once they dry out.



Most of the products do a good job of preventing full sized leaves from entering your gutters. That is a simple task. However, many of the gutter cover products fail to stop tiny tree flower buds, seed pods and evergreen needles from entering or clogging the gutters. And none of them are maintenance free... every gutter guard system will require cleaning regardless of their claims!!!

## Gutter Cleaning may be a cheaper and better solution...

Gutter guards are not cheap! Depending on the type of gutter guard they run anywhere from \$8 to \$20 per lineal foot installed. An average house may have 100 feet of gutter; some houses have even more. Most homes' gutter systems can be cleaned by a professional in an hour or so... you can do the math!

Gutter cleaning, as you well know, is not just a Fall activity. Many trees in the Baltimore area shed debris throughout the seasons. Over time, clogged gutters can do serious damage to a home. Usually, fascia, eaves, and foundation areas suffer first. Paint peels and insects invade. In some cases, rainwater can enter an exterior wall through eaves. Prolonged exposure to a clogged gutter system will also render rafter end and roof sheathing vulnerable to rot. Repairs become expensive. It is not uncommon for some homes to need cleaning four times a year. **Safety First:** Gutter cleaning is a very dangerous job. Hire a professional.

*Jeffrey P. Fick*

*Fick Bros Roofing & Exterior Remodeling Co.*  
[www.fickbros.com](http://www.fickbros.com)