



# The REGENCY RECORD

Newsletter of the  
Regency Estates  
Civic Association

Spring 2024



## President's Message

Dear all -

I hope you and your families are well. With sunnier days and warmer weather upon us, spring is clearly in full swing. And with these favorable conditions comes the opening of a new housing market season.

While that might mean a great opportunity for some residents to sell their homes, most of us have planned to stick around for the long haul, and many have opted to appeal our tax assessments to reduce property tax bills. Building upon the in-person and virtual tax assessment meetings we held this past winter, we're pleased to share some additional advice for those with upcoming tax assessment hearings that may help you save your hard-earned money. Be sure to read "Top Tax Assessment Points for Your Appeal" by RECA treasurer Jerry Garson in this issue to help build a better case for your hearing.

I'm also proud to highlight that RECA is now approved to offer service learning opportunities to Montgomery Public School students. Kudos to board member Al Belsky for leading RECA's application efforts during the many months of reviews, approvals and meetings. We look forward to mentoring the next generation of leaders in our community!

Have a wonderful and safe spring,

Rick  
President

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## In Our Neighborhood

### Local coach wins prestigious IAC championship

by David King, Board Member



*RECA resident and Bullis Bulldogs varsity coach Bruce Kelley*

RECA resident Bruce Kelley, varsity coach for the Bullis Bulldogs, led the Bulldogs to the Interstate Athletic Conference (IAC) Championship. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, Bullis took on local rival Georgetown Prep in the IAC championship game at Bullis' home gymnasium.

In an exciting back and forth game, the Bulldogs eventually took control and won the game 70 – 52. The win was the second consecutive championship for Kelley and the Bulldogs. Bullis also won the regular season title with a record of 25 wins and just 2 losses.

In addition to winning the IAC title, Coach Kelley was nominated for US Coach of the Year by US Elite Basketball. Congratulations to Coach Kelley and the Bullis Bulldogs for a fantastic season!

If you know of any Regency Estates students, athletes or others that have noteworthy achievements, we encourage you to contact us about writing an article so that we can share it with other RECA members. Please email us at: [rick.chen@regencystates.org](mailto:rick.chen@regencystates.org).

## Top Tax Assessment Points for Your Appeal

by Jerry Garson, RECA Treasurer



For those that have requested an appeal hearing from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (MDAT) and have an appointment date set or pending, the following list of points may be helpful in arguing a lower tax assessment:

- Mortgage interest rates are now over 7%, and if MDAT is referencing sales when interest rates were lower, they are not reflective of values as of December 31, 2023. At the start of 2022 they were under 3%.
- On the Area Sales Listing sent to you as part of the appeals process, the highest percentage of Normal Depreciation is from 8505 Wild Olive Drive at 37.50%. Most of the depreciation for properties in Regency Estates ranged from 22% to 37.5%. This would indicate a remaining life for many properties of over 100 years. All to say, if your property depreciation percentage is assessed lower than the 8505 property, yet you believe your home is in worse condition, point this out to MDAT.
- Neighborhood adjustment rates range from 1.05 to 1.65, Regency Estates is one neighborhood. This number is supposedly based on the model number of the type of house, but it probably should be in the lower range. Note how your rate compares to those in the recent list of sold homes that MDAT provides you.
- Most of the plumbing is about 60 years old and needs to be replaced. These items should have 100% depreciation.
- Most of the electrical system is about 60 years old and needs to be replaced. The houses are using electrical strips because of insufficient number of outlets. Electric vehicles, which are mandated by the Governor after 2035, cannot be charged in driveways or carports with

220 volts safely. The buildings department has told one of our neighbors that he could not replace his carport with a garage because current zoning requires a larger setback from the property line. These items should have 100% depreciation.

- Most of the gas supply lines are about 60 years old and needs to be replaced. These items should have 100% depreciation. We have seen Washington Gas replace most of the lines leading to houses in Regency Estates.
- There are Original Windows in many of the houses. These items should have 100% depreciation.
- The bathrooms are much smaller than current expectations, and many have pink or yellow bathroom fixtures instead of white. These items should have 100% depreciation.
- Over 65-year-old electric poles in street and cannot support electric vehicle charging.
- Are there any cracks in walls due to shifting of property? Note: cracks in the driveway do not affect the property value per MDAT.
- Is HVAC system ducts over 55 years old?



## Bring Greenery and Shade to Your Neighborhood with Tree Montgomery

by Glenn Lesak, Board Member

With the start of early spring, having beautiful green foliage and fauna is likely top of mind. I wanted to share my experience with Tree Montgomery, a unique free tree planting resource, that could be a good option (as long as you're not in a hurry). I'm very glad I did this five years ago and hope this is helpful information for RECA neighbors.

Starting back in the summer of 2016, I emailed my inquiry to [Tree Montgomery](#). Tree Montgomery is a **free** program to plant shade trees across Montgomery County, Maryland. Their goal is to plant shade trees and increase our tree canopy to provide a wide array of benefits for you and your community. Tree Montgomery staff will work closely with you to choose locations and species to plant on your property. They plant the shade trees for you and help with caring for your new trees.

They responded two days later and informed me that they would get back to me when they could. I had been forewarned that it would be 9-12 months by my Master Gardener friend, so if you are in a hurry to plant trees, look elsewhere. Sure enough, in mid-summer of 2017, I was contacted by the Tree Program Manager who requested a site visit to select varieties and locations of the trees. In brief, we had a choice of 30+ non-flowering trees, (remember, it is a canopy project) and the manager was extremely helpful in helping us select appropriate varieties and sites in our yard. Once we selected the varieties we wanted, we paid several visits to Brookside Gardens in Wheaton to view what the mature trees would look like. The Tree program manager was extremely patient as we changed our selection four times before we settled on four trees: two Shumard Oaks, one Red Maple and one Sycamore.

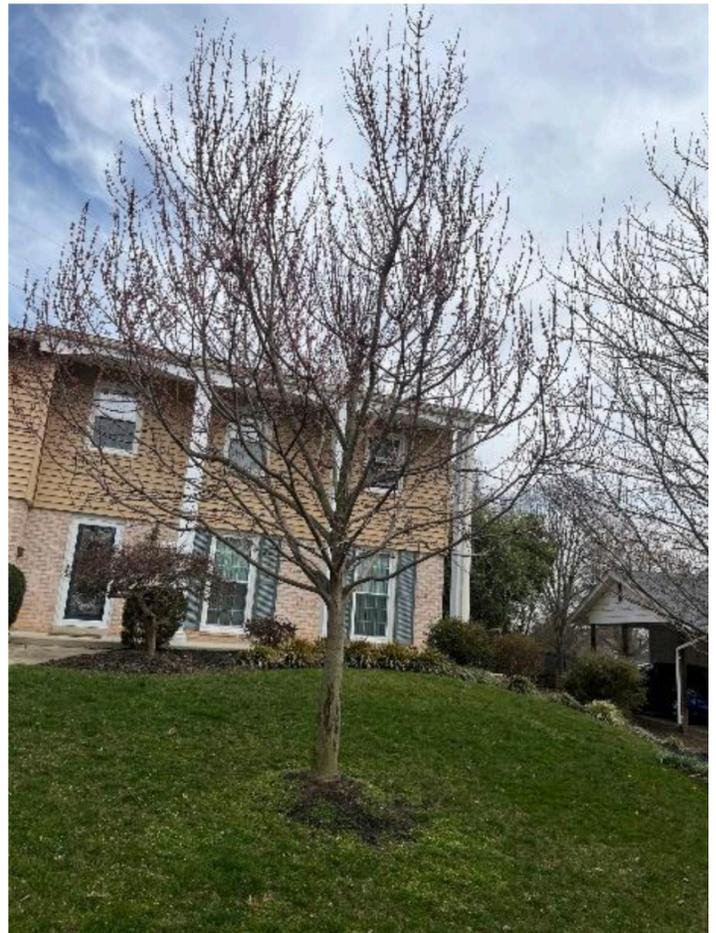
Once we were set on the varieties and location, we were required to sign an access form that allows PEPCO to confirm that the proposed trees will not interfere with utility lines. This was signed in August 2016. In November 2017, a Miss Utility (PEPCO) representative arrived at the house with a map showing the location of where we intended to plant the trees. He marked the spots with blue paint on the grass and confirmed that all was ready to go for the planting. Note, if you don't have pets in the yard, you don't have to be there for the planting, as everything is recorded on the Miss Utility-approved map.

The following day D&A Dunlevy Landscapers, a Montgomery Co. contractor, arrived. The Dunlevy folks had the four trees and we worked out exactly where they should be planted (within two-feet of the map). They planted

and staked the four trees. The trees they brought were more than seven feet tall (a nice surprise!) and were mulched. The contractor agreed they would return four times a year to fertilize and water the trees and replace any that did not survive the winter/transplant. I expected them back in March, but as we are not required to be there, we'd only see them if we are home when they are in the yard.

In conclusion, after PEPCO's abusive de-forestation of our yards, it is really nice to see that Montgomery County supports our efforts to plant more trees. Your choice of trees is limited to 30+, but that was not an issue for us. I was pleasantly surprised at how large the trees were and my Master Gardener friend, who started a year before me, reports that they are very regular in their support visits.

I just wanted to share this with my neighbors as I was unaware of this program until my Master Gardener friend mentioned it. Consider it, but you can't be in a hurry. GO GREEN!



*A tree in my front yard provided through Tree Montgomery.*



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## Around the City and State

### Scotland AME Zion Church: A Beacon of Hope and a Story of Strength

by Rick Chen, RECA President



*Early photo of Scotland AME Zion Church in its prime.*

If you're a non-native Potomac resident who's driven south on Seven Locks Road past Cabin John Plaza, you've probably noticed and possibly wondered about the modest-sized, older white building that has been under construction for years. A quick Google search will tell you that it's the Scotland African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, being rebuilt as a result of foundation flood damage caused by a severe 2019 thunderstorm. But digging deeper, this unassuming church is the cornerstone of one of Potomac's oldest Black communities, whose storied history of racial strife and resilience has recently transitioned to a new chapter of hope and restoration. The church celebrates its 100th birthday this year, and tells a compelling chronicle that transcends generations.

#### Community resilience despite troubled times

Scotland is one of the first pieces of land that Black people purchased in Montgomery County. The neighborhood of 100 townhomes is located off Seven Locks Road, an anomaly among the many million-dollar homes that surround the area. But it wasn't always this way.

Scotland was once made up of more than 500 acres of land. Over the years, developers and urban sprawl overtook this community, which put pressure on some Scotland families to sell their land. Today, Scotland is no more than 11 acres — only three of which are still owned by Scotland families.

At the heart of the Scotland community is the Scotland AME Zion Church. Originally built in 1924 and extended in 1963, it is one of the remaining early structures this community created. The century-old church was once a safe space where Scotland residents could celebrate their resilience. By the late 1950s, when the community had fallen into complete disrepair, largely due to government neglect, Maryland officials wanted to demolish it to expand Cabin John Regional Park. However, Scotland residents prevailed. In the 1960s, the Scotland community and some concerned Bethesda neighbors galvanized to successfully apply for federal funds to replace the original makeshift homes with the current townhomes — 25 owned and 75 rentals. In the 1980s, Montgomery County re-routed Seven Locks Road around and several feet above the church, which created a rain trap in the process. Then on July 7, 2019, a disastrous flood destroyed the foundation, forcing the church to close its doors.



*Ongoing church construction post-storm from the side of Seven Locks Road.*

#### Rebuilding a robust church for generations to come

Amid this loss, nearby churches and synagogues have temporarily hosted the congregation of roughly 175 members for worship services, and helped raise awareness of Scotland's plight. Since then, the Scotland Community has been hard at work raising \$10 million to floodproof the landscape, restore the church, and build a new community center space.

As a result of the community's staunch advocacy to preserve its storied history, many others have joined a \$10 million "2nd Century Project." Its goal is to repair and restore the church, and construct a new building next to it that will expand the community space threefold into a 5,000-square-foot community center. Among the

key supporters, Glenstone Foundation has committed a donation match of up to \$3 million for the renovation. Scotland church supporters have already raised more than \$3 million toward the overall funding goal, thanks to a \$300,000 grant from the Montgomery County Council, matched by the state, along with contributions from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

The church rehabilitation project has proceeded slowly since 2022, with construction stalled due to bureaucratic hurdles. Earlier this month, the Scotland community reached a new milestone. The steel supports that once held up the church for years while a new foundation was laid were finally removed.



*The church stands proudly on its new foundation without support beams.*

While the road to full restoration is long, the church's inspirational story has garnered many new supporters. They have joined the journey, and are committed to helping the congregation reach its goal at a faster pace.

To learn more about the project and donate to its efforts, please [click here](#).



*Artist's rendering of the future fully-restored Scotland AME Zion Church, new community center and paved driveway.*

## Construction Updates in and Around Our Neighborhood

*by Don Carney, Board Member*



*A future townhome site adjacent to Lifetime Fitness.*

### North of Park Potomac – the “Northside Community”

Training your teenager to drive in the old Lifetime Fitness parking lot may be a thing of the past with the construction of the new Northside Community. Just north of Park Potomac and adjacent to the shops at Potomac Woods and Lifetime Fitness, developers EYA and Pulte plan to construct 228 homes — 85 EYA townhomes and 143 Pulte condominiums.

The first townhome deliveries are expected in late 2024 or early 2025, and are scheduled to be completed by the end of 2026. Base prices of the three “market-rate” townhome models are planned to be between \$1.2 and \$1.6 million, though prices can increase for various amenities, like elevators. EYA held a preview event in February. All homes are part of a Master Home Owners Association (HOA). EYA identifies the site as being in the City of Rockville. All the streets in Northside will be public, but the alleys behind the townhomes will be private with public access easements.

Construction of the five-story Pulte condominiums will begin in 2024, with the first building scheduled to be completed in mid-2025.

EYA's website states that an approximately 20' to 30' tall sound wall will be constructed along a portion of the site that abuts I-270, and will wrap around to include a portion of the north side of the site that abuts the Montgomery County maintenance facility. Northside will feed into Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville.

Pedestrians crossing the street from Quincy's, Brooklyn's Deli, and other shops at Potomac Woods to Northside may have a challenge with the large volume of cars flowing through Fortune Terrace. A traffic light and crosswalk will likely be required to make this safe.



*The crossing from Potomac Woods to Northside at Fortune Terrace.*

### **Former Marriott Headquarters – “Grandview” Retirement Community**

Like a phoenix rising from the ashes, a new, large retirement community is rapidly taking shape on the huge 33-acre site of the former Marriott International headquarters on Fernwood Road in Bethesda. The Whiting-Turner Contracting Company is constructing a retirement community call the “Grandview,” by Erickson Senior Living, a retirement community developer. Grandview will reportedly include up to 1,300 independent living units, 210 assisted living and memory care units, and 50 skilled nursing units with public amenities. The first phase is scheduled to open in late 2025. Artist renderings show two large 12-story structures. A sales center for the Grandview is located at 6701 Democracy Boulevard.

Marriott officially moved into its new global headquarters in downtown Bethesda on Wisconsin Avenue in the Fall of 2022.



*Grandview site with large cranes.*

### **Twinbrook Quarter**

During a recent Sunday visit, construction activity was ongoing at the Twinbrook Quarter site. Developer Saul Centers Inc. describes Twinbrook Quarter as a “transit-oriented, mixed-use development.” It’s located at the corner of Rockville Pike and Halpine, next to the Twinbrook Metro stop. Construction is currently in Phase 1, which includes 452 residential units, an 80,000 square foot Wegmans, and 25,000 square feet of retail. Delivery of Phase 1 is anticipated in late 2024.



*View of Twinbrook Quarter.*

This article was provided by one of our advertisers, Geneva Day School.

## Stamping to Tapping Feet: How the Geneva Method Invites Two-Year-Olds to Step Up



One of Mrs. Porras' students sharpens fine motor skills by stringing beads.

Terrible twos? Terrific twos!

The tiniest of scholars may have a reputation for tantrums, yet the professionals at Geneva Day School (GDS) see promise in stamping feet.

"Starting preschool is a big developmental milestone for a toddler," acknowledges Mrs. Porras, a passionate GDS Teacher of Twos. As these students experience

"their first separation from home," they achieve — also for a first time — "social skills and confidence," she explains.

Soon, frequent embraces designed to reassure the newly-arrived give way to interactions of exploration and inquiry.

"Would you like to buckle your shoe?" "What might you say to your friend?" "How many balls do we count?"

Heartwarming, readers of "Bethesda Magazine" and "Potomac Lifestyle" have again recognized GDS as "Best Preschool," with additional commendation of its Summer Program, Geneva Summer Camp for Young Children. Both the academic year and summer months unfold in GDS's ideally appointed campus.

Classrooms sprawl as a cozy warren. Wide windows overlook Maryland Green School grounds. A bamboo forest, fairy tale bridge, innovative playground, flower gardens, and Monarch Butterfly Waystation invite exploration and discovery. Frequent field trips, which could be parent-accompanied, take place to the nearby creek.

"Walking both with the children and walking with parents, this makes them part of the Geneva Family," Director Lizama attests.

Truly, the stamping feet of incoming two-year-olds become tapping ones when choreographed to pre-academic learning. Although there is no martinet to ensure a particular pace or rhythm, therein lies the radiance of the school's approach.

Each child is "met where he or she may be," states Director Lizama, knowingly. What a thrill to discover where young scholars' paths will lead once paved by the Geneva Method.



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## MOM's: Saving The Planet Today is Just a Short Drive Away

by Marge Bender, Board Member



If you've never visited MOM's Organic Market at 5566 Randolph Road in Rockville, you're in for a treat. Many unique, imaginative healthy food items line the shelves for your dieting pleasure. Meander about as you notice a diversity of meat, cheeses, and frozen foods; not to mention breads, pastries, and snacks.

MOM's has even more offerings that are good for the environment. Just outside the store are special bins that will take eyeglasses, cork and most other recyclables. Most importantly, the store will take plastic compostable bags

of methane-producing food waste. Every time you finish preparing a meal, eat a piece of fruit (like a banana), collect the organic food waste and dump it into a container, lined with a compostable plastic bag. Then, place the container wherever is most convenient.

You are doing something great for our planet by keeping food waste out of city dumps. A short drive from Regency Estates up Montrose Road to Randolph Road can become a new routine that emphasizes how our simple acts can improve our planet's health.

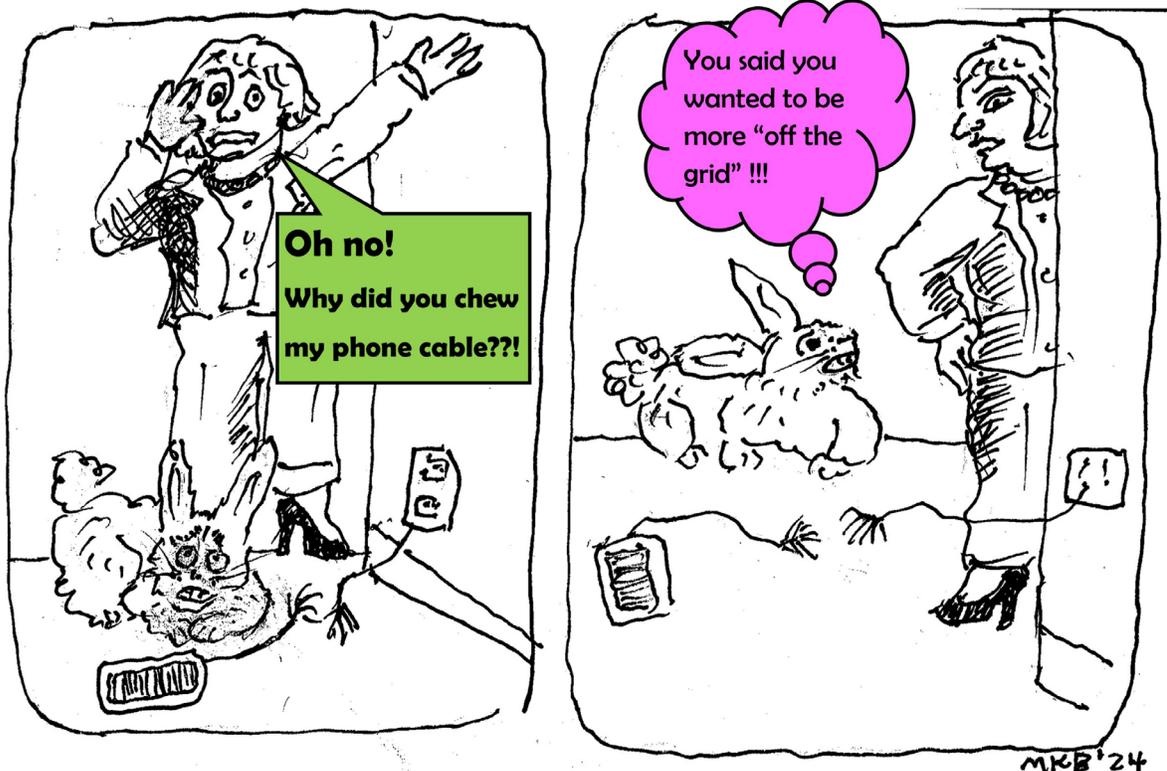
[Click here](#) to learn more.



MOM's compost and recycling center is just outside the front of the store.

## LENDING A HELPING PAW

By Marge Bender and Rick Chen



## Tech Tips: Best Practices for Disposing Electronic Devices

by Peter Stocksclaeder, Board Member



As the world continues to become more interwoven with various electronic and digital devices, so do the problems dealing with phones, tablets and computers we leave behind. This is generically called electronic waste or e-waste. While we've covered this general topic previously here in the Regency Record, it's a valuable subject to revisit since practices on addressing this waste continue to evolve!

E-waste is generally considered to be one of the fastest growing solid waste streams in the world. Various statistics gathered by the World Health Organization through 2023 estimate that only around 17% of the over-53 million tons of e-waste produced globally in 2019, was actually documented as formally collected and recycled. Many factors compound this problem. For example, e-waste recycling can have adverse effects on human health, especially through activities like open burning, which releases lead and other toxic substances. Manual labor is often involved in more informal sectors, and often times e-waste is shipped internationally for disposal, rather than handled in its source country.

### Best practices for preparing devices

You may be thinking that preparing devices for disposal is a tricky and complex process that only the experts should be handling. As an IT professional myself, yes this **can** be true depending on what the device is, who made it, what you're using it for, and even where you work. This is indeed true if, like me, you are working within a government agency (regardless if it's local, federal, or state) that has a specific set of mandates on discarding electronics when they are no longer supported or otherwise replaced. These mandates can include specifics on the disposal method (up to and including physical destruction), documentation and certification about how data was removed (overwriting the data a set number of times with random characters), and what data may need to be retained according to law.

So you've got some devices you need to throw out, and you are pretty sure you have deleted what you can (emptied the recycle bins, transferred your data off, and deleted documents and bookmarks, etc.). What next?

Cell phones are probably the easiest to deal with, especially if you are upgrading to a new model. If you are doing this in-person at the store and getting trade-in credit, staff will always be happy to help you with the data transfer, provide the mail-in envelope to return your device if applicable, and walk you through steps to perform a factory reset. However, if you are confronted with a stack from your junk drawer, you'll probably need to take matters into your own hands.

It's always best to do this with the old device plugged in, of course. The steps may differ according to the device manufacturer, but the first important step is to **always make sure you have signed out of any and all services**, like Gmail and Apple iCloud before doing anything else. Once you have done that, proceed to the following based on your device brand:

- Android devices (Samsung, HTC, etc.) = Go to Settings -> General Management and find the Reset or Factory reset setting, which will wipe all settings and personal data on the phone and reset it to an as-shipped state.
- On iPhones (Apple) = Go to Settings -> General -> Transfer or Reset iPhone and select Erase all Content and Settings for a full reset of the phone (this should work on iPads also as it is the same underlying OS).

Desktop PCs are generally the next easiest, especially if you have an internal CD/DVD drive and have basic knowledge of how to create a bootable CD. An excellent free open-source utility is DBAN, a/k/a [Darrick's Boot and Nuke](#) which, once you boot that old computer you've had hiding in the closet for the past 10+ years, provides a few different options on how many passes to use to fully wipe the data on your drive. Some companies use DBAN as a basis for their own erasure products! It is always recommended to check your respective manufacturer's website (HP, Dell, Lenovo, etc.) to determine how you boot that old computer boat anchor to boot to the CD/DVD drive, as there is not a specific standard on what key or key combo to do so with.

Laptops may be as easy as desktops. If you have a CD/DVD drive in your laptop or available as an external device, the process is ultimately the same as a Desktop PC. Boot to the CD drive and run the utility. However, it is recommended you consult with your manufacturer website before moving forward. This is especially true given most laptop brands now use silicon storage devices (SSDs)

instead of hard drives, and the manufacturer may have a specific procedure you need to follow to perform a disk wipe or factory reset.

Apple hardware has its own particular set of challenges. The Macintosh ecosystem has its own peculiarities with disk resets, depending on the age of the hardware, the OS version installed, and so on. The pain points are greater with more recent hardware, not only with SSDs and with Apple no longer installing or supplying an external CD drive, but also the migration of Apple hardware from Intel CPUs to their own proprietary Apple Silicon. [Apple's specific support page](#) is an excellent start to guide you through what you may need to do. It shares specific key combinations you may need to use to reach the appropriate utilities.

### What can we do locally?

There are a few ways you can dispose of your e-waste once you've taken the above steps to get them ready.

- The most obvious, of course, is to drop them at the Shady Grove Transfer Station. The [Montgomery County DEP website](#) has an excellent list of all the items that are accepted. This includes not only computers and peripherals, but also TVs, audio equipment, video cameras, and even all the cables and power supplies you may have been hoarding in that junk drawer. It is always interesting to see how many dozen pallets of flat screen monitors and TVs are wrapped and waiting for disposal! The DEP site notes that their contractor and non-profit partners will then determine if devices can be reused for other purposes, or if they can be recycled. While it is also noted that their contractors are required to perform data erasure, it is still recommended to remove/erase personal data before probing it off.
- [Earth911](#) is an excellent tool for finding info on electronics recycling, not just local but also mail-in programs for cell phones.
- The [Maryland Department of the Environment](#) also maintains an electronics recycling program list.
- Of course, if you have just upgraded an old phone, all of the cell phone carriers (Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, etc.) have their own trade-in programs and store drop-off points where you can leave your old device.
- Finally, it is worth mentioning that if you are buying online direct from the manufacturer (especially Dell), check to see if they have trade-in and disposal programs where you can get rid of that old computer.

## Blast from the Past: Identifying and Addressing Problems with Balance

by Peter Stocksclaeder, Board Member

*Note: This article is adapted from the original, which appeared in the October 2008 issue of the Regency Record. It reflects updated content you can now find [here](#).*

Having good balance means being able to control and maintain your body's position, whether you are moving or remaining still. An intact sense of balance helps you walk without staggering, get up from a chair without falling, and climb stairs without tripping. Good balance is important to help you get around, stay independent, and carry out daily activities.

As people grow older, they may have difficulty with their balance. Many adults who are 65 and older report having problems with balance. According to the Centers for Disease Protection, more than one-third of adults ages 65 years and older fall each year. Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of injury deaths.

There are many ways to treat balance disorders. Treatments will vary depending on the cause. See your doctor if you are experiencing dizziness, vertigo or other problems with your balance.

### Causes and Prevention

Have you ever felt dizzy, lightheaded or as if the room were spinning around you? If the feeling happens often, it could be a sign of a balance problem. While you can reduce risk, it is important to understand possible causes:

- **Medications** - Consultation with your doctor is needed because this may mean dosages or the prescription itself may need to be changed to address the side effects.
- **Inner ear problems** - As part of the structure of the inner ear is responsible for balance, problems could be a result of infection, inflammation, or other ear diseases.
- **Alcohol** can also cause dizziness and affect how the inner ear works.
- **Other medical conditions**, including diabetes and heart disease, or problems with vision, thyroid, or blood disorders can cause balance problems.

## Treatment

Your doctor can recommend strategies to help reduce the effects of a balance disorder. Scientists are studying ways to develop new, more effective methods to treat and prevent balance disorders.

Some exercises help make up for a balance disorder by moving the head and body in certain ways. The exercises are developed especially for the patient by a professional (a physical therapist, or a vestibular rehabilitation specialist if the condition is particularly complex) who understands the system and its relationship with other systems in the body.

Balance disorders can have a serious impact on an older person's life. They are one reason older people fall. A fall or a life of limited physical activity due to balance disorders can lead to health problems, isolation, and loss of independence. If you think that you have a balance disorder, you should schedule an appointment with your family doctor.



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