



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

August 2023 Edition



HICKORYFARMS.ORG

P.O. BOX 2239, FAIRFAX VA 22031

HFCA BOARD & VOLUNTEERS

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- Vice President: Telah Jackson
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- Common Areas: Melissa Stark
- Webmaster: Bryan Crabtree
- Neighborhood Watch Coordinators: Allie Shaw and Steve Kubrak
- At Large: Pam Barrett
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- Common Areas Committee: Bob and Judy Cosgriff, Rich Dudley, Larry Rogers, Melissa and Jarrett Stark
- Neighborhood Block Reps: Jim Bever, Alyssa Eswood, Ellen Head, Justin Mensen, Meredith Perkins, Lee Sottile, Jen Spencer
- Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Maloney
- Social Committee: **VACANT**

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HOW TO CONTACT ...

- Board of Directors: hfca@hickoryfarms.org
- President: **VACANT**
- Architectural Control Committee: acc@hickoryfarms.org
- Treasurer: treasurer@hickoryfarms.org
- Common Areas: commonareas@hickoryfarms.org
- Webmaster: webmaster@hickoryfarms.org
- Newsletter: newsletter@hickoryfarms.org



RESIDENT INFORMATION NEEDED FOR RENTAL PROPERTIES

The HFCA Board of Directors is making sure our records are up to date for all Hickory Farms properties. For those property owners who are renting out their homes, please email your renters contact information (name, phone number and email) to hfca@hickoryfarms.org.

HFCA BOARD MEETING NOTICE

HFCA Board Meetings continue to be held via Zoom. Unless otherwise notified or due to an unforeseen change, HFCA Board Meetings will be held the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 7 pm.

To join a Board meeting, contact any HFCA Board Member or send a request to join to hfca@hickoryfarms.org. You will be provided with the Zoom meeting URL, meeting number and passcode.

STUDENT YELLOW PAGES



Shannon Turner	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Babysitting, pet sitting
Nathan Turner	Angmturn@hotmail.com	Dog walking, yard work, leaf removal
Lily Bucher	Lrbucher4@gmail.com	Babysitting/mother's helper, pet sitting
Kiera Stark	commonareas@hickoryfarms.org	Pet sitting
Greysen Berg	210-428-5535	Yard work, leaf raking
Cedar Batz	571-398-1467	Dog walking, dog sitting

If you offer services such as those listed above, or others such as tutoring, etc., and wish to be included in future listings, please email the Newsletter Editor at newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

NEWSLETTER ITEM DEADLINE AND DISTRIBUTION NOTICE

Newsletter items are due the 25th of the month, for the next month's issue. Please send submissions to newsletter@hickoryfarms.org.

Newsletters are distributed via the HFCA listserv and posted on the HFCA website. Paper versions of the newsletters are no longer delivered to households. All are encouraged to access the digital newsletter via the listserv or the HFCA website.

THE BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS

By Bob Cosgriff

The big news since the last newsletter concerns the bluebird trail and the Purple Martin colony. As of July 25, we have fledged 23 bluebirds, making this a great year for our efforts in attracting these beautiful birds. And there are two boxes with four eggs each, due to hatch on or about 1 August. Hopefully these late nesting attempts will be successful, pushing our final count to an all-time high. We have reached or exceeded 20 bluebird fledglings only three times since 2012: 2013 (22), 2017 (20), and 2021 (29). These results tend to suggest that installing plastic “skylights” on five of our boxes did discourage sparrows. We had few sparrow attempts and no bluebird nests were marauded. Of course, we will need to see how we do next year and in subsequent breeding seasons to draw a firm conclusion on the efficacy of this method.

We have also fledged six House Wrens with six more new hatchlings in the same box. Sadly, an attempted nesting by Tree Swallows was thwarted when three hatchlings disappeared from the box. Since the pole has a snake guard, the most likely culprit is House Sparrow. In 2021, we had a similar occurrence, when five eggs were laid but the nest was predated. The last successful fledging of swallows was 2015.

As for the Purple Martin colony, our advisor, Mike Bishop, confirmed three nesting pairs. This is consistent with our observations and those by neighbors Rich Dudley and Phil Donnelly who both act as extra sets of eyes for us. Mr. Bishop considers the Hickory Farms initiative a great success, since he said that it often takes a couple of years after setting up a colony to get any takers. I attribute our success to his choice of the site, less than a mile from two successful colonies of 18 units each at George Mason University near the pond in front of the Center for the Arts. We have probably attracted the overflow from last year’s broods who didn’t find room at GMU and discovered our colony nearby. If all goes well, we should have more pairs nesting next year. Eventually, we can look forward to filling all the units. We are not counting the martins in their nests, but should be able to do an eyeball count once the young birds come out and roost on the colony and will include our findings next month along with the final tally of bluebirds and wrens.

As for the August Bird of the Month, it has to be Purple Martin (*Progne subis*), the largest of nine species of swallows found in North America (six species can be seen in Virginia in the right habitats). Eastern purple martins have become habituated to living in manmade structures. This is believed to stem from the Native American practice of hanging gourds by their garden areas to keep bugs down. Western martins nest in natural cavities as apparently the Native tribes there did not use the same practice. All swallows are insectivorous, consuming large numbers of mosquitos, gnats, flies, and other flying insects that we humans do not like to have around. They spend hours on the wing, soaring and swooping, chattering as they fly. So these birds are both beautiful and beneficial. For more information about our newest residents, check out this link: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Purple_Martin

By August, some migratory species have already begun to move south. This movement will increase in September and October. By November, all of the ‘summer’ songbirds we enjoy will be far south of here. The fall migration is more dispersed than the spring migration. Since birds have finished breeding, they often molt into different plumage, which is not as showy as that exhibited in the spring, thus making identification of some species, such as warblers, a bit problematical. Also, since the birds are not setting up territories, the males do not sing much, if at all, on migration. So it’s a different experience altogether. We are hoping to catch sight of a

couple of fall migrants that we did not see in the spring. Our yard count stands at 49, with a Wood Thrush singing on 10 July and again on the 11th. We'd like to reach or exceed fifty backyard birds for the year.

One constant is that the migrating birds do need food, so it's worth filling your feeders and helping them on their way. This is particularly true for hummingbirds. Boil water and sugar in a 4:1 ratio, respectively, or even increase it to 3:1, to provide more energy to the hungry hummers!

So until next time, enjoy the rest of the summer and if you get a chance, walk up to the upper commons and take a look at the martin colony. Early morning or before dusk are the best times. We do ask that you stay at least 50 feet away, if not farther, so as not to stress the birds as they help teach their young how to fend for themselves.

JOIN OUR LISTSERV!

Don't miss any news! Join the Hickory Farms Listserv! Hickory Farms utilizes Google Groups to manage our listserv. This platform is simple, easy to use and free. If you don't have a Gmail account, you can sign up for one at <http://www.gmail.com>.

Once you have an account, visit <https://groups.google.com/my-groups> to sign into Google Groups. From there, go straight to <http://groups.google.com/g/hickory-farms-hoa/> and click the "Ask to Join." In the Reason for Joining, please include your address, phone number, and own/rent status to include in the neighborhood directory.

Once your membership is approved, you'll receive emails when they are sent to the listserv. You can adjust your membership settings - like changing single emails to a weekly digest - in your Google Groups Settings.

Please don't forget to review the guidelines on the Hickory Farms website here: <https://hickoryfarms.org/hickory-farms-listserv> . There's also information on how to post to the listserv, manage your account and more.

Finally, if you need basic Google Groups help, visit: <https://support.google.com/groups/answer/1067205?hl=en> . You can always contact the admins of the listserv for help or questions by emailing hickory-farms-hoa+managers@googlegroups.com.

THE ROLE OF YOUR HICKORY FARMS BOARDS IN OUR RECENT RE-ASPALTING

By Jim Bever, former Board Member

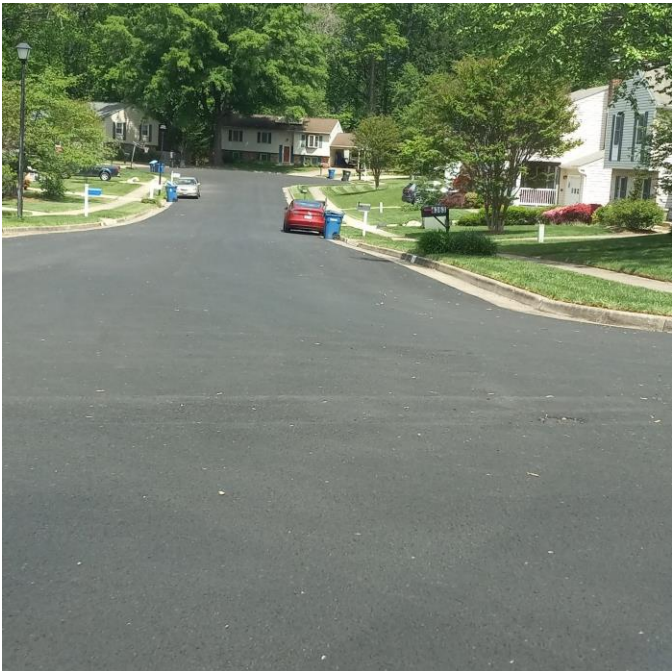
It was so exciting to see our Hickory Farms neighborhood finally being re-asphalted! This comes after literally decades of waiting as our streets' asphalt gradually deteriorated. They apparently were last asphalted sometime during the final quarter of the last century. Some say that we just had to be patient for this re-asphalting to eventually happen. Our homeowners should know, however, that over the past 5 years, successive Boards of Directors for our community have diligently made it a point to not only monitor when our "turn" was coming up for re-paving, but to pro-actively advocate for such with both the local elected Braddock District Supervisor's office, as well as with VDOT (Virginia Department of Transportation). **Note:** VDOT sets the final asphaltting schedules, lines up the significant taxpayer budget for such from the State of Virginia and legislature in Richmond, briefs the Fairfax County Supervisors (along with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation) and then executes the paving via contracted asphaltting companies.

Consecutive Boards of Directors here were beginning to notice that neighborhoods and county roads all around Hickory Farms had been re-asphalted over the past 5 years, but that Hickory Farms still had not been. Nor did we seem to be on any publicly accessible schedule with any specific future start date for our re-asphalting in any coming year. In the interim, the cracks in our streets were growing bigger and with such, more weeds were growing along most of our curbs' borders with the old, asphalted street. In many places, yet more and bigger weeds stretched all the way across our streets! Some homeowners had to regularly weed whack, dig out, or poison weeds all the way out into the middle of our streets. Successive online requests to VDOT by Board Members were achieving some spot improvements, but such were not yet achieving the overall desired strategic effect of total re-asphalting of our streets.

The good news is that at the suggestion of homeowner Bob Cosgriff, our Board over a year ago invited the new Assistant to the Braddock District Supervisor to come here to meet in-person over coffee with a few Board and community members, during which visit she became familiar with our community and its needs. This fortunately then led to the newly elected Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw agreeing to come here last Spring to join the Garden Tour at Bob's invitation (the tour's lead organizer). During such, one member of our Board was able to not only walk the District Supervisor around to greet neighbors, but also to drive him all around our community for a "windshield" tour of our homes and Common areas. This included specifically pointing out to him the condition of our streets and our urgent need for re-asphalting. Supervisor Walkinshaw subsequently reviewed VDOT's annual paving plans and projected schedules, upon which he wrote to VDOT about our pressing re-asphalting needs. And lo and behold, this late winter/early Spring, our streets got paved!

(FYI, anyone may use the "myVDOT" website address (<https://my.vdot.virginia.gov/>) to report one-off issues like a cracked or spalled section of a sidewalk or a gutter/curb--especially important if there's concern of a possible safety issue, structural collapse, or tripping hazard.)

Re-cementing a home's own concrete driveway, for example, increases the home's resale value by 5%, according to numerous real estate and other sources. Likewise, re-asphalting all of our streets has also now significantly boosted the value of all of our homes in Hickory Farms! Hopefully, this will also remind all of us as well to continue to maintain the condition of our own homes and yards to keep Hickory Farms such an attractive neighborhood for everyone's benefit.



Photos by Jim Bever



WINDOWS/DOORS



SIDING/ TRIM



ROOFING/GUTTERS

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