

West Lanham Hills Citizen

AUGUST 2025

No WLHCA Meeting in August

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 4 at 7pm
Park Building (7700 Decatur Road)

Highlights in this Issue:

- **Important Purple Line Updates:** Road closures impact our neighborhood!
- **History of the Hills:** This month's feature—1950s!
- **Summer Events:** Don't miss these great local happenings, many right here in our neighborhood!

Back to School Bash: August 22 (4–8PM)

Join us for a fun-filled community event for all

Whether you're grabbing school supplies, bringing something to share, or just looking for a good time, this **event is for YOU**. We've got free food, games, and plenty of chances to laugh, connect, and celebrate with neighbors of all ages. Let's kick off the season with good vibes and great company!

We need your help!

- Drop off donated school uniforms at 7776 Emerson until August 15.
- Lend a tent, table, or chair for use at this event - contact denniam17@gmail.com

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **School supply pick-up** for those who completed the request form.
- **Free food** (5-7 PM), snacks, and refreshments.
- **Face painting** and **yard games**.
- **Plant swap** - bring seeds, seedlings, or cuttings to exchange.
- **Donated school uniforms** available first-come first-served.

Tues, Aug 12

Game Night

Park Building
7–8:30 PM

Games & Snacks Provided

Join us for an evening of games, laughter, and community fun! We'll be celebrating both July and August birthdays with sweet treats and birthday cheer. Play classic board games, lawn games, card games, or get creative with Legos. It's a great way to connect with neighbors of all ages and make lasting memories.

All are welcome—see you there!

Sat, Aug 23

"Learn to Grow A Garden" Tutorial

4–5 PM

Hosted by the WLH Garden Committee

Have you always wanted beautiful cut flowers or to grow your own food? Join us for a tutorial on how to start your own garden. During this tutorial you'll learn how to grow plants from seed, where to start your garden, and how to maintain the garden over time.

RSVP by emailing
wlhca.gardening@gmail.com
to save your spot and start growing with confidence!

Fri, Aug 29

Fifth Friday Fun Run Returns!

6:00 PM Park Building

All fitness levels and ages welcome!

Back by popular demand! The Fun & Games Committee invites you to our second neighborhood Fun Run/Walk — a casual, social way to get outside and connect. Whether you run, jog, or walk, all are welcome to join a short 1-mile loop at their own pace.

Meet at 6:00 PM at the park building. We'll start shortly after, then cool down and mingle afterward.

Additional Information Available at:

Website: www.westlanhamhills.com | **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/westlanhamhillsmd
Email: westlanhamnews@gmail.com

Local events & reminders

Purple Line Testing Begins – on or about July 28, nightly 9 PM – 5 AM

Light rail vehicle (LRV) testing will take place nightly from 9:00 PM to 5:00 AM along Veterans Parkway to Ellin Road in New Carrollton. Expect brief traffic delays at flagged intersections.

IMPORTANT: Emerson Place at Ellin Rd will be CLOSED NIGHTLY throughout the testing period. Please plan ahead and use alternate routes. Emergency access will remain available. Pedestrians may experience short delays while trains pass. Email: outreach@purplelinemd.com

New Carrollton National Night Out – Tues Aug 5, 5–8 PM

Join New Carrollton neighbors and local law enforcement for a fun, family-friendly evening of games, music, safety demos, and community connection! **Beckett Field (8511 Legation Road)**

Bingo-fest hosted by PG Parks & Rec – Fri Aug 8, 10 AM – 2 PM

Join your neighbors for a fun day of BINGO, prizes, and lunch—all while supporting local students with school supplies. **Free** with a Parks Direct Senior ID + school supply donation. Register at pgparksdirect.com | Key word search: Bingo

Want to carpool or ride with others from the neighborhood? Email westlanhamnews@gmail.com.

Park Police Community Day – Wed Aug 13, 5–8 PM

Hosted by The Maryland-National Capital Park Police. Enjoy food, games, entertainment and interact with Law Enforcement Agencies from across the region! **Watkins Regional Park**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By: Michael Chodos, WLHCA President

I hope everyone is having a safe, fun, and relaxing summer! It's been such a joy to see our neighborhood come alive these past few months—from the excitement of Tuesday Game Nights to the great turnout for Movie Night in the park and the energy at our first Friday Fun Run/Walk. These events have truly shown the **strength of our community**, and I'm so grateful to everyone who joined in and helped bring them to life.

Next up is our **Back to School Bash on August 22**—come out for an afternoon of food, supplies, games, and good neighborly fun!

We'll resume our regular WLHCA meetings in **September**, and I'm looking forward to keeping the momentum going. Until then, enjoy these final weeks of summer!

Back-to-School Safety Reminders

School Zones: Slow down and watch for students—speed limits are enforced.

Buses: Never pass a stopped school bus with flashing red lights.

Save the Date: WLH Flower & Vegetable Garden Competition (Sept 20, 2–4 PM)

Enter the first-ever West Lanham Hills Garden Competition! Got blooms or veggies growing? Show off your garden in one or both categories: **Flower** or **Vegetable**. Judged on creativity, color, yield, pollinators, and style.

Rain Date: Sept 21. Sign up by emailing wlhca.gardening@gmail.com. More details coming soon!

Notice of Passing: William N. Flippo III, a resident of Emerson Road in West Lanham Hills since 1999, passed away suddenly on July 22, 2025. He is survived by three daughters, three sons, and eight grandchildren. One son preceded him in death. If you would like to reach out to the family to offer condolences or assistance, please contact Christina Flippo 301-523-6177, Felicia Flippo 240-825-8662 or Lori Flippo 240-603-0981.

History of the Hills: A Decade of Building a Community (1950s)

By: Kay Rager and Alicia Denning

The 1950s were a defining time for West Lanham Hills—a decade when neighbors rolled up their sleeves and built the foundation of the community we know today.

It all began with a fight for our children's education. In 1950, the county Board of Education told our residents there would be no neighborhood school—just expansions elsewhere. But the people here wouldn't take no for an answer. They formed committees, wrote letters, and packed public hearings until finally, in January 1951, the Board approved a ten-room school for West Lanham Hills. Bond sales, planning meetings, and construction followed, culminating in a proud moment on April 22, 1954, when the school was officially dedicated. Soon after, the first PTA meeting brought parents together to support it.



Image: The former neighborhood school, West Lanham Hills Elementary.

But education wasn't the only concern. Safety was on everyone's mind. Residents lobbied the state to reduce the speed limit on Route 50 where it bordered our neighborhood. They started asking in 1953 for a traffic light at the dangerous intersection of Route 450 and Garrison Road—a request that would be repeated for years without success. Meanwhile, potholes and rough streets prompted neighbors to form repair committees, buy patching materials, and get the job done themselves.

Health and environment also drew action. In 1953, the association raised money to hire a bulldozer to fill in the area at the intersection of Garrison Road and West Lanham Drive which had become, in effect, a mosquito pond. Street signs were replaced, and by 1957 a new neighborhood welcome sign was in place, a visible symbol of local pride.

Of course, these were Cold War years, and civil defense was part of life. Residents discussed using the firehouse roof for aircraft spotting and organizing the community's emergency equipment. Blood type cards were proposed in case of an attack, and there was even talk of building bombproof shelters. At school, children practiced duck-and-cover drills—a chilling reminder of global tensions even in our small corner of Maryland.

Beyond the serious work, there was community spirit. A recreation council was formed to give kids safe places to play. A local radio station offered to broadcast our civic announcements for free. The association even took careful inventory of its gear: typewriters, a public address system, bingo cage, holiday tree lights—everything needed to keep meetings running and events lively.

And through it all, the people of West Lanham Hills stayed vigilant about the neighborhood's character. When an attempt was made in 1958 to rezone part of Garrison Road for commercial use, the association successfully fought to keep it residential, preserving the quiet streets for generations to come. While this may be "history" some things never seem to change.

The 1950s weren't just about building roads or schools. They were about building a community—through grit, cooperation, and a shared belief that West Lanham Hills was worth fighting for.