

HICKORY FARMS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

May 2021 Edition



HICKORYFARMS.ORG

P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By: Sean Coleman

May is always one of my favorite months. Temperatures are routinely in the 70s, the heat and humidity of the Summer have not yet arrived in force, and the flowers are all beautiful. The windows are open, and you wake up to birds chirping to help welcome a new day. In the spirit of Spring, the Association will host a Kona Ice truck on May 23 in the Upper Commons. Bring your own picnic dinner and enjoy a Kona Ice on the neighborhood. There will be required social distancing and mask-wearing when not eating. We will also be contact tracing on the off chance that there could be someone with COVID in attendance. I hope you can join us.

In addition to the Kona Ice truck on the 23rd, the Social Committee has been busy organizing our new Block Representative program. We hope this new effort at outreach will help keep all of us in the neighborhood better connected. The block representatives will normally be neighbors on your street so that you will recognize them.

As of April 18, all Fairfax residents 16 and older are eligible for the COVID vaccine. If you have not yet registered, you can at the new registration site, [VaccineFinder](#).

If you are interested in exploring the placement of solar panels on your house, the County has a program with Solarize where you can get a discount of 10-15% off panels and a battery storage system. There are two virtual information sessions, one on May 11 from 6-7 pm and the other on June 3 from 3-4 pm. Use this link to attend the sessions one of the [virtual information sessions](#). Information about the program can be found here [Solarize Fairfax County program](#).

I am sure you have heard about skyrocketing housing prices nationwide. That trend has hit our neighborhood as well. In the last year, we have had three houses in the Association sell for or more than \$700K, with one for \$749K and the other for \$760K. That means, over the past 25 years, houses have appreciated on an average of \$20,000 a year. For those who have lived in the neighborhood for more than ten years, that is an incredible amount of money for Hickory Farms houses. In part, we have to thank our Architectural Control Committee (ACC) 's work for these prices. The ACC has the unenviable role of helping each of us as owners maintain our property in conformance with the covenants and deed restrictions under which we purchased it. In June, the ACC will be conducting its annual curbside review. In our 2018 community survey, over 60% of respondents felt that these visual inspections should be done at least annually. The ACC process is not meant to be adversarial. It is intended to be a way to maintain and grow the value of our investments.

Late last month, the Board had a special session to refine our neighborhood's strategic plan. One of the ad hoc working groups that we have created is to consider ways to celebrate the neighborhoods' 50th anniversary in a few years. We believe this has value in two ways; we can celebrate the neighborhood's history and help gain notice to what a real estate agent recently called "one of Fairfax's hidden gems." We would really like this to be neighborhood-driven and would invite your participation in it. I have asked Vice President Jim Bever to assist the Social Committee with the early planning process at this stage. You are welcome to reach out to Jim with your ideas at his email bentonboy@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE! We are pleased to announce that looking ahead positively, the Board has scheduled an Annual Meeting for all of our homeowners for October 13, 2021, from 7pm-9:30pm, at our traditional meeting site of the nearby Green Acres Recreation Center cafeteria. Any still required State of Virginia COVID-19 precautions will of course apply. Please mark your calendars!

Lastly, as you will see elsewhere in the newsletter, a recent change in Virginia law has required us to create a written complaint process. We are looking for feedback on that process. Please feel free to send us your comments at complaints@hickoryfarms.org

STUDENT YELLOW PAGES

If you offer services such as raking leaves, lawn mowing, babysitting, general home maintenance, dog walking, tutoring, etc., please email Bill at berg_bill@yahoo.com to be included.

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
Kiera Stark (11)	commonareas@hickoryfarms.org	Pet sitting, plant/tree watering, weed picking and leaf raking
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



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WANT TO CONTACT THE BOARD?

Board of Directors: hfca@hickoryfarms.org

Architectural Control Committee: acc@hickoryfarms.org

President: president@hickoryfarms.org

Treasurer: treasurer@hickoryfarms.org

Common Areas: commonareas@hickoryfarms.org

Webmaster: webmaster@hickoryfarms.org

Social Committee: social@hickoryfarms.org

Secretary: secretary@hickoryfarms.org

MAY HFCA BOARD MEETING

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hickory Farms Board Meetings are now conducted using the Zoom audio/video conference application. That means that every Hickory Farms Community Association member can observe their Board in action without leaving home! The next HFCA Board meeting will be held Tuesday, 11 May at 7pm. To join the meeting, contact any HFCA Board Member or send a request to join to hfca@hickoryfarms.org. You will also be provided with the Zoom meeting URL, meeting number and passcode.

Hickory Farms has a strong and consistent history of transparency regarding access by members to Board Meetings and the challenges facing our community. Please consider attending the Board Meeting so that you are fully informed with the issues facing our neighborhood!



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SAVE THE DATE! COMMON AREAS ACTIVITIES & VOLUNTEER EVENTS

The CAC team has lots of volunteer activities and events planned for spring and into summer! We welcome everyone to join & participate in these fun events. Sign Ups will be sent via the Listserv & Nextdoor!

Hickory Farms Bird Hike with Bob and Judy Cosgriff

Come out and take part in a bird walk in our common areas with Bob and Judy Cosgriff during the peak weekend of spring migration. Learn the basics of bird identification, what is involved in monitoring the Hickory Farms bluebird trail, and get information on how to attract birds to your yard. Binoculars and a field guide are recommended, but not required. Curious kids welcome! Even though the walk is outdoors, we will wear masks and practice social distancing. The goal will be to see 20 species of birds.

When: Saturday, May 8th from 0900-1000

Where: Rabbit Run, by the Little Free Library at the intersection of Farm House Ln. & Cotton Farm Rd.

Invasive Management – Cutting & Removing Vines & Tree Seedlings

Help clear out some of the vines & invasive tree seedlings that are within our commons. A learning experience on invasive management & eradication.

When: TBD

Where: TBD

Be on the lookout for these pop-up events throughout March – October via the Listserv & Nextdoor. This is a join if you able type of event. Gloves will be required & a limited number of hand and tree pruners will be provided.

SAVE THE DATE! ANNUAL HOA MEETING

The annual Hickory Farms Community Association HoA meeting is back on this year.

Location: Green Acres Rec Center Cafeteria

Date/Time: Oct 13th, 7:00 pm-9:30 pm

THE BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS

By: Bob Cosgriff

Right after I submitted my article for the March newsletter, we saw three sparrow species in a row in a two-day period, beginning with **Field Sparrow** on 26 March. This was the first one we've seen in our yard, although we have recorded three other sightings in the upper and lower commons in 2006-2007. As the name implies, the Field Sparrow prefers fields, pastures, and meadows where it can find abundant food (seeds, insects) and places to build its nest on or close to the ground hidden by long grass and vegetation. The next day we saw a **Fox Sparrow**, one of the prettiest of the sparrow family of birds. Its name is due to its reddish coloration interspersed with gray. It is an attractive bird, one we don't see every year in our yard, but one we always look for in February or March. Finally, on the same day (27 March) we saw a true harbinger of spring, the petite and dapper **Chipping Sparrow**. To close out the month, we were visited by two male and two female Purple Finches on 30 March. With the sparrow trifecta and the finches, we reached **43** species, which is a record count through the first three months of the year for our yard. In April, we added Common Grackle early in the month and then had a lovely **Palm Warbler** on 11 April. This was a first-ever yard sighting of this species, which has been seen twice before in the Lower Commons (2018 and 2020). By the 27th of April, we added **Ruby-throated Hummingbird, House Wren, Chimney Swift, Gray Catbird, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, and Broad-winged Hawk** to bring our total to **52** species for the year.

We did two unofficial checks on our bluebird boxes in late March and early April. Usually, we have at least one nest with eggs around 1 April, but this year we found no nests in the boxes by this date. During our first 'official' survey on 10 April, we saw bluebirds entering a box in the upper commons with nesting material. On 17 April, there was a complete nest with one egg in it. The following week (4/24), there were five eggs in this box. We also had two partial, probably bluebird, nests in other boxes.

While May is the peak of the spring migration, this year there will be an even bigger natural event, all the more noteworthy because it happens only every 17 years. This is the mass emergence of in mid- to late May of insects called cicadas, specifically, the Great Eastern Brood, designated as Brood X. The Washington, DC area is home to one of the largest emergences in the eastern United States. If you haven't experienced it, you are in for a treat, if hearing very loud, non-stop thrumming of large insects that look like space aliens is your idea of a treat. Cicadas are harmless and kids get a kick out of them. They are slow-moving, don't bite, and make good pets! Dogs and cats don't know quite what to make of them, but occasionally will try to eat them, something you should discourage. They are not toxic, but can cause digestive problems in animals due to their hard shells. Birds are similarly puzzled by these strange creatures. Since they appear so infrequently, birds don't recognize them as a food source. Plus, they are quite large, so smaller songbirds are probably not going to tackle them. This might be one reason that cicadas have evolved in this fashion—it's all about survival. While some animals will eat them, they really don't have a natural predator because they are here only briefly once every 17 years. Plus, they appear in such vast numbers that they overwhelm any potential predators who can't possibly eat them all, a situation scientists term "satiety." Thus, the species is ensured to live on.

One question that arises is: will cicadas harm my garden or my trees? The short answer is no. Cicadas do not have mouths designed for chewing on plants; rather, they 'drink' sap from trunks and branches. From what I have read, it seems that trees and garden plants will be okay. Here is a link to an article by Adrian Higgins, who writes a weekly column for *The Washington Post*: https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/home/garden-tree-damage-cicadas/2021/03/30/b900f550-8cc7-11eb-a6bd-0eb91c03305a_story.html As Mr. Higgins notes, the adult female will lay its eggs on the tips of small tree branches using a sharp organ called an ovipositor. This cuts into the branch, causing it to break off, dropping the eggs to the ground. The larvae then burrow into the soil to grow for the next 17 years, feeding off tree root sap. Healthy trees survive the loss of the branch tips and the subterranean feeding. Their lifespan above ground is short: about 4-6 weeks. They basically breed and die, so be prepared to see lots of cicada carcasses littering the ground. Here is a link to another article about cicadas:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/28/us/cicada-brood-x.html>. There are several good videos on YouTube and other sites on this phenomenon: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2nvwly> features Sir David Attenborough; another is "Return of the Cicadas" by Samuel Orr at www.naturedocumentaries.org. This will be the third Brood X we've experienced since we've lived in Hickory Farms (1987, 2004, 2021). It's quite a show, so if you've never seen it, be prepared to witness one of Nature's most unusual, memorable, and noisy events!

Finally, mark May 8 on your calendar and meet us by the lending library on Farm House Road at 9 a.m. for a bird walk through our common areas. Kids are welcome. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will cover the basics of bird identification, bluebird trail monitoring, and how to attract birds to your backyard. We have a goal of seeing 20 bird species on the walk.



HERE COME THE BLOCK REPS!

Who's that? Why are they walking up my driveway?
Oh my gosh....they are COMING TO THE FRONT DOOR.
THEY ARE KNOCKING. Whyyyyy??????????

Don't be scared! It's your BLOCK REP!

Block Reps are neighbors that live on your block! They are going to help you stay informed by giving you flyers to come to fun stuff like neighborhood parties, give you the head's up about important neighborhood news and help you interface with the HFCA Officers and Board when you need assistance.

So go ahead, answer the door! Meet your new friend in Hickory Farms!



****Block reps will be following current CDC and VDH best practices for outdoor small groups/gatherings as they greet their neighbors.**

ACTIVE FAIRFAX TRANSPORTATION PLAN

By: Bob Cosgriff, Braddock District Representative and Vice-Chair

Fairfax County Trails, Sidewalks and Bikeways Committee

The ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan is a multi-year effort by the Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) to update, expand, and consolidate legacy plans for trails and bicycle routes as well as other modes of getting around without using a car, bus, or train. The resulting plan will become part of the County's Comprehensive Plan and will provide policy guidance for planning and building an integrated infrastructure to promote safe facilities for walking, biking, "rolling" (scooters, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.), hiking, running, and riding (equestrian).

An important part of the ActiveFairfax Transportation Plan development is gathering citizen input.

You can provide input to the Plan in two ways:

Complete an online survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ActiveFairfax>

Using an interactive map, indicate your active transportation destinations, ("activity centers") and where you would like new trails, sidewalks, or bikeways to help you reach these destinations more conveniently and safely at <https://activefairfax.weebly.com/> (the survey is also available on this site)

To date, over 1,000 people have provided input, but the more input, the better the results will be.

Citizen input and other information gathered by the consultant hired by FCDOT will be used to create a vision that will guide the creation of the plan's specifics. This vision will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in July or August for review and approval. This will launch Phase II of the development plan, which will be to convert the vision into specific recommendations and policies to be incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2022.

For more information about the ActiveFairfax Plan, please go to this site: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk/activefairfax>.

I strongly encourage you to take a few minutes and complete both the survey and the interactive maps. The deadline is 15 May, so don't put it off. Provide your input today!

JOIN OUR LISTSERV

There's no better way to stay in touch than through our Hickory Farms email listserv. Visit hickoryfarms.org, click "Email Listserv" in the "For Residents" menu and follow the instructions.

SIGN UP FOR COMMUNITY YARD SALE IN JUNE

By Pete Scala

After taking a break over the last two years, we're going to conduct a Community Yard Sale again this year. Pete Scala will run it, and we plan to hold it on June 5th, with a rain date of June 6th. We run it on a Saturday (or Sunday if we get rained out on Saturday) from 8 am to noon.

As in past years, HFCA does the advertising, posts signs, and distributes maps showing yard sale locations (but not names). Because we usually have many families participating, we always get a much better customer turnout than single family or 2 or 3 family yard sales.

The way it works is; that Saturday morning you put out your items for sale in your front yard, and shoppers use the map we provide to go to participating houses.

In order to cover costs, a nominal charge is required for people participating. Call or email Pete Scala (703) 764-0730 or scalapr@verizon.net to sign up.

COVID Note

While COVID remains a valid concern, the country appears to be managing it. As sellers we can deal with COVID and COVID concerns by wearing masks, minimizing close contact with shoppers, and having a bottle of disinfectant or disinfectant wipes handy for people who are concerned about passing COVID by contact (note the CDC says there is less than a 1 in 10,000 chance of that happening). You may also want to wear disposable gloves.

Preparing for a yard sale

- **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.
- **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.
- **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).
- **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.
- **Put out your sale items in an attractive display.** Run extension cords to power electrical appliances, so you can demonstrate they work.
- **Be ready early on Saturday (Sunday) morning.** Aggressive yard sale shoppers start as early as 6:30 a.m., going from yard sale to yard sale. If you're out there, you can get their business.
- **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.
- **Sign up with neighbors . . .** the more adjacent houses that are selling things, the more likely buyers are to stop by.

KONA ICE TRUCK!

TOGETHER AGAIN!

Hickory Farms' Spring Fling

Bring your own picnic.
Kona Ice provided by HFCA!
Sunday May 23 2021 | 4:30-6:30 PM
Upper Commons

RSVP REQUIRED AT
[CUTT.LY/HFSPRINGFLING](https://cutt.ly/hfpringfling)

Attendees should plan to follow current Virginia outdoor social gathering protocols. Specific guidance will be provided via HF listserv, 3 days prior to the event.





In Loving Memory of
Thomas Barrett

Thomas Barrett, a resident of Hickory Farms for 38 years, died on April 29, 2020. Tom was born in Hazleton, Pennsylvania. His family spent summers at a second home on nearby Sugarloaf Mountain, where he developed a lifelong love of the outdoors. Tom was a skilled archer and an excellent marksman. He completed his Eagle Scout requirements before turning 16. Tom played football and swam for Hazleton High School, holding a state record for the backstroke during his senior year.

Tom studied Geology and Electronics /Sound Engineering at Parsons College and Penn State University. After graduating college, Tom entered the Army and studied counterintelligence at U.S. Army Fort Holabird, setting off on a 21 year career path of planning and leading varied assignments in 10 foreign countries.

Beginning military service during the last years of the Vietnam War, his first assignment in Seoul, South Korea was monitoring enemy activity in the DMZ. Tom went from Korea to New Orleans, where developed a life-long love of the Big Easy. He then transferred to Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque; where he met and married his wife, Pam. From Albuquerque he covered the Nevada Test Site, the Stanford Research Institute (SRI), and testing sites in the South Pacific. The Army then stationed him at AFNORTH and the American Embassy in Oslo, Norway. While based in Oslo, he traveled and worked through Scandinavia, Northern Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

After nearly eight consecutive years abroad, the Army reassigned Tom to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Pentagon Arlington. At the Pentagon, his last assignment before retiring, Tom would direct counterintelligence, physical security, and anti-terrorism measures for the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). One of Tom's favorite assignments was working as the Chief of Security to JCS, including the important work he did with General Colin Powell.

Through the Pentagon referral service, he found a home to lease -- and perhaps buy -- in Hickory Farms. His first impression of Hickory Farms, with its generous common areas and wildlife, was that this was a welcoming community with some of the comforting characteristics of his childhood home in Pennsylvania. He decided this was the right place to raise his children, so the family arrived in 1982.

Tom wanted to participate in Hickory Farms Community Association activities from the beginning. Even though not officially a homeowner yet, he was tapped by neighboring homeowners who knew Tom's background to help initiate a Neighborhood Watch, where he rode on one of the first official watch weekends. He installed the first modern sound system at the Fairfax Pool. His children played soccer, and it didn't take long for him to become a soccer coach. He would help found a new travel team, "The Fairfax Firecrackers," and soon after became Director of Soccer for the Fairfax Police Youth Club.

Tom served on the Hickory Farms Board of Directors as Chair of the Architectural Control Committee because he cared about his community and wanted to preserve high standards for the benefit of present and future owners.

While leading a busy personal life, Tom was engaged for nearly 20 years in government contracting services to the State Department and the Pentagon. He became a luncheon speaker for groups like the National Association of Facilities Managers and other organizations concerned about security and terrorism. The Wilson Quarterly tapped him to write short pieces for their "cluster reports" on anti-terrorism and security. NPR, contacted him as an expert to interview and field listener questions for an hour-long segment on "Talk of the Nation" after the Oklahoma Bombing. He this the day after the tragedy, where he correctly surmised that this had not been the act of a foreign entity. Subsequently, Tom returned for another show on NPR.

Tom loved his family and his home in Hickory Farms. After retirement, he began focusing more on his interests. Tom loved to play and study the guitar and became an expert on guitar players of all generations, even those much younger than him. He had an uncanny grasp of music trivia in a wide variety of blues and rock genres from every era, right up to the present.

Tom was a voracious reader, often finishing three or more books a month. He was an enthusiastic student of history. While there was no topic in military history he could not knowledgeably discuss, he became an expert on the history of military technology.

Tom cherished time with his family at his home in Hickory Farms. In his last days, when he and his family assumed he would be home before his birthday in June, he relished the thought of having a summer beer beneath the trees on his beloved backyard deck.

Tom will live on in the love of his wife Pam -- his best friend and dear love of 48 years -- and his adoring children, Michelle and Tommy.