

September
2016

The Hickory Farms

Newsletter

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Get Email addresses at

www.hickoryfarms.org

All telephone area
codes are 703-

Hickory Farms Community Association

P.O. Box 2239, Fairfax VA 22031

www.hickoryfarms.org

Our Annual Meeting will be held October 18th at 8 PM at the Green Acres Center on Sideburn Road.

Please read the article on the next page about a proposal that we contract out the enforcement of our Rules and Regulations to improve the appearance of our community and increase efficiency and fairness of enforcement. The Board of Directors welcomes your comments.

Start organizing your unneeded stuff to sell at the September 10th community yard sale. See article.

After serving as the community newsletter editor for nearly ten years, Kirk Randall is retiring October 1st (One more issue after this one). If you may be interested in this critical position, please contact [Kirk](#) or President [Bruce Bernhardt](#).

It's that time of the year when college students move into Hickory Farms. Please see articles on pp. 4-5 for both students and homeowners.

Join the Hickory Farms email/listserv Group

- Get up-to-the-minute news on neighborhood happenings
- Ask your neighbors to recommend a contractor/repairman
- Locate a lost and found item
- Get an advance copy of this newsletter in PDF format.

Visit <http://www.hickoryfarms.org/E-mail.htm> -- Click "Join Group"

Hickory Farms – A Neighborhood in Decline?

A Proposal to Subcontract the Process of Reviewing Homeowner
Compliance with Our Rules & Regulations
Brian Roethlisberger (Chairman, Architectural Control Committee)

In the fall of 2002, my wife and I purchased a home in Hickory Farms (HF) with the anticipation of starting and raising a family here. In addition to its convenient location and great school district, one of the primary reasons we decided to purchase here was the overall, pleasing appearance of the neighborhood. Sadly, over the years, we've observed a slow decline in this pleasing appearance, with a substantial number of properties lacking in basic upkeep and maintenance. This has left me concerned that ours might be a neighborhood in decline.

Although not as strict as compared to some nearby communities, HF does indeed have standards contained in our [Deed of Dedication and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions](#) (in particular, Article VII - Restrictive Covenants) as interpreted by our [Rules and Regulations](#) that all property owners agreed to abide by when they purchased a home here (Every homeowner should receive a [VPOAA Disclosure Packet](#) from the seller prior to closing). For example, Section 1.4 of the Rules and Regulations addresses basic maintenance and upkeep of our properties:

- a) All lots and yards shall be maintained in a neat and attractive manner so as not to detract from the appearance of the Hickory Farms Community Association.
- b) All lots and dwellings shall be kept in good repair (e.g., shutters, trim, fences, siding, roof, etc. shall be maintained) and maintained in keeping with the standards of the neighborhood and development.
- c) Grass shall be mowed regularly and maintained in a neat, even manner. It is recommended that the lawn be mowed well before the average grass height is 8 inches above the ground. When the height of grass exceeds 8 inches, the Board of Directors may contact the owner or property manager to direct them to cut the grass.
- d) All curbs, driveways and sidewalks of lots shall be edged as needed to maintain a neat appearance and so that grass does not grow over curbs and sidewalks.
- e) Sidewalks shall be kept clear of obstacles (e.g., automobiles, trash receptacles, recycle bins, shrubbery, overhanging tree limbs, portable basketball hoops when not in use, etc.).
- f) Flower beds and landscaping shall be maintained in an attractive manner so as not to detract from the appearance of the neighborhood or encroach on public and common areas. Trees, shrubs, and bushes shall be trimmed on a regular basis.
- g) Automobiles shall be parked in garages, driveways or on the street, not on lawns or lots.
- h) Carports shall not be used for storage in a manner that creates an unsightly appearance.

You'll note that several of these regulations reference the "standards" or "appearance" of the neighborhood. So what defines the HF standard and appearance alluded to in these regulations? I'm not sure there's an easy answer to that. Rather than defining what the neighborhood standards or desired appearance are, perhaps it's easier to say what they are not. Here are a few real examples where I believe the basic standard or appearance, by any reasonable definition, has not been achieved: (1) lawn growth for weeks without mowing, (2) heavy green algal growth on siding, uncleaned for years, (3) tree, bush, shrub and other ornamental growth unchecked and untrimmed for years, (4) unchecked brush and overgrowth, consuming a substantial portion of a lot, (5) tree limbs and other vegetation

encroaching on sidewalks and other public pedestrian areas, (6) window/door shutters significantly damaged or missing for years, (7) sidewalks and driveways un-edged for several seasons (7) untrimmed weeds left indefinitely around mailboxes, road signs and other difficult to mow areas, and (8) cluttered carports, used primarily for the storage of household items or materials. The Rules and Regulations also address a number of other topics, including fence maintenance, trees, temporary structures, parking, signs, and trash.

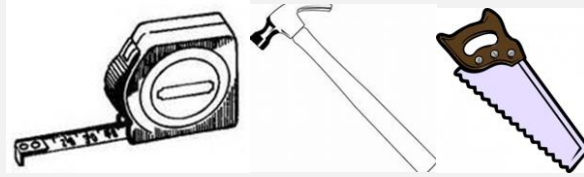
Although perfection isn't the goal, I do believe a reasonable expectation is a tidy property appearance that comes with basic maintenance and care. So, what is the root cause of the persistent issues in our neighborhood? Is it homeowner apathy? Is it a lack of enforcement? In my opinion, it is potentially due to the lack of a routine and consistent property evaluation process that provides prompt homeowner feedback. Historically, a small group of volunteers has performed neighborhood property inspections about every four years. As you might imagine, organizing the team (usually members of the Board of Directors or Architecture Control Committee), inspecting the 198 HF properties, compiling and analyzing the resulting data, preparing notices of violation and completing follow-up actions requires a significant investment of personal time and effort for these volunteers. In addition, concerns of bias or fairness have been raised, with residents inspecting other residents. With the goals of keeping Hickory Farms a highly desirable community to live in, minimizing the significant time burden on our volunteers and bringing an unbiased, systematic approach to the property inspections (with prompt feedback), some members of the Board of Directors are proposing that we retain the services of a professional property management firm that specializes in the execution of property inspections (using our own Rules and Regulations and Restrictive Covenants as the standard) and the subsequent issuance of violations notices and follow-up actions. Initial inquiries with one such service provider indicates that reviews would be performed on an ongoing basis, not just approximately every four years as has been done by community volunteers in the recent past. These services would cost approximately \$15 per property per year and could necessitate a 10% increase in the current dues level. The Board of Directors believes at this time that there are sufficient funds on hand to pay for a service in this price range beginning in 2016 without an increase in the current \$150 annual assessment. However, an increase in the assessment may be necessary in future years.

The Board of Directors would like to hear your comments about the visual appearance of the community in general, and this proposal, before formally bringing it before the members at our October 18th Annual Meeting. You may provide feedback by responding to the email thread that will be initiated on the HF LISTSERV on September 6th (visit this link to join, if you are not already a LISTSERV member: <http://hickoryfarms.org/E-mail.htm>) or by e-mailing me directly at rbergers@hotmail.com.

Architectural Control Committee Approvals

4296 Country Squire – Sidewalk & Storm Doors
4316 Farm House – Garage & Windows, Front Door
10008 Cotton Farm - Fence

Remodeling Services by *Handyman-On-Site* (David Cortez)



Bathroom & Kitchen Remodels – Decks
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For and About George Mason University Students

At any given time, Hickory Farms may have 1-3 homes (out of 198) that are rented to GMU students. This is not surprising given that GMU is just blocks away from HF.

Be nice to your student neighbors! They have just as much right to live in our community as anyone else. And, please be tolerant, since this may be their first experience of off-campus independent living and managing trash service, lawn mowing and other responsibilities may be new to them.

The Hickory Farms Community Association does not have jurisdiction over who may rent or own a home in Hickory Farms, but the Fairfax County zoning ordinance does (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoningordinance). Zoning Enforcement complaints, such as for more than four unrelated persons living in the house or excessive noise, may be submitted at 703-324-1300 or online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fido/complaints/comp_submit.aspx).

If you have a conflict with your neighboring students, please try to peacefully resolve the issue with them. If that fails, contact GMU's Director of Community Relations (Traci Kendall 703-993-8846 tkendal2@gmu.edu), our County Supervisor John Cook at 703-425-9300, or the police non-emergency number at 703-691-2131.

(9)



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www.deborahllewis.com

Let me help you protect your family, your income and your future through comprehensive financial planning. Please contact my office if you would like more information about the products and services that we offer. **-Debbie Lewis (Your Hickory Farms Neighbor)**

Deborah L. Lewis, Financial Adviser, offering investment and advisory services through Eagle Strategies LLC, a Registered Investment Adviser. Registered Representative, offering securities through NYLIFE Securities LLC (member FINRA/SIPC), A Licensed Insurance Agency.

GMU Students Living in Hickory Farms – This Message Is for You

GMU's Director of Community Relations (Traci Kendall 703-993-8846 tkendal2@gmu.edu) says that:

- Students should contact Ms. Kendall so that she may provide them with an off-campus student housing information packet.
- Off-campus GMU students must comply with the university's code of conduct (<http://studentconduct.gmu.edu/university-policies/code-of-student-conduct>)
- Off-campus students are encouraged to be good neighbors (<http://offcampus.gmu.edu/neighborly-advice>).

At least one of the student residents should register with our listserv email service so you may receive emailed copies of our newsletters, learn about safety issues in the community, etc. To register, follow the instructions at www.hickoryfarms.org/E-mail.htm. Please provide the Listserv Coordinator your name, address, phone number, and email address, and identify yourself as a tenant. Also, please visit our web page at www.hickoryfarms.org (9)

Do You Want to Add “Webmaster” to Your Résumé?

We need a web savvy resident to take over responsibility for our web page www.HickoryFarms.org. The site is currently very plain vanilla and requires only a minimal amount of maintenance. Creative web enthusiasts are encouraged to call President Bruce Bernhardt at 703-989-0751.

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140 Course Offerings This Fall at the NEARBY Osher Lifelong Learning Institute For Young and Old

If you have a passion for learning, over 140 stimulating, diverse, exam-free daytime courses and special events, plus social and cultural activities, are in store for you this fall term (Sept. 19 – Nov. 11, 2016) by joining the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University. OLLI, adjacent to the Fairfax Swimming Pool, is just a short walk from Hickory Farms.

OLLI courses, created by members for members, are taught by Washington newsmakers, university professors, regional experts and OLLI members themselves. Courses this fall include: "Explosive Exposés from Watergate to Snowden," and "Engineers of Victory: Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War,".

Although most students are seniors, classes are open to anyone. Students pay a single fee that allows them to attend as many classes as they please.

OLLI is an independent, thousand-member nonprofit founded in 1991 that offers Northern Virginians a vast array of intellectual, social and cultural experiences throughout the year.

If you'd like to get a feel for OLLI, you can sample two class sessions for free. The registration period for fall term classes is now ongoing and classes begin September 19th. Call **703-503-3384**, email olli@gmu.edu, or go to olli.gmu.edu for more information

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[Click Here](#) for a map - only 7 minutes from Hickory Farms

Please call Holly at 703-539-8393 and mention that you are from Hickory Farms.

Hickory Farms Community Yard Sale

September 10th (8 AM – Noon)

Pete Scala will run the AWESOME community yard sale again this year. Team up with your neighbors! Get rid of your extra stuff. Make room to buy more stuff! Teach the kids the value of money!! As in past years, HFCA does the advertising, posts signs, distributes maps showing yard sale locations (but not names) and volunteers pick up leftover stuff. Because we usually have a lot of families participating, we always get a much better turnout than single family or 2 or 3 family yard sales. In order to cover costs, a \$10 charge is required for people participating. Call 703-764-0730 or e-mail scalapr@verizon.net, to sign up.

1. **Select worthwhile items to sell.** You may have some true junk to sell; but your chances of selling it, or anything else, go up if you get people to look at your stuff by having good things out there.
2. **Prepare your merchandise ahead of time.** Wash and press clothes, dust and polish furniture, paint and oil old bikes, make sure electronics work and have demo CDs, tapes, etc.
3. **Buy some change from the bank ahead of time.** You'll need bills and coins; how much depends on how many things you have for sale, and what prices you pick (if your stuff is all 5.99, 11.59, etc., you better have a lot of pennies).
4. **Put prices on your sale items the night before; use large tags.** People will try to bargain you down, so take that into account when you pick your asking price.
5. **Put out your sale items in an attractive display.** Run extension cords to power electrical appliances, so you can demonstrate they work.
6. **Be ready early on Saturday morning.** Aggressive yard sale shoppers start as early as 6:30 AM, going from yard sale to yard sale. If you're out there, you can get their business.

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7. **Have a chair to sit on and a partner to work with.** The day will get long. You might have to take a break. You might want to make up some lemonade the day before, as well. (9)

Repairing Hickory Farms Sidewalks and Street Curbs

If the curbs on your street are damaged or the sidewalks are crumbling or uneven, report them to the Virginia Department of Transportation. Call 800-367-7623 or visit www.virginiadot.org/travel/citizen.asp (7)

This Month's Home Maintenance Checklist

Furnace & Heat Pump Filter Change – Replace paper/fiberglass filters. Vacuum or wash electronic filter elements. A dirty filter makes your fan work harder, using more electricity.

Range Hood Cleaning – Clean that greasy kitchen range hood screen

Refrigerator & Freezer Cleaning – Use a vacuum cleaner or special refrigerator brush to clean the refrigerator coils, which are usually under or behind the refrigerator. This is especially important if you have pets. Place a piece of paper between the door and rubber seal of the refrigerator/freezer. If it can be moved while the door is closed, there is a leak and the seal should be replaced, or the latch may need adjustment. Drain and clean the drip pan under the refrigerator. Defrost non-frost free refrigerators & freezers; they use less electricity when the frost buildup is removed.

Siding Cleaning – Pressure wash the vinyl/aluminum siding every 3-5 years. However, frequent pressure washing can strip the paint off aluminum siding down to the bare metal, so don't do this too often if you have aluminum siding.

Washing Machine Hose Check – Check hot and cold water hoses for cracks and replace, if needed. Better yet, replace them with metal reinforced hoses



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Absentee Homeowners - Do We Have Your Contact Information?

If you are an absentee homeowner, the Board of Directors needs to know your permanent address, phone number, and email address so we can mail newsletters and dues bills to you. In the past, some absentee homeowners have complained about missed dues deadlines only to discover they never told the Board where they lived. If you haven't done so already, please send that information to the Treasurer and Kirk at kirk_randall@hotmail.com (9)

Your Exterior Remodeling Project May Need Approval

If you are changing the exterior appearance of your home (siding, windows, additions, etc.) or property (fences, sheds, etc.) you probably need the approval of the Architectural Control Committee. You must get ACC approval **before** you begin the project! If you are in doubt as to whether approval is required for your particular project (and some do not require approval), please read [Application for Architectural Review](#) and [Approval of Your Exterior Renovation Project – How to Get It](#) at www.hickoryfarms.org. You may also find [Tips for Choosing a Contractor](#) helpful. If you do not have internet access, please call the chairperson of the Architectural Control Committee, whose phone number is listed on the front page. (1-5-9)



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\$800,000 home = \$4,000* cash closing credit
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Long Time Hickory Farms Resident

Linda Min - Realtor

(703) 655-3597



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Got a Compliment or Gripe on How the Neighborhood is Being Run? Attend a Board of Directors Meeting on September 14th or October 4th

Homeowners are welcome to attend any Board meeting. Please contact President Bruce Bernhardt at 703-989-0751 or email him at bnbnjb06@cox.net to make arrangements to attend in person or to pass on your concerns about community issues. Of course you can always email Board members using the addresses at www.hickoryfarms.org

(1-5-9)

GMU Police Officers Are Ticketing Speeding Vehicles on Roberts Road

This may be news to you, but Campus Police has jurisdiction over roads adjacent to GMU property, including Roberts Road. And, now that classes have resumed, they are more active than ever. Indeed, several northbound cars have been seen pulled over on Roberts Road, just downhill from Still Meadow Road which, to this observer looks like a dangerous place to make a stop. So, watch your speed on Roberts Road when exiting Hickory Farms and proceeding in the direction of Braddock Road.

(9)



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Please Clean Up After Your Dog

Please show consideration to your neighbors by cleaning up after your dog! Whether it's in a neighbor's yard or our Common Areas, please use a plastic bag to clean up your dog's waste. Please **DO NOT** dispose of the bag in a storm drain, a neighbor's yard, a neighbor's trash can, or our common areas. Not only is disposing it in your own trash the neighborly thing to do, it is also required by law. Thank you for your consideration! (3-9)

Is Your Carport in Need of a Cleanup?

We sometimes accumulate just too much stuff. That stuff frequently finds its way into our carports, overburdening them with clutter and creating an unsightly appearance in the community. Our Rules and Regulations clearly state that "carports shall not be used for storage in a manner that creates an unsightly appearance." If your stuff is nonessential, donate it to Goodwill or sell it at the fall Hickory Farms community yard sale or using Craigslist on the internet. Or, if it is really needed, please consider moving it to your back yard shed or basement. Your neighbors will thank you for your cooperation. (9)

Student Yellow Pages

If you wish to offer services such as snow removal, raking leaves, lawn mowing, babysitting, general home maintenance, etc., ***your parent or guardian*** should contact the Editor at 703-425-0210 or email Kirk_Randall@Hotmail.com, giving the information shown in the table. (12-5-9)

Anna Rashkover (15) 703-426-2451	Babysitting, dog sitting & dog walking
Bridgette Buchanan (13) 703-307-7323	Pet sitting
Cody Dempster (14) 703-503-0561	Yard work (raking leaves, lawn mowing, etc.) snow shoveling, housework
Dylan Mehrman (14) 478-230-5066	Lawn mowing
Erika Maaseide (13) 703 865-4469	Babysitting
Kent Coddling (14) 703-317-7319	Lawn mowing, light landscaping, snow shoveling
Mason Danger (13) 703-403-5751	Lawn mowing, snow shoveling
Mikey D'Alessandro (13) 571-577-7255	Pet sitting, dog walking, snow shoveling
PJ D'Alessandro (15) 703-785-0876	Lawn mowing, snow shoveling
Peter Turner (17) 703-581-8617	Lawn mowing
Zach Buchanan (17) 703-307-7323	Yard work (raking leaves, lawn mowing, etc.) snow shoveling, housework



Tea Light Lanterns – Dangerous and Illegal

At least one, and possibly two, fires were ignited in Hickory Farms in July by tea light lanterns, which are paper balloons fueled by hot air generated by candles or tea lights. This doesn't even count the HF house fire that was started by Independence Day fireworks. Image the fire damage possibilities if the balloons had landed on a home, rather than in their back yards. Some folks use these balloons during wedding ceremonies, funeral/burial services (Fairfax Memorial Park absolutely prohibits them), or just for fun. Please, please, please do not mess with these devices. If you see them being set aloft by a neighbor, immediately call the fire department at 911.

Neighborhood Watch Schedule

Please volunteer for this important activity!! It only takes one three hour shift every three months on a Friday or Saturday evening. Neighborhood Watch has been proven to cut crime! It's also a great way to meet your neighbors! Call Vanessa Franck at 703-483-0730.

Fri	Sep 2	Eric Maribojoc	Clarisa Dacanay
Sat	Sep 3	Bob Montgomery	George Rosenkranz
Fri	Sep 9	John Coyne	Linda Coyne
Sat	Sep 10	Pete Scala	Rose Scala
Fri	Sep 16	Jim Marshall	
Sat	Sep 17		
Fri	Sep 22	Debbi Buchanan	
Sat	Sep 24	Matt Franck	Vanessa Franck
Fri	Sep 30		
Sat	Oct 1	John Kitzmiller	
Fri	Oct 7	Ed Wagner	
Sat	Oct 8	Pam Barrett	Tom Barrett
Fri	Oct 14		
Sat	Oct 15		
Fri	Oct 21	David Froberg	Beverly Froberg
Sat	Oct 22	Jason Zhao	Laura Feng
Fri	Oct 28		
Sat	Oct 29	Wendy Chen	Tony Dong

Farewell, Carol Rogers– Can You Replace Her on the Architectural Control Committee?

After nearly eight years of supporting our community as a member of the Architectural Control Committee, Carole Rogers (Harvester Farm) is stepping down. The ACC review applications for proposed changes to the exteriors of our homes. Please thank Carole for her service the next time you see her.

Can you replace Carole on the ACC? It takes only about 30 minutes a month (really!) and all of the ACC's business is done via email. Please contact ACC Chairman Brian Roethlisberger at 703-426-9099 or rbergers@hotmail.com to learn more.

The Board of Directors Needs YOU!



The annual election of HFCA Board Members and Officers is now underway. HFCA Vice President Chuck Stewart is the 2016 Nominations Committee Chairperson. If you would like to serve with Chuck please contact him at 703-425-7368 or arch31415@yahoo.com.

To nominate yourself or a neighbor for a Board position, please contact Chuck so that he can include candidate names on the nominations slate to be voted on at our October 18th Annual Meeting. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the Annual Meeting. To see who is currently on the Board of Directors, [please click here](#). Note that some of these volunteers will not be running for reelection because of other pressing

responsibilities.

Dozens of volunteers have stepped forward over the past 40 years to make Hickory Farms the wonderful place it is today to live, perhaps raise a family, and enjoy surrounding attractions. Please consider volunteering this year as a member of the Board of Directors in order to keep our unbroken chain of volunteer community service going into decade number five!

(9-10)

Fairfax County's Law for Parking on the Street

The Hickory Farms Community Association has certain restrictions regarding the parking of vehicles on our lots. The HFCA does NOT have authority to regulate parking on public streets; that authority rests with Fairfax County. If you have a street parking issue that cannot be amicably resolved, please call the police non-emergency number at 703-691-2131 or call Supervisor Cook's office at 703-425-9300 for assistance.

Commercial Vehicle Parking Restrictions

- Taxi and limousines are limited to one per house and must be registered in Virginia
- Commercial vehicles that exceed the following may not park on public streets:
 - More than 21 feet long
 - More than 8 feet high
 - More than 102 inches wide
 - A gross vehicle weight of 12,000 lbs. or more
 - Vehicles carrying commercial freight in plain view
 - Trailers or semitrailers – except camper, boat or single axle utility
 - Vehicles with 3 or more axles
- There are a few exceptions to these regulations:
 - Public service company vehicles
 - Watercraft or motor home

- School buses in current use
 - Private vehicles with disability plates
 - Cable service vehicles
 - Rental/moving type vehicles within 48 hours of leasing
 - Propane gas service vehicles
- Vehicles parked on a public street must have both front and back license plates and display a current safety inspection sticker. (9)

Your Underground Water Pipe WILL Break – It's Just a Matter of When

There seems to have been an epidemic (OK, only two) of underground water line failures this summer. It is not if, but when, your underground water line will fail. I have been touting water line insurance program for years because our homes seem to be especially prone to these failures. Insurance is available, and at about eight bucks a month, it is a bargain.

If you're the "better safe than sorry" type, Dominion - the electric utility folks - offers a variety of insurance programs (I'm sure you can find competitive programs elsewhere, too). If you can only afford one, though, make it the water line insurance.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Water Line Replacement | Sewer Line Repair |
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Call 1-866-645-9810 or visit <https://www.dom.com/corporate/what-we-do/related-business/dominion-products/home-protection-programs>

(9)

Birds of Hickory Farms Bob Cosgriff (Cotton Farm Road)

Summer officially ends in about three weeks, so now is a good time to summarize the results of our community bluebird trail. This year produced mixed results. We did have two successful bluebird nests, producing eight young total. Both broods were from the same box in the lower common grounds (May and July). On the negative side, we had two failed bluebird nesting attempts (both in the upper common grounds).

One other species did take our boxes: House Wrens. We had two successful broods of six birds each, both in the lower common grounds. We did find a dead House Wren in a box as well (no nest, just the bird), and there was one failed attempt. This occurred during the intense heat in July, so the weather is the likely culprit. (Cold weather, on the other hand, was probably responsible for the death of a Downy Woodpecker found in one of our lower common ground boxes in late March.)

House Sparrows were a persistent problem early in the breeding season, so we experimented a 'Hutching's guard' that was said to discourage sparrows. The results of our experiment indicate that it did do so, as sparrows thereafter did not take boxes with this guard attached, with one exception. On the other hand, the new guard did not seem to bother House Wrens, despite making it much harder for them to drag their long (4"-5") twigs through the cylinder of the guard. On the down side, the Hutching's guards seemed to deter bluebirds as well, which we were aware might be the case. It is a matter of their becoming comfortable with the different configuration. Further investigation next year will tell us more about the relative merits of different guards.

This year, for the first time in several years, we did not get any Tree Swallows to nest in Hickory Farms. In fact, we did not even see any. We are not sure why this is the case at this point.

When I get the county/state results later in the autumn, we can compare how we did relative to other trails in Fairfax and elsewhere in Virginia for bluebirds and other cavity-nesting species. Overall, the bluebird trend is projected to continue downward from a few years ago, when populations soared, and then crashed due to two severe winters in a row.

In other neighborhood bird news, we added two new birds to our Hickory Farms list: Eastern White-crowned Sparrow and Tennessee Warbler. Both were seen in our yard during the peak of the spring migration in mid-May. Our neighborhood total now stands at 117. We also had two notable overflights seen from our yard: a Green Heron in July (third ever) and two Bald Eagles, high up, in August (also a third-ever sighting of this species).

September and October will bring on the southbound migration. This is a good time to keep scanning the skies to watch long-distance migrants pass over our area. Many songbirds might well stop here for refueling! So keep your eyes and ears open. You never know what you might see!

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