

## Geoffrey Wolfe

9009 Charred Oak Drive, West Bethesda, Md.

I have lived in Montgomery County since 1941 and owned homes here since 1972. I attended schools in Takoma Park and Silver Spring, and in College Park, Maryland.

During my adult life, I lived in the U.S., Canada, and Asia. Among the long list of places I have lived and others I have visited, **I prefer to live and raise my children in Montgomery County and particularly in the neighborhood of the Seven Locks Elementary School.** There are many reasons: convenience, familiarity, safety, natural amenities and parks, cultural resources, and the tangible and intangible benefits of neighborhood and an extraordinarily rich wider community. In particular, and in addition to the formal benefits, the school has provided a place to use playground equipment, to shoot toy rockets, to fly kites, to run a quarter-mile, to throw Frisbees and other such activities essential to childhood and parenting.

The Seven Locks Elementary School, convenient to our home, has provided all of the benefits that schools can provide for my children, who continue their education now at the Winston Churchill High School. They were welcomed into the Montgomery County education system having begun their formal education abroad. (Our gratitude to Mrs. Robin Gordon, the current principal of the school and others who worked and taught there is unbounded, beyond our ability to express or compensate.)

Beyond the services provided by the school system, the Seven Locks Elementary School serves as a community meeting place for all local issues. It provides the polling place for our precinct; it provides a place for Cub Scouts to run and play and a home for the pee-wee soccer league. The school has provided a meeting place for neighbors concerned with environmental issues affecting Cabin John Creek and the local watershed. There is no similar tract available to the community elsewhere.

My points in regard to the budget regarding Seven Locks Elementary School are not complicated:

- The school grounds provide advantages to our community in terms of size, convenient location, and favorable terrain that other sites cannot.
- The school is of appropriate size for our community. Experts have argued that a small school provides a better education than one much larger.
- Investment of large sums of tax resources in a more distant, less desirable facility, dealing with important disadvantages of terrain such as flooding, steep grades and community opposition—is unwise.
- Over the longer run, to invest in the destruction of a unique community resource and devotion of the land and buildings to purposes unrelated to our community, however worthy in terms of other objectives, cannot be considered progress.

. o 0 o .