

HICKORY FARMS COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

December 2021 Edition



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

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By: Sean Coleman

Congratulations to the Mehrman's for their winning Halloween yard display for the contest run by the social committee. I can't wait to see what the displays are for Christmas.

As this is the season of thanks, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of the Board members for their service to the community over the past year. The current board consists of Jim Bever, Carlie Mensen, Pam Barrett, Melissa Stark, Telah Jackson, Bryan Crabtree, Bill Berg, Ken Sorg, Sarah Tropiano, and Merideth Perkins. We also have the people who help Melissa with the care of the common grounds, Jarrett Stark, Claire Coleman, Bob & Judy Cosgriff, Rich Dudley, and Bill Berg. David Tropiano manages our listserv.

The newly formed block representatives that help all of us stay better informed are Jen Spencer, Jim Bever, Justin Mensen, Lee Sottile, Alyssa Eswood, Ellen Head, Jeannette Hough, Meredith Perkins, and Sarah Tropiano. Thank you all. Also, to the 20+ neighbors who showed up to help spread mulch on the Upper Common area, thank you. That level of participation makes these necessary chores so much easier, and it is fun meeting new people or catching up with neighbors you have known for a while.

Congratulations are due to all of us. Several years ago, at the annual meeting, the community approved a budget that called for refreshing and restoring our common areas. In particular, for ridding the Upper Common area of the bamboo infestation and the rehabilitating of the area with native trees, shrubs, and flowers. As a result of that community decision this past month the neighborhood was awarded the Fairfax County Friend of Trees Award. You can read more about this award here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/tree-commission/friends-trees-awards> In particular, though, thanks for the drafting of the award nomination goes to Bob Cosgriff and Melissa Stark. The County will make a video of our efforts during 2022, and when ready, we will place a link to it on the neighborhood website.

Once again, this year the Social Committee will be having a holiday decorating contest. More information is available elsewhere in the newsletter and also on the neighborhood listserv.

If you are not yet a member of the neighborhood listserv and want to join, please drop a note to David Tropiano at davidtropiano@gmail.com indicating you want to join the listserv and include your preferred email address. The listserv is not advertisement, it only notifies you of Hickory Farms neighborhood-wide issues of interest.

As I write this article small snowflakes are falling, and daylight hours are very short. Both are harbingers of the holiday season. Here is wishing all of you the happiest of holiday seasons.

Happy Holidays,

Sean (president@hickoryfarms.org)

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.

CHANGES TO HICKORY FARMS ANNUAL ASSESSMENT (DUES) DUE DATE

By: Ken Sorg

The annual assessment (yearly HOA dues) due date has moved from 31 December to 31 January. This change was approved by the Board to ease the administrative challenges with year-end collections and minimize the burden of accounting transactions across two different fiscal years.

The 2022 HFCA annual assessment is \$261.00 and will be due January 31, 2022. Detailed annual assessment payment guidelines will be provided in the January HFCA newsletter.

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

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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.

Cody Dempster (17)	703-776-0101	Yard work, snow shoveling, housework
Lauren Turner (17)	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Pet Sitting
Shannon Turner (16)	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Pet Sitting
Nathan Turner (11)	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Dog walking, yard work and watering, leaf removal and snow shoveling
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
Xavier Gilmer (15)	703-862-2192	Shovel snow; lawn mowing
George Coddling (14)	703-223-4101	Snow shovel, yard work, leaf raking
Greysen Berg (14)	210-428-5535	Snow shovel, yard work, leaf raking



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BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS

By: Bob Cosgriff

As the days get shorter and colder, one might think that bird activity would be reduced. But the opposite is true. Because of their near-constant need to eat, birds stay very active in the winter. It takes a lot of energy-rich food to maintain their high metabolism. Insects (except for grubs buried in dead tree trunks) are off the menu, so Nature provides an assortment of nuts, seeds, and berries for hungry birds. In some cases, birds themselves are the food source for raptors such as the Cooper's Hawk. Squirrels, too, need to be on the lookout for hawks and Barred Owls, which do sometimes hunt during the daylight hours.

Another food source comes from humans in the form of bird feeders. Here are some quick tips on what to consider if you are interested in feeding birds over the winter. It can be very entertaining to see the numbers and variety of birds that you can attract.

- Offer a variety of options: black-oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, thistle (nyjer), white millet, peanut splits, peanuts in the shell, and suet. Avoid "bargain" mixes that have ingredients (e.g., milo, cracked corn, red millet, barley, etc.) which are not favored by native birds. Use the specific seeds listed. Bird food makes a good Christmas present!
- Offer a variety of feeding stations: platform feeder, hopper feeder, thistle feeder (tube or sock), and suet feeder. For millet, just scatter the seeds on the ground for White-throated Sparrows, Song Sparrows, and Mourning Doves.
- Be sure your feeders are squirrel-proof: place them at least 10 feet away from anything a squirrel can use for a launching pad. Ensure that all your feeders are at least 4 feet and preferably more from the ground. Install racoon baffles on the feeder poles. You can use pepper suet and put your suet feeder anywhere. One taste and the squirrels will learn!
- Try to keep your feeders full, but if you can't, don't worry; the birds won't starve. They will find other sources (natural or feeders) to tide them over until you refill your feeders.
- Keep a pair of binoculars handy and have a field guide for reference to help identify birds that are new to you. Keep a list of what you see each day.

You might well ask what birds you could see at your feeders. In 2020 and 2021, counting from 1 January to the end of May, our overall average was 20 or more species a day! We typically see songbirds such as Slate-colored Junco ("Snowbirds"), Carolina Chickadee, Carolina Wren, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch, American Robin, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Blue Jay on a daily basis. It is possible to get up to six different types of woodpeckers, with Downy, Hairy, and Red-bellied being the most common. Invasive species like House ("English") Sparrow and European Starling will undoubtedly show up almost every day for a free handout. Throw in Mourning Doves and occasional visitors such as Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hermit Thrush, Purple Finch, Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Bluebird, Cooper's Hawk, and Eastern Towhee and your yard can be a very busy place, even on the coldest and snowiest days.

The end-of-year holidays provide a bit of extra time for relaxing pursuits like backyard birding. If you want a bit more adventure, you can always bundle up and go outdoors to our common areas to enjoy the winter birds of Hickory Farms. Best wishes of the season and Happy New Year to all.

Hickory Farms

2021 HOLIDAY DECORATION COMPETITION

Awards for:

Holiday Heavyweight (New!)

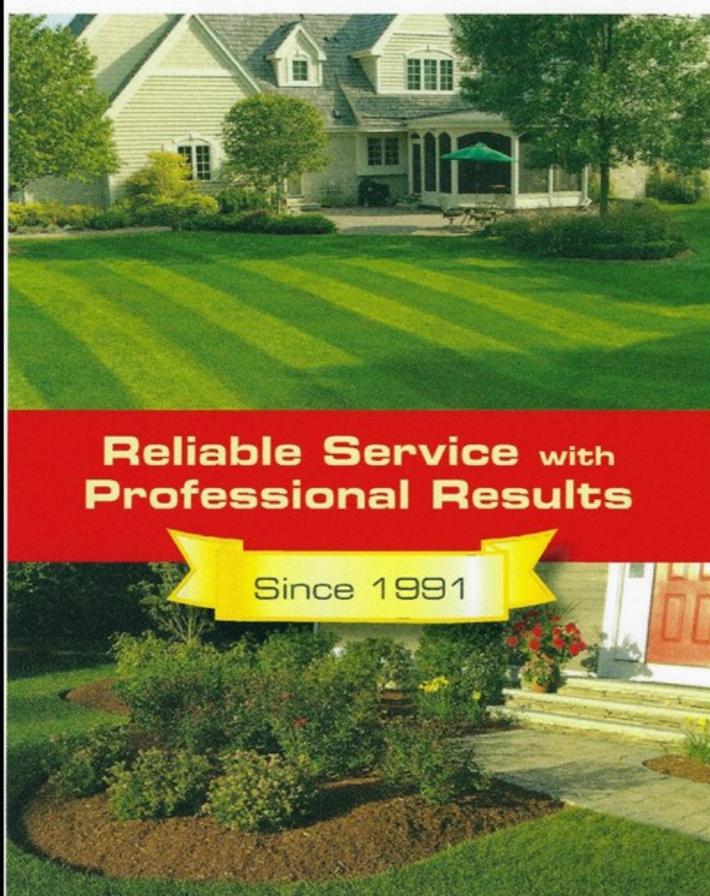
Most Holiday Spirit

Most Colorful

Most Classic

Neighborhood Voting Online: Dec. 19-21

Awards Presented: Tuesday, December 22nd



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HICKORY FARMS AND THE CIVIL WAR, PART II

By: Bob Cosgriff

In the previous article, I discussed the military fortifications erected by the Confederates in the immediate vicinity of Hickory Farms on Braddock Road and what is now the campus of GMU. These installations played a role in the First Battle of Manassas fought on 21 July, 1861. After the Confederate victory in that engagement, the area around Fairfax Court House was controlled by the Confederates until March, 1862, when they withdrew to defend Richmond from a Union army advancing on the Confederate capital. Northern forces quickly moved in and occupied Fairfax Court House and the immense Confederate earthworks in Centreville.

Other than the Battle of Ball's Bluff (near Leesburg) on 20 October, 1861, the next major military activity in Northern Virginia was the second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run) fought 28-30 August, 1862. Unlike in the first battle, no troops marched through Fairfax Court House en route to the battlefield. However, after the three-day struggle, Union forces retreated to Washington via Fairfax Court House and Confederate forces under Stonewall Jackson attempted to cut them off. This resulted in the Battle of Ox Hill (Chantilly), which took place along Route 50 at the West Ox Road intersection (the location of Fairfax Towne Center), with some Union forces extending as far east as Fair Oaks Mall. The battle was fought in the late afternoon during a tremendous thunderstorm. Two Union generals were killed in the engagement as their forces stopped the Confederate flanking movement and protected the Union line of retreat to the defenses of Washington.

Another notable event involving 2nd Manassas was the work of Clara Barton, who treated wounded Union soldiers at Fairfax Station and on the grounds of St. Mary's Church in Burke, arriving after the Battle of Ox Hill. This was not her first, nor her last, time helping out after a battle. She had previously tended to wounded soldiers in Washington, DC, after 1st Manassas, and also at the Battle of Cedar Mountain (near Culpeper), which was fought three weeks prior to 2nd Manassas during preliminary maneuvering between the two contending armies.

The next notable event in Fairfax was the raid on the courthouse by Mosby's Rangers on 9 March, 1863. With a small force of 30 men, "Ranger" Mosby moved along the tracks of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad and turned north at Fairfax Station along Ox Road (modern route 123). After capturing Union sentries, he proceeded to the rectory of Truro Church, quietly overpowered the guards, and woke up a sleeping Union brigadier general. Mosby's men captured the 70-man cavalry company that had been sent to help hunt him down and took the soldiers and their mounts back to Loudoun County the way they had come. When he heard of this, President Lincoln is reported to have said words to the effect, "I can make another brigadier general, but I regret the loss of the horses." The building where this exploit occurred still stands today and is visible from Main Street as you round the curve by the church. In 2013, the building was opened to the public for one day to commemorate the 150th anniversary of what is arguably the most famous Civil War event to happen in Fairfax, so I got to see the exact room where this famous event occurred.

Other than figuring in the two battles at Manassas and Mosby's famous raid, Fairfax was not in the epicenter of Civil War action. There were skirmishes here and there, including one on 5 November, 1861, at the preserved Oak Hill mansion near Wakefield Chapel Road. This was followed by a retaliatory ambush of Confederate troopers on 4 December near the intersection of

Braddock Road and Rolling Road, which has become known as the Bog Wallow Ambush. Union troop stretched two telegraph wires across a marshy area to dismount Confederate riders, who were then fired upon from ambush. This action occurred at night. About one year later, on 29 December, 1862, Jeb Stuart's cavalry raided Burke Station and captured Union supplies. He sent a telegraph to Washington complaining about the inferior quality of the mules he took. In this same raid, a detachment burned the wooden trestle bridge over Accotink Creek in what is now the Lake Accotink Park (the modern railroad bridge used by VRE, Amtrak, and Norfolk Southern freight trains stands near the site of the original Orange and Alexandria Railroad bridge). (The hapless Gen. Stoughton of Mosby's Fairfax Court House Raid fame was in charge of the forces that were defending Burke Center and the bridge.) On 24 August, 1864, Mosby attacked a Union stockade in Annandale near the intersection of Hummer Road and Little River Turnpike, just east of I-495.

The purpose of noting these various incidents is to show that the modern suburbs of Fairfax County around Hickory Farms were once filled with military activity during the Civil War. I have little doubt that both Confederate and Union soldiers traversed the land that is now Hickory Farms. As we drive along nearby roads like Roberts Road or Braddock Road, or shop in stores that stood on the site of battles such as Ox Hill, it is hard to picture such things as fortifications and skirmishes. It can help us to reflect on the causes of the Civil War and how people faced the consequential events in which they were engulfed. In the case of the Battle of Ox Hill (Chantilly), the only major military action that took place in Fairfax County, the fact that extensive development on the site was approved without any real recognition its historical significance, helped launch the modern battlefield preservation movement. Somewhat belatedly, the County created a 5-acre park at West Ox Road and Monument Drive, which is all that is left of the battlefield where several hundred men were killed, wounded, captured, or missing while fighting in a tremendous thunderstorm. It is worth a visit. There is a small parking lot off Ox Road, just south of Monument Drive.

Sources: This article is a distillation of information from several secondary works. For anyone who is interested in learning more, the definitive book on the campaign and battle of 2nd Manassas is *Return to Bull Run* (1993) by John Hennessey, former historian of the Manassas National Battlefield Park. A more recent book that explores in detail the final Confederate assault and Union defense of Chinn Ridge and Henry Hill at the climax of the battle is *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* (2011) by Northern Virginia resident, Scott Patchan. Even Mr. Hennessey acknowledges that Mr. Patchan has uncovered new information and has produced a fresh perspective on this crucial phase of the battle. The Battle of Ox Hill, often overlooked by historians, is well documented in *He Hath Loosed the Fateful Lightning* (2003) by Paul Taylor. The National Park Service website (<https://www.nps.gov/mana/index.htm>) for the Manassas National Battlefield Park has much useful information that makes the battles more understandable for the casual visitor. The battlefield itself is free to visit. In the visitor center, you can see an excellent movie to provide context for both battles and visit the small, but very interesting museum. The park brochure allows you to take a self-guided tour. I recommend starting with First Manassas, as it covered less ground than the second battle and most of it can be done on foot from three parking areas (Stone Bridge, Mathews Hill, Henry Hill). The battlefield offers miles of trails for hiking and bird-watching in addition to learning about the battles. As for the other Civil War events that happened nearby, the basic factual information is drawn from written and online sources too numerous to list separately.