

# HICKORY FARMS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

April 2020 Edition



HICKORYFARMS.ORG P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

## **HFCA BOARD & VOLUNTEERS**

President: *Chuck Stewart*  
Vice President: *Kathie Schmidt*  
Secretary: *(Temps) Debbi Buchanan*  
*& Telah Jackson*  
ACC: *Pam Barrett*  
Treasurer: *Jim Bever*  
Assistant Treasurer: *Ken Sorg*  
Common Areas: *Melissa Stark*  
Webmaster: *Bryan Crabtree*  
Neighborhood Watch: *Debbi Buchanan*  
Newsletter Editor: *Bill Berg*  
Social Committee: *Meredith Perkins,*  
*Lauren Crabtree, Krissy Lunsford,*  
*Sarah Tropiano, Angela Turner*  
Architectural Reviews: *Pam Barrett,*  
*Debbi Buchanan, Keith Ferguson*  
*Donna Garfield, Ed Kiechlin, Kirk*  
*Randall, Josef Gasimov*  
Newsletter Delivery: *John Kitzmiller,*  
*Heather Webb, Dante Gilmer,*  
*Sondra Arnold, Ed Kiechlin, Claire and*  
*Sean Coleman, Debbi Buchanan*  
At Large: *Telah Jackson, Kirk Randall*

## **IN THIS EDITION**

COVID-19	2
Neighborhood Watch	4
Pressure Washing	4
Barking Dogs	5
Wrought Iron	5
New Advertisers	5
Dog Waste	6
Termites	6
NEXTDOOR	7
HFCA Secretary	7
Smelly Water	8
Real Estate Activity	8
Student Yellow Pages	9
Yard Debris	10
Trash Collection	11
LISTSERV	11
Fairfax Alerts	12
Birds of Hickory Farms	13
Contact the Board	13

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)**

### **WHAT IS CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)?**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

### **HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?**

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?**

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever • cough • shortness of breath.

### **HOW CAN I HELP PROTECT MYSELF?**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. • Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. • Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. • Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

### **IF YOU ARE SICK, TO KEEP FROM SPREADING RESPIRATORY ILLNESS TO OTHERS, YOU SHOULD**

- Stay home when you are sick. • Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. • Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

### **FURTHER REDUCING PUBLIC GATHERINGS**

Governor Northam told Virginians to avoid non-essential gatherings of more than 10 people, per federal guidelines. This does not include normal operations at essential services such as manufacturers, distribution centers, airports, bus and train stations, medical facilities, grocery stores, or pharmacies.

### **DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLE OFFICE CLOSURES**

Virginia's 75 DMV offices, as well as mobile units, will close to the public. Online services will remain available, and anyone needing to renew a license or vehicle registration is encouraged to do so online. For those who cannot renew online, or whose license or registration expires before May 15, DMV will grant a 60-day extension.

## PROTECTING HIGH-RISK VIRGINIANS

Those with chronic health conditions or aged 65 or older should self-quarantine. Public health experts advise that individuals with underlying medical conditions and those aged 65 or older are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Governor Northam encouraged neighbors and friends to stay in touch and regularly check in with high-risk individuals.

## INCREASING SOCIAL DISTANCING

All restaurants, fitness centers, and theaters are directed to significantly reduce their capacity to 10 patrons, or close. Restaurants are encouraged to continue carry-out and takeaway options.

## METRORAIL

Rail system hours and service levels are further reduced to support ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY. DO NOT TRAVEL UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY and follow guidance from your state and local authorities.

New hours: Weekdays 5AM-11PM, Sat/Sun 8AM-11PM

Trains will run every 15 minutes on each line at all times, including the Red Line. All trains will operate with 8 cars, the maximum possible length, to help maintain social distancing between customers. Metro's Rail Operations Control Centers (two) will actively monitor trains and station platforms for any possible crowding, something that has not been an issue at any point during the pandemic emergency response. Metro is reducing/cancelling track work, except emergency maintenance and inspections, to avoid unexpected delays and maintain 15-minute intervals between trains.

## METROBUS

Bus hours and service levels are further reduced to support ESSENTIAL TRAVEL ONLY. DO NOT TRAVEL UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY and follow guidance from your state and local authorities. Buses will operate on a Sunday schedule, with supplemental service on selected routes to prevent crowding and ensure areas are not cut off. Visit [wmata.com](http://wmata.com) for information about "supplemental" routes that will operate, in addition to Sunday routes.

## UTILITIES

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) issued an order directing utilities it regulates, such as electric, natural gas, and water companies in Virginia, to suspend service disconnections for 60 days to provide immediate relief for any customer, residential and business, who may be financially impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.

For a comprehensive list of actions Governor Northam has announced to combat COVID-19 in Virginia, visit [virginia.gov/coronavirus](http://virginia.gov/coronavirus).

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

Neighborhood Watch encourages total community involvement in discouraging preventable crime by organizing and providing technical assistance through awareness meetings that help neighbors get to know one another. Members learn to secure their property, look out for one another, and recognize and report suspicious activity. Neighborhood Watch enhances and fosters communications between the community and the police department through the Crime Prevention Office. Please contact Debbi Buchanan at 703-307-7323, [simplydebbi1@gmail.com](mailto:simplydebbi1@gmail.com) if you would like to be added to the schedule to keep “your” neighborhood safe! It only takes one night a quarter to keep all of us safe and “your” family safe too by donating a couple of hours to the cause!” The following is the volunteer schedule for the upcoming weeks:

Friday, April 3, 2020	Debbi Buchanan	Michelle Bush
Saturday, April 4, 2020	George Rosenkranz	Bob Montgomery
Friday, April 10, 2020	Ron Arnold	Charles Walter
Saturday, April 11, 2020	Dave Dempster	Dawn Dempster
Friday, April 17, 2020	Bruce Bernhardt	Nancy Bernhardt
Saturday, April 18, 2020	Jim Marshall	Carol Marshall
Friday, April 24, 2020	Kirk Randall	
Saturday, April 25, 2020	Jim Bever	Barbara Bever
Friday, May 1, 2020	Susan Mulliner	Brenton Mulliner
Saturday, May 2, 2020	David Froberg	Beverly Froberg
Friday, May 8, 2020	David Cain	
Saturday, May 9, 2020	Mark Jean-Pierre	

---

## **GROUP PURCHASE FOR PRESSURE WASHING HOUSE SIDING**

Given all the rain we have had since last summer, the vinyl siding of many of our homes has become covered with mold and algae stains. You can, of course, rent a pressure washer and do it yourself, assuming you can find one during this time of health emergency. But, speaking for myself, I'm not about to climb up a ladder with a pressure washer to reach the third floor siding. Hickory Farms residents have used Rob Banks at Northern Virginia Pressure Washing Service since 2011, and he is again offering special pricing this Spring.

Other outfits can charge as much as \$400 pressure wash homes our size. Rob and his crew can pressure wash most homes in our community for less than half that. And, while they are at it, they can clean your deck, driveway, or sidewalk, many of which have turned gray or black because of the recent proliferation of mold and algae.

Rob has developed three tier pricing based upon the amount of siding on your home: small = \$180, medium = \$195, and large = \$210.

Here are a few tips: Ask the crew to keep the high pressure water stream away from double pane windows and doors. The water pressure can break the seal between the glass panes and, after a few months, they may fog up. Take special care when cleaning concrete. Too much water pressure can tear up the surface of the concrete, leading to premature failure. It is generally OK to clean decks constructed of pressure treated wood. However, it is not recommended to pressure wash deck components made of Trex or similar composite materials. If in doubt, check with Rob.

Some folks still have the original aluminum siding, which has become oxidized and worn over the years. I know from personal experience that one too many pressure washings can wear the paint down to shiny bare metal. Our aluminum siding is 45 years old; consider replacing it with another material (vinyl or Hardie Board) or, after pressure washing, paint the metal, as was done at 10008 Cotton Farm and 4313 Farm House. NVA Pressure Washing generally does not do aluminum siding more than forty years old.

When you contact Rob, please tell him that you are with Hickory Farms and that “Kirk sent me.” Call 202-330-9922 or email him [robmelisab@verizon.net](mailto:robmelisab@verizon.net).



## Love our Service Refer a Friend!

You will receive \$20 Off your next Heating, Air Conditioning or Plumbing Service and your referral will receive \$35 Off these services



### **ARE YOU BOTHERED BY BARKING DOG?**

Fairfax County's new noise ordinance addresses barking dogs. The law, which became effective in 2016, states that barking, howling, meowing, squawking or quacking animals between 10 PM and 7 AM when they can be heard inside a home with its doors and windows closed, or if these sounds can be heard between 7 AM and 10 PM for more than five minutes consecutively or non-consecutively during a 10-minute period. To report a violation, please call 703-691-2131.

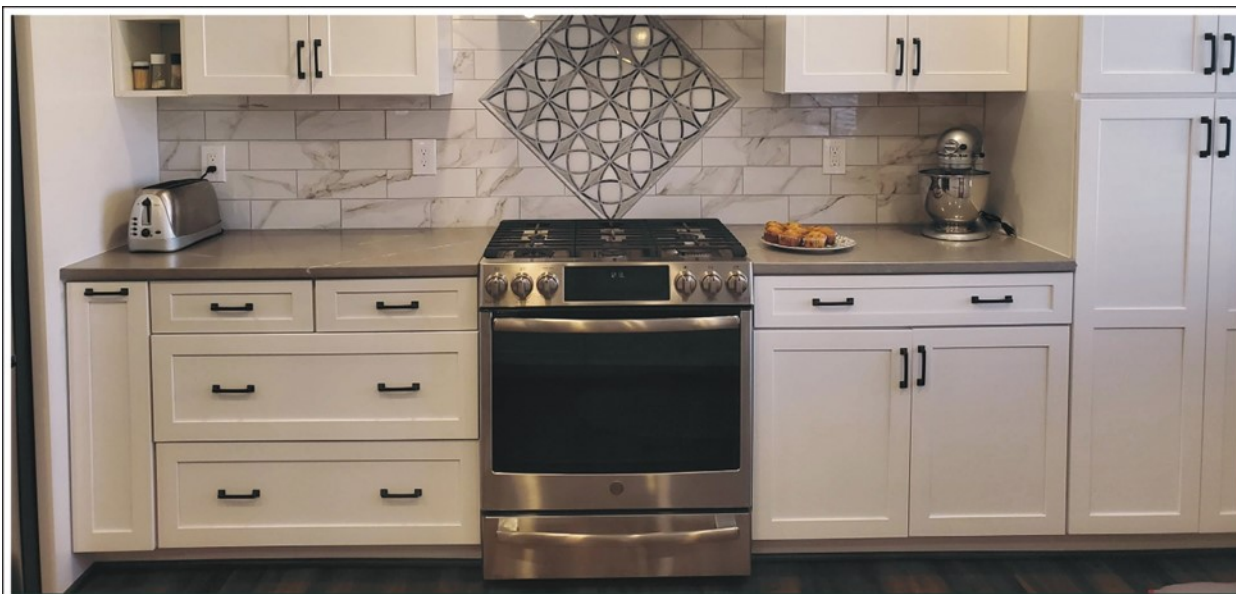
### **IS IT TIME TO CLEAN & REPAINT YOUR WROUGHT IRON STAIR RAIL & GUARDRAIL?**

By: Kirk Randall

Most Hickory Farms were constructed with wrought iron railings, which are showing their age. I made mine look better than new by having them sandblasted and painted at Sandblast America in Manassas (6974 Wellington Road 703-392-5570). The "paint" is actually what is known as a powder coated finish, which is applied electrostatically and then cured under heat to allow it to flow and form a "skin". The result is a silky smooth finish that will last for decades. How much? The handrail costs about \$10 per foot to treat and the sloped stair guardrail is \$18 per foot. Taller guardrails run \$21-25 per foot. I spent about \$200 and it was worth every penny. A good color choice is Millennium Black Semi-Gloss #44/90051. Be sure to touch up the screws with gloss black Rustoleum paint before you reinstall the pieces. And, tell Joe at Sandblast America that you're from Hickory Farms in Fairfax.

### **NEW ADVERTISERS**

Welcome new advertisers Fieldstone Builders and Brenda Denny, Fairfax Realty Select real estate agent, who knows our community well, having lived here for many years.



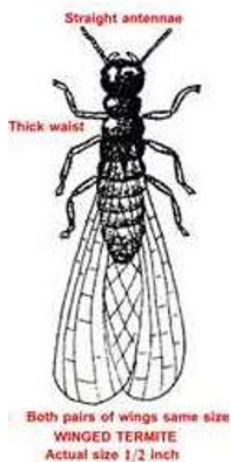
Integrity. Inspiration. Innovation.

info@fieldstonebuilders.net | 703.819.3392 | fieldstonebuilders.net

### **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. Properly disposing of your dog's waste is the neighborly thing to do, and it's the law.

### **HAVE YOU SEEN ME RECENTLY?**



During April and May, you may see vast quantities of ½ inch termites swarming around your house, particularly near outside doors. The termite protection that may have been done during construction over 40 years ago is long gone and the termites are now ready to invade your home again. It would be unusual for homes our age to not have been invaded by termites. Consult Washington Consumers Checkbook magazine (it's a nonprofit organization, similar to Consumer Reports) – available at the library – to get the names of top rated pest control firms.



DINH PHAM &  
THE GOOD LIFE  
TEAM

"Your realtor for The Good Life."





**BRENDA DENNY**  
REALTOR® LICENSED IN VA

o: (703) 423-3779      6350 Rolling Mill Pl  
e: [brenda@thegoodlifedmx.com](mailto:brenda@thegoodlifedmx.com)      #102 West Springfield, VA  
w: [www.thegoodlifedmx.com](http://www.thegoodlifedmx.com)      22152



FAIRFAX REALTY  
SELECT

An Equal Housing Opportunity Broker. If your home is currently listed for sale, this is not intended as a solicitation for that listing.



## **WHAT IS "NEXTDOOR?" SHOULD YOU JOIN?**

By: Kirk Randall

Some folks have been invited to join an Internet-based service called Nextdoor. Nextdoor is a social networking service for neighborhoods. It allows users to connect with people who live in their neighborhood and nearby neighborhoods. Nextdoor complements – but does not replace - our own email-based networking service, our Listserv, which is moderated by our David Tropicano and Kirk Randall. Nextdoor is a great way to find a babysitter or report a found cat, much like we currently do with the Hickory Farms Listserv, except that you can expand your messages to nearby communities such as George Mason Forest and Green Acres. The Fairfax police department recently partnered with Nextdoor and has been sending out alerts to affected neighborhoods. They also assign officers to a group of neighborhoods that you can directly reach out to and ask questions. You might consider joining Nextdoor as a useful community resource. You can learn more about it at [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com).

## **HFCA SECRETARY POSITION**

The HFCA Board welcomes a volunteer to join us as Secretary! The main functions are to record the official Minutes of the Monthly Board Meeting and to serve as a Member of the Board. To inquire or volunteer, please email [president@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:president@hickoryfarms.org).





# HANDY MAN ON SITE LLC.

**Serving Hickory Farms for Over 10 Years!**  
**Full House Remodeling Services and More**

Bathroom & Kitchen Remodels  
Cabinets & Fine Carpentry  
Interior/Exterior Painting  
Drywall & Finishing  
Hardwood Flooring/vinyl  
Decking & Fencing  
Gutter & Shingle Repairs  
Doors, Windows & Shutters  
Plumbing & Electric Repairs

**Free estimates call us today.!**






David Cortez  
571-313-9550  
HM-On-Site@Hotmail.com  
 HM-onsite onsite  
Class A Licensed #2705170560

## DOES YOUR DRINKING WATER HAVE A CHLORINE SMELL?

Each spring - during late March through June - Fairfax Water switches its treatment process from using combined chlorine to free chlorine. You may notice, for a few days, a chlorine taste and odor in your drinking water while free chlorine is utilized. If you are especially sensitive to the taste and odor of chlorine, try keeping an open container of drinking water in your refrigerator. This will enable the chlorine to dissipate, thus reducing the chlorine taste.

## HICKORY FARMS REAL ESTATE ACTIVITY

Address	Model	Bed	Baths	Listing Price	Sold Price	Days on Market	Status
4371 Farm House	Colonial	5	2.5	\$650,000		4	Active 3/9/20
10032 Wheatfield	Colonial	5	3.5	\$670,000		5	Pending 3/15/20
4357 Harvester	Split Level	4	3	\$600,000		7	Pending 3/5/20
4327 Still Meadow	Split Level	4	2.5	\$589,000	\$548,000	52	Closed 11/1/19

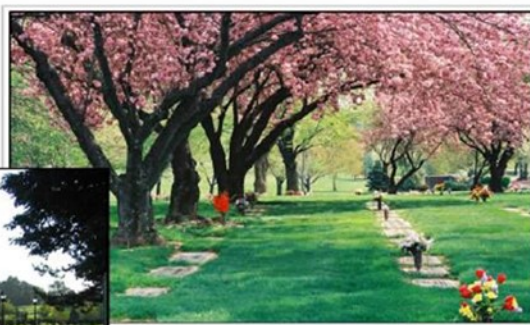


## **STUDENT YELLOW PAGES**

If you wish to offer services such as shoveling snow, raking leaves, lawn mowing, babysitting, general home maintenance, tutoring, etc., email [kirk\\_randall@hotmail.com](mailto:kirk_randall@hotmail.com).

Bridgette Buchanan (16)	703-307-7323	Babysitting and dog sitting
Britney Mulliner (17)	571-474-7277	Babysitting and dog sitting
Cody Dempster (17)	703-776-0101	Yard work, snow shoveling, housework
Dominic Cannata (17)	703-568-9896	Lawn mowing, shovel snow, cleaning, mulching
Dylan Mehrman (17)	478-230-5066	Lawn mowing
Erika Maaseide (17)	703-659-5321	Babysitting; Special Needs experienced
Kent Coddling (18)	703-317-7319	Shovel snow, yard work, leaf raking
Paul Cannata (18)	786-445-5318	Lawn mowing, shovel snow, cleaning, mulching
Xavier Gilmer (15)	703-862-2192	Shovel snow; lawn mowing
Jaden Singh (17)	703-278-8800	Math tutoring, snow shoveling
George Coddling (14)	703-223-4101	Snow shovel, yard work, leaf raking

*Fairfax*  
MEMORIAL



### **Fairfax Memorial Park**

Contact us for cremation or traditional burial information

(703) 323-5202 – [www.fmpark.com](http://www.fmpark.com)

### **Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home & Crematory**

Contact us for funeral and cremation services

(703) 425-9702 – [www.fmfh.com](http://www.fmfh.com)



## **FAIRFAX COUNTY WILL SOON PROHIBIT PLASTIC BAGS FOR YARD DEBRIS**

This spring Fairfax County will begin phasing out the use of plastic bags for yard waste collection. This decision aligns with the county's environmental vision and was made to reduce the amount of plastic in our natural environment. The change applies to private collection companies' customers (90 percent of the county) as well as residents living in the county's solid waste collection areas. With this change, Fairfax County joins seven neighboring jurisdictions in the Washington, D.C. Metro Area that already discourage or prohibit the use of plastic bags for yard waste.

"Plastic pollution is a big problem for our natural environment," said Eric Forbes, director of engineering and environmental compliance, Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program. "This change will help eliminate a known source of plastic from entering our environment. By next winter we think everyone will have learned of the change and joined the many residents who have already switched to more environmentally friendly paper bags or reusable containers."

Fairfax County's yard waste collection season runs from March through December. When yard waste – brush, leaves, and grass – is processed into compost, small pieces of shredded plastic end up in the organic material applied in gardens, yards, and capital improvement projects. Even the best screening systems don't remove all the plastic shreds.

A survey conducted last summer found that 30 percent of residents have already stopped using plastic bags for yard waste. Instead of plastic bags, residents should use compostable paper bags or a rigid container clearly marked yard waste. Other options include composting and mulching at home and grasscycling (leaving mowed grass clippings on the lawn).

Leaves should not be blown into the woods. Unused plastic bags can be used as trashcan liners.

Accepted yard waste includes grass clippings, leaves, straw, brush, small prunings, branches, and flowers. Unaccepted material includes tree stumps, food waste, lumber, treated wood, pallets, sawdust, dirt, mulch, and sod.

For more information, visit [Transition from Plastic Bags for Yard Waste Collection FAQs](#).



**Sunshine CONTRACTING**

Labels on house: ATTIC INSULATION, TRIM, SIDING, ROOFING, GUTTERS/LEAF PROTECTION, WINDOWS, DOORS, DECKS/PORCHES

**20% OFF**  
all Hickory Farms Projects!  
\*Must be presented at time of estimate

Call Today for Your **FREE** Estimate!  
**(703)499-8654**  
[www.SunshineContractingCorp.com](http://www.SunshineContractingCorp.com)

 • Family Owned & Operated  
 • Lifetime Warranties  
• In-House Crews  
• 0% Financing Available

SENIOR, MILITARY, GOVERNMENT, POLICE & FIREFIGHTER DISCOUNTS AVAILABLE

**TOP 200 RATED EXTERIOR REMODELER IN THE NATION 6 YEARS IN A ROW!**  
*Celebrating 23 Years In Business!*

**Sunshine CONTRACTING**



## MORE TRASH COLLECTION NEWS

By: Kirk Randall

By now, you should be settled into our new trash collection schedule. Both AAA/Republic and American Disposal now collect both trash and recycling on Tuesdays, and yard debris on Wednesdays from March through December. I recently had a nice discussion with the driver of one of American's trucks equipped with a claw that clamps onto the trash tote, raises it to the top of the truck and flips it over, dumping the trash into the truck. Here is what I learned.

Place your trash and recycling totes side-by-side, either next to the curb or on the driveway pan. Keep the two totes one to two feet apart. If they are too close to one another, the claw could tip one of the totes over while wrangling the other.

Sometimes a truck doesn't have a claw so the worker has to grab the tote by the handle to drag it to the truck. Help him save a few seconds by having the handle facing the street. Do a good turn for our postman who has to wend his or her way around trash totes. Keep the totes at least 5' from mailboxes. If your totes block the mailbox, the postman has to turn off the truck engine, walk to your mailbox, return to the truck, and start up the engine before moving to the next mailbox. Even if it takes only 30 seconds, these seconds turn into many, many minutes for a neighborhood our size.

---

## JOIN OUR LISTSERV

There's no better way to stay in touch than through our Hickory Farms email listserv. Visit [hickoryfarms.org](http://hickoryfarms.org) and click "Hickory Farms Listserv" on left and follow the instructions.

---



**Reliable Service with Professional Results**

Since 1991

**PPM INC**  
Lawn, Shrub & Tree Care

*Professional Property Maintenance Inc.*

*Lawn mowing + Landscape maintenance*  
*Landscape Design + Installation*  
*Tree pruning, Removal + Planting*

**Call 703-273-9626**  
or email [info@ppmlandscapes.com](mailto:info@ppmlandscapes.com)

**[www.ppmlandscapes.com](http://www.ppmlandscapes.com)**





**If we can't *reach* you,  
we can't *alert* you!**

*Fairfax County's FREE alert system  
sends you important information  
during an emergency*

**Customize Your Fairfax Alerts:**

- Get alerts on up to 10 devices such as a cell phone, home phone or email
- Receive alerts for 5 geographic locations such as home, work and school
- Weather, traffic and emergency alerts
- Mobile app available

**Sign up for Fairfax Alerts:**  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts)



## Fairfax Alerts: What You Need To Know

<p><b>How often will I receive alerts?</b></p> <p>Emergency alerts will be customized to your preferences. However, alerts about events posing a significant risk to life or property will be sent to all devices.</p>	<p><b>How much does it cost?</b></p> <p>Fairfax Alerts is free. You may incur charges from your cell phone company if you have a per-call or per message limit on your mobile device.</p>
<p><b>Will my information be shared?</b></p> <p>No, the information you provide will be used for emergency purposes only.</p>	<p><b>How do I sign up?</b></p> <p>Sign up and customize your Fairfax Alerts at <a href="http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts">www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts</a>.</p>
<p><b>What other ways can I stay informed?</b></p> <p>  <a href="http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog">Emergency Blog: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog</a>   <a href="https://twitter.com/fairfaxcounty">Twitter.com/fairfaxcounty</a>   <a href="https://facebook.com/fairfaxcounty">Facebook.com/fairfaxcounty</a> </p>	

This document was prepared under a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Grant Programs Directorate (FEMA/GPD) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of FEMA/GPD or the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts)



## **BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS**

Bob Cosgriff (Cotton Farm Road)

No sooner had I submitted the last “Birds of Hickory Farms” to the editor than the daily number of backyard birds began to increase. Starting on 23 February, we began a string of days of 20 or more species per day that pushed our February average up to 19. This string continued throughout March, with only three days (17, 19, 19 respectively) falling below that number, giving us a monthly average for March of 22 species per day, which is in line with the last few years. It took a ‘leap day’ to net February bird #9 and year species #36 (Northern Mockingbird) to give us a new cumulative total record for January and February. Early March brought us #37, a Red-tailed Hawk, and late March saw the arrival of #38, a dapper little Chipping Sparrow. We expect to see several more arrivals soon. Last year we had 10 migrant species show up in April.

February was warmer than average by several degrees. Does our string of 20-plus birds a day mean that birds are migrating earlier than usual in response to climate change? The short answer is ‘no.’ Neo-tropical migrants wintering hundreds, if not thousands, of miles south of here cannot know what our weather is like. Besides, millennia of evolution have created an avian timing system for triggering migration. The angle of the sun is the main factor. This is correlated to seasonal changes in temperature and therefore food availability. Whereas weather is variable year to year, climate might change slowly over many decades, and the annual movement of the earth around the sun is for all intents and purposes unchanging over many thousands of years. So birds are going to migrate pretty much as they always have, which means that average arrival dates will not vary much year to year. We have seen no surprises for our location for this time of the year.

Virginia Bluebird Society indicated that some early bluebird nesting has already occurred in southern Virginia and Tree Swallows have shown up in the state. Based on that news, we started weekly preliminary checks of our new boxes on 3/5. As of 3/31, there is one probable bluebird nest just started in a box in the lower common grounds. We also saw the beginnings of a Carolina Chickadee nest in another box in the same field. During our checks, we did find and remove some House Sparrow nests. Last year the first bluebird egg was laid on 6 April, so we are right in the prime time as March draws to a close.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a cessation of activities that would bring people into close contact with each other. However, outdoor activities can be an enjoyable alternative and permissible under the governor’s ‘shelter-in-place’ order, provided you keep a safe “social distance” from others. A walk around our common grounds, on trails in nearby County parks (which remain open as of this writing, although recreation centers are closed), or on neighborhood sidewalks can provide a welcome antidote to ‘cabin fever’ and at the same time provide opportunities to see many birds. As the trees begin to leaf out and spring flowers start to emerge, we are reminded that nature’s cycles continue unabated. Birdsong fills the warming air. We should take advantage of this annual re-awakening of life, perhaps this year more than in previous years.

---

## **WANT TO CONTACT THE BOARD?**

Board of Directors: [hfca@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:hfca@hickoryfarms.org)

Architectural Control Committee: [acc@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:acc@hickoryfarms.org)

President: [president@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:president@hickoryfarms.org)

Treasurer: [treasurer@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:treasurer@hickoryfarms.org)

Common Areas: [commonareas@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:commonareas@hickoryfarms.org)

Webmaster: [webmaster@hickoryfarms.org](mailto:webmaster@hickoryfarms.org)