

## April Newsletter - From P.A.C.K. Chair

A message from the President.  
February/March 2017 - Newsletter



Dear Park Users,

Spring has appeared and disappeared from February through March with some very warm weeks and some very cold ones. I have a big pile of coats in various weights for whatever the day may bring. Back in February we had a week of very warm weather that fooled our new grass and then it snowed. Hopefully, it didn't harm what was beginning to come up in the south end.

On to business!

Most importantly, the members of **the board would like to ask you to attend our general meeting on April 19th, 7pm at the Martha Washington Library** near Westgrove OLDA across from Belle View Elementary School. The library is closed at the hour but we have permission to use the general meeting room at the front of the library. Signs will point the way to the entrance. We have switched general meeting venues to assess the ability to bring more people to our meetings.

I am pleased to announce that Mr. Mike Tomai, an excellent dog trainer currently teaching other dog trainers at Petco and also providing individual training, will be giving a presentation on giving us a better understanding of dog interaction in the dog park setting. Mike will be discussing dog aggression, how to read "dog language" and how to intervene or not when two dogs are fighting.

We have had several instances of fights recently and I think that Mike's presentation will go a long way in understanding this critical issue and how we can all head off any problems before they escalate and dogs and/or people are hurt. Mike will allow time to answer questions from the audience and I am very pleased that he has agreed to speak.

**Please consider attending this meeting as your board needs your input.** Specific issues upcoming are reporting on progress on projects for 2017, discussing issues that arise from time to time and reports on our fiscal status and ongoing maintenance and improvement activities. Our park users are the primary source of new ideas and suggestions to improve the park and the board values your opinions and your time.

Our contractor aerated, put down a compost/mulch mixture and seeded the south area at the end of February. The grass is coming in but slowly. We are still on track to open up the south end in late spring depending on the progress of the grass. Opening this area too soon could cause the new grass to be trampled before it can handle the traffic. Keep watching for updates as we get close to the end of the month.

When we open the south end we will be closing the north end to improve the turf in that area. Last year's soil and seeding helped the north end considerably but so did the relatively mild winter. We are still having a drainage problem just outside the fence near the water faucet and we are continuing to evaluate our options considering our budget limitations for a full-scale drainage project. We are hoping to go forward with a rain garden just outside the fence to help the drainage.

During February and March, members of the board became official "dog park monitors", volunteer positions that provide benefits to the park board and Fairfax County. Our primary functions are to remind users of the park about the park rules and provide help for new users in how to effectively and safely use the park. We cannot, and should not, enforce the rules but we can remind our users of those rules when it becomes apparent that a rule may be broken even if unintentionally. As Chair my two main concerns about enforcement concerns the need to pick up after our dogs and to tactfully point out that children under 9 are not permitted in the park.

We also supported the "Ides of Bark" event at Grist Mill park recently. Fairfax County Park Authority sponsors this event every year and we were pleased to support it by volunteering to help out. This year three board members monitored the actual dog park area in our new roles as dog park monitors. The event was very successful and I had an opportunity to discuss our issues with Supervisor Dan Storck and FCPA board member Mr. Linwood Gorham. I continue to believe that supporting other dog parks is good for our own interests and hope that all of you agree with that idea.

Thanks again for your participation,

Barry Spangler

Chair - Westgrove P.A.C.K.

[www.westgrovepack.org](http://www.westgrovepack.org/) (<http://www.westgrovepack.org/>)

Click here to make a tax deductible donation (<http://www.westgrovepack.org/donate-now.html>)