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The Hickory Farms Newsletter

Who to contact

Jeff Altman, President
703-978-0309
Mike Martin, Vice President
703-323-3995
Jaime Gutierrez, Treasurer
703-425-7919
Rob Mikula, Secretary
703-323-0917
Dave Dempster,
Neighborhood Watch,
703-503-0561
Angel Meza, Grounds
703-425-3862
Diane Klingemann, Welcome
Wagon, 703-978-6838
Jennifer Maloney, Newsletter
jmaloney@gmu.edu

*Hickory Farms Community Association
Fairfax County, Virginia*

President's Letter

Dear Neighbors,

Well, another summer has come and gone. I hope you and your families enjoyed the last few months, hot as they were.

As the season cools and we can get back to outside work, I encourage all homeowners to take a fresh look at their houses. Does your house need a fresh coat of paint? Does your fence need to be repaired or replaced? Home values have continued to soar, with several recent houses selling for over \$600K. Part of this is due to our neighborhood, and the upkeep of our homes. I encourage everyone to think about his or her homes and apply the small fixes as needed.

In addition, I know that several families have, or are planning, expansion work on their homes. As a reminder, an application needs to be filed with the Architectural Control Committee prior to any work being done. Please see inside for more information.

Finally, the West Springfield Police Department has a monthly newsletter called "The Shield" that they publish electronically. If you are interested in receiving, please send an email to wspnewsletter@fairfaxcounty.gov.

As always, don't hesitate to contact me with any neighborhood concerns.

Sincerely,
Jeff Altman

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NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Neighborhood Directory - Update

Karen Mason is completing work on the updated HF newsletter. Be on the look out for the updated directory in the next month or two. Your feedback would be appreciated, once the directories are distributed.

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Fences are for . . .

Our neighborhood fences are for many things. Provide privacy, keep dogs and children in (or out), aesthetics. One thing they are not for is throwing rocks and other objects over. Please be on the lookout for people throwing rocks or other objects over your neighbor's fences. The harm or damage this can do, as well as the general nuisance of the acts, cannot be overlooked.

On behalf of your neighbors, please keep your eyes open and report any acts of vandalism such as this to the Police or neighborhood watch.

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Architecture Control Committee

The ACC is looking for a few good members to help it monitor all the activities that take place with our homes. If you are interested in joining the ACC, please contact either Rob Mikula or Jeff Altman. Also, as a reminder, an application needs to be submitted to the ACC prior to any changes being made to the outside of your home, including additions of a deck or expansion of the house itself.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Jaime Gutierrez

This is to remind all homeowners who are planning to sell their homes of the law, which requires you to disclose to the prospective buyer that the property is subject to the Virginia Property Owners' Association Act (VPOAA). This Act requires the seller to obtain a disclosure packet from the Association and provide it to the new owners. In Hickory Farms you must obtain the VPOAA packet from the Treasurer at a cost of \$50. **Please do not wait until the last minute should you need this information.** There have been instances when I have received calls to my home on the day of settlement asking for this packet. Since I work full time, I cannot respond immediately to such messages left on my telephone recorder. Sometimes settlements have had to be postponed. Thank you in advance for planning ahead should you require my assistance.

NOTICE TO NEW HOMEOWNERS

New homeowners are reminded that the Association must have your name and telephone number for its record. Normally this information is requested via a form that is provided to the previous owner, who is supposed to give to you at the time of settlement. This does not happen all of the time. You can email that information to us at jagutierrez1@cox.net. Be assured that this information is for the sole use of the Association business and will not be given to anyone else. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Following is the neighborhood assignment schedule for September and October. Please contact Dave Dempster at 703-503-0561 with any questions or to volunteer for this important neighborhood activity.

Fri	Sep 2	Larry Russe	Chris Russe
Sat	Sep 3	Jaime Gutierrez	Ed Wagner
Fri	Sep 9	Bill Galinis	Diana Galinis
Sat	Sep 10	Harry Herchert	Ginny Herchert
Fri	Sep 16	Pingjun Li	Wang Chan Cheng
Sat	Sep 17	Greg Gillette	Kathy Gillette
Fri	Sep 23	Dave Maurer	Sanjeev Munjal
Sat	Sep 24	Jay Kistler	Mike Martin
Fri	Sep 30	John Kitzmiller	Brand Niemann
Sat	Oct 1	Bob Sottile	Lee Sottile
Fri	Oct 7	Ron Arnold	Charles Walters
Sat	Oct 8	David Froberg	Beverly Froberg
Fri	Oct 14	Bob Cosgriff	Don Klingemann
Sat	Oct 15	Kirk Randall	Vacant
Fri	Oct 21	Angel Meza	Jason Meza
Sat	Oct 22	Jeff Lindsay	Larry Rogers
Fri	Oct 28	Bob Montgomery	George Rosenkranz
Sat	Oct 29	Eric Maribojoc	Clarisa Dacanay

Upcoming ESOL Classes

ESOL classes will be held this fall at Church of the Good Shepherd (corner of Braddock Road and Olley Lane). Registration is Sept. 6 and 7, 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

All classes, from beginner to more advanced, begin Sept. 20 and finish Dec. 8. Day classes are held Tues., Wed., and Thurs. from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Night classes are held Tues., Wed., and Thurs. from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The cost for books and materials is \$50. Please note that childcare is NOT available.

Graduation will take place Saturday, Dec. 10 from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Roberta Lindsay at jlindsay5@cox.net.

Join the Hickory Farms e-mail List

If you were registered with the Hickory Farms e-mail group, you would have already received an electronic copy of this newsletter and received other information about our community! Visit www.hickoryfarms.org and click E-mail Service.

Why Mow Your Lawn?

(from www.hickoryfarms.org)

Why keep your grass trimmed? Aside from the obvious benefit to neighborhood appearance and property values, there are sound financial reasons. First, the Hickory Farms Community Association Rules and Regulations require it. Second, Fairfax County zoning regulations require it. In fact, the County may fine the homeowner, mow the lawn, and bill the homeowner for mowing the lawn. So, it's cheaper in the long run to mow your lawn or pay someone to do it!

So, keep everyone happy and trim your lawn. If your neighbor's grass is starting to look like a hay field, politely mention the fact to the neighbor. If the grass is over 12 inches high and he or she has not responded to a polite suggestion to mow the lawn, you can report the issue to the Fairfax County Division of Public Works and Environmental Services, Site Inspections Division at 703-324-1931. If you want to read up on this, visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/environmental/neighborhood.htm>.

Free Home Security Inspections

The Fairfax County Police Department offers free home security inspections. A qualified, trained officer will inspect the locks, doors and windows of your home with you and make recommendations for improvement. Exterior lighting, landscaping and other factors affecting the protection of your home from burglary also will be reviewed. You can arrange for a free inspection by calling the West Springfield District crime prevention officer at 703-644-7377.

Here Are Two Good Cell Phone Ideas

According to the Washington Post (July 18, 2005 – Page A6), emergency rescue personnel often consult the phone book in an accident victim's cell phone for family contact information, when the person is unable to speak for himself or herself. Emergency rescue personnel recommend that folks list the names of emergency contacts in their cell phone address books as "ICE – Wife" "ICE – Mother", etc. "ICE" stands for "In Case of Emergency." This is a great idea that you might consider.

Also, did you know that ANY cell phone can be used to dial 911 – even if it is no longer in service? So, do a parent or friend a favor and give them an old cell phone and charger for them to keep in their car's glove box. If they find themselves in an emergency situation, they can then dial 911.

Master Gardener Plant Clinics

Fairfax County Master Gardener plant clinics are underway at farmers' markets throughout the summer. Master gardeners on hand at many of the farmers' markets in Fairfax County can identify plants and insects, provide disease diagnosis and advice on disease prevention, and answer questions on gardening and horticulture. Information on the farmers' markets and the Master Gardener Program is available at 703-324-8556, TTY 711. For a list of the farmers' markets with master gardeners, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farm-mkt.htm. For more information on this program, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp/mastergardener.htm

Sept. 26 Hearing for Proposed Verizon Cable Franchise Agreement

Fairfax County residents will have a chance to voice their opinion on a proposed cable franchise agreement between the county and Verizon at 4 p.m. on Sept. 26 in the Government Center Board Auditorium, 12000 Government Center Parkway.

Federal law requires cable companies to obtain a cable franchise from local authorities before

providing cable service in a locality. Fairfax County currently has cable franchise agreements with Cox Communications. Verizon has applied to provide cable service in all areas of the county.

If the proposal is approved, Verizon would begin providing service to some areas by late 2005, and it would be required to offer service by 2012 to the same percentage of homes in the county that is served by Cox and Comcast. Verizon is already in the process of installing a new fiber optic cabling network, as authorized by the state, to replace its copper wire telephone network. The fiber optic network has the bandwidth capability for video services as well as voice and Internet services.

Residents interested in speaking at the public hearing should contact the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors at 703-324-3151, TTY 703-324-3903 or ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Absentee Homeowner Should Notify Board of Change of Address (from www.hickoryfarms.org)

Unless notified otherwise in writing, the official "address of record" for a property owner is the owner's property address within the Hickory Farms development. Should an owner establish an alternate residence, he/she should notify the Hickory Farms Community Association in writing of any change.

Failure to provide proper notification of a change of address will not excuse an owner for failure to comply with HFCA notices, such as annual or special assessments and other critical information.

Notifying HFCA will ensure that the property owner continues to receive the HFCA newsletters. Normally, newsletters are delivered to each property owner's residence and mailed to non-resident owners. The HFCA newsletter serves as the vehicle for notifying property owners of official HFCA business as well as general news about activities in our community. Don't miss out on critical information about your community – please send us your new contact

information: name, old address, new address, new telephone number, e-mail address.

- **Landlords** - Even if you rent your home, you the landlord are still responsible for complying with the Hickory Farms Restrictive Covenants and Rules and Regulations. Landlords may consider adding a clause to the lease agreement requiring the tenant to also comply with the Restrictive Covenants and Rules and Regulations.
- **Tenants** - Please comply with the Hickory Farms Restrictive Covenants and Rules and Regulations.

A Tree Fell on My Property
(from www.hickoryfarms.org)

When a tree falls, who pays for the consequential damages and removing the tree depends on a number of factors. Let me state upfront that I am just a homeowner and this information should not be considered definitive. Consult an attorney or an insurance expert for expert advice.

> If your tree falls on your property and causes no property damage, you are responsible for clearing up the damage. Damage to your lawn only does not generally qualify for homeowners' insurance coverage.

> If your tree damages your property (for example, your fence is crushed), you can file a claim with your homeowners insurance company, which should pay for repair of the damaged property *and* removal of the tree. Non-structural damage only does not generally qualify for homeowners' insurance coverage.

> If a neighbor's tree falls on your property and causes no structural damage, it is generally considered to be an "Act of God" and you are responsible for clearing up the damage.

> If a neighbor's tree falls on your property and causes property damage, you can generally file a claim with your homeowners insurance company, which will pay for repair of damaged property and removal of the tree.

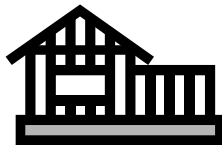
> The exception to the above is if you have notified the neighbor that they have a tree that is threatening your property. They *could* then be held liable for damage to your property when the tree falls. You must have notified the neighbor in writing of the danger. If the neighbor will not pay for the subsequent damage, you can file a claim with your insurance company, which will then attempt to collect from the neighbor's insurance company. Better yet, inform the neighbor of the threat the tree poses to your property and convince them to remove the tree as a preventative measure. If they balk, you might consider sharing the cost of removing the tree for your peace of mind.

> These days, an insurance claim can adversely affect whether your insurance company retains you as a client. Carefully consider whether you want to make a claim. Even innocently asking the insurance company whether an incident would be covered by insurance could lead to negative marks on your record, even if you make no claim!

> As a last resort – If discussions with the neighbor get nasty, contact an attorney. (Kirk Randall October 2004)

Free Mulch

Fairfax County manufactures double-shredded wood mulch, which is distributed to various distribution sites around the County. Leaf mulch is also available on a seasonal basis, usually November through March. You must haul the mulch to your property yourself. Mulch is available from the I-66 Transfer Station on West Ox Road, across from Costco. More info? Visit <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/dpwes/trash/dispmulch.htm>



Securing ACC Approval for Your Outside Project

Robert Mikula (ACC)

If you are changing the external appearance of the house, you must obtain Hickory Farms Architectural Control Committee approval before construction begins.

ACC approval is required for any additions to your home including room, garage, porch, or deck. **A full list of projects requiring ACC approval is listed on the application listed in this newsletter.**

In general, anything which alters the outside appearance of structures on your property requires ACC approval such as modifying the color or style of your siding, windows, trim, gutters, shutters, doors, or roof.

According to Hickory Farms bylaws, the ACC has up to 30 days to review your application.

Most requests are processed in 15-20 days. Remember, ACC members are volunteers and do their reviews during evenings and weekends. So, do as much homework as you can, and give the ACC as much supporting documentation as possible. It only wastes your time and theirs if they have to ask you to supplement your request with additional information. And, if you are asked to supplement your request, the 30-day clock restarts when you submit the requested information.

Hand deliver or mail the completed document to the ACC. Each ACC member reviews the application by visiting your home and votes whether the proposal fits in with the other homes in the same general area. A simple majority of votes is needed to pass the application.

The ACC does not do blanket approvals for specific color combinations of siding and shutters. It reviews each request to ensure that the color combination fits in with the other homes in the same general area.

ACC approval is required before construction can begin.

You may consider giving the ACC a current and proposed photo of your home as part of your application. We have been thrilled to see all the improvements by residents over the past couple of years!

Graduations, births, anniversaries, other special announcements to share? Newsletter items are due the 25th of the month. Send in a Word attachment to jmaloney@gmu.edu.