



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

May 2025 Edition



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

HFCA BOARD & VOLUNTEERS

President: Steve Kubrak
Vice President: Telah Jackson
Secretary: **VACANT**
Treasurer: Judy Deng
Assistant Treasurer: Tad Weed
Common Areas: Melissa Stark
Webmaster: Bryan Crabtree
Neighborhood Watch Coordinator:
Allie Shaw
At Large: Pam Barrett and Charles Chu
Architectural Reviews: Louis Eswood,
Keith Ferguson, Donna Garfield, Josef
Gasimov, Edmond Kiechlin, Justin
Mensen, and Bob Sottile
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: Laura Bucher and
Juliette Giordano

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HOW TO CONTACT ...

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

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW HICKORY FARMS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

Dear Hickory Farms Neighbors,

My name is Steve Kubrak, and I am honored to introduce myself as the new President of the Hickory Farms Community Association. I have been a proud member of this neighborhood for 3 years, and it is with deep appreciation for all who have served before me that I step into this role.

Hickory Farms is more than a collection of houses — it's a community built on shared values, pride in our homes, and a spirit of looking out for one another. As President, my goal is to preserve everything that makes Hickory Farms special, while also ensuring we continue to grow and adapt in ways that strengthen our community for the future.

Over the coming year, I hope to focus on a few key priorities: improving communication between the board and homeowners, supporting the wonderful volunteer initiatives that keep our common spaces beautiful, and making sure our community guidelines remain fair, transparent, and easy to understand. Above all, I want to foster a sense of openness; if you have a question, a suggestion, or a concern, I want you to feel confident reaching out.

One of the great strengths of Hickory Farms is the wide range of talents and experiences among our residents. Whether you've been here for decades or just recently moved in, you have a voice that matters. I encourage you to stay involved, attend meetings when you can, and consider lending your skills to one of our many committees or projects. Even small acts of participation make a big difference in keeping Hickory Farms the vibrant, welcoming place we all love.

Thank you for placing your trust in me. I am excited to work alongside the Board and all of you to make this year a great one for our neighborhood.

Here's to a wonderful year ahead!

Regards,
Steve Kubrak
President, Hickory Farms Community Association

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

HICKORY FARMS NEWSLETTERS ARE COMING BACK TO PAPER FORM!

Yes, you read that correctly. On April 8th, the Hickory Farms Board of Directors (BOD) voted to move our HFCA newsletters back to paper form. This is due to our 2025 goal to increase communication and ensure that all neighbors get a copy in their hands versus being lost in their email inbox (or SPAM).

The month of May's newsletter will be sent for the last time on our Hickory Farms Listserv. It will also be printed and mailed to homeowners who rent their home, and our new HFCA President, Steven Kubrak, will hand deliver the May newsletter to all Hickory Farms homes (198). Please dust off your large rock (or go buy one) and place it next to your door for newsletter delivery. For those neighbors who enjoy it digitally, and wish to continue to receive it digitally, they may opt out of receiving a paper copy by emailing us at hfca@hickoryfarms.org.

Please see the call below for Newsletter Delivery helpers! We need **you** in order to make this transition successful!

A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS – CAN YOU FIND TIME TO KEEP OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THRIVING?

Time, is a precious resource, in today's day and age. One that no matter what stage of your life is at, is a valuable commodity.

What I am about to ask you or your household, is do you have a little time to give per month to your neighborhood? To keep our neighborhood thriving, to keep up the beauty that our neighborhood has (which is rare in this area), and to keep our home values going up by your participation?

We have some key positions that are open that **do not** require a lot of time per month. They just need a helpful neighbor that wants to contribute. And.... the positions are available for ALL ages, tenants to homeowners, to participate!

Please consider volunteering for the following:

Newsletter Delivery Neighbor

Your eyes are not deceiving you! Paper newsletters are back and we need 10 – 20 volunteers to help deliver them. Our goal is to have you deliver only to neighbors who live close to your home. It's a simple job and hopefully with enough neighbors helping it should take only 15 – 30 minutes of your time, per month (if you are a super speedy walker, maybe even less). Teenage volunteers are welcome and credit hours will be distributed for their effort.

Job Description

The Newsletter Delivery Neighbor will receive a batch of newsletters to be delivered to their set area (a map will be provided). Please deliver them by the 5th day of the beginning of the month to the neighbors' doors only. They can be tucked behind a storm/screen door or placed under a rock/item by their front or side door (split level homes).

On vacation during your delivery time? No worries! Other Newsletter Delivery Neighbors can help fill your role, while you are out.

Welcome Wagon

Do you enjoy meeting new people and want to meet more neighbors in the neighborhood? The Welcome Wagon has been around since the start of our neighborhood, but over the last couple of years volunteer participation for this role has diminished. We are looking for a few neighbors to team together to meet new neighbors (tenants and homeowners) to give them the Hickory Farms welcome that we used to have in the past.

Job Description

- Welcome new neighbors by providing them with a Hickory Farms welcome packet.
- Verify their contact information and gather key information and email it to our Hickory Farms Secretary and Treasurer (mainly just name(s), phone number and email address)
- Be a point of contact, if the new neighbor has questions.

Time Commitment: Varies by the number of new families that move into the area, per year. We typically see yearly anywhere from 5 – 12 new neighbors move in. The total amount of time visiting per neighbor would be 15 – 30 minutes (including walking/driving).

Secretary

This role is a key Hickory Farms BOD position and is a part of the Hickory Farms Executive Board. It is a simple role, yet very important, and not time consuming as one would assume.

If you are a good listener, can attend monthly BOD meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, take good notes and can use Microsoft Teams to publish them for the BOD to review, this role is for you! You can view the full description of the role on our Hickory Farms website:

<https://hickoryfarms.org/board-of-directors>

Time: Roughly an hour to an hour and a half per month (except for October....may be a bit more due to our annual meeting). Most of this time is attending our HFCA Board meeting and publishing the meeting notes.

As a Hickory Farms Board we are a friendly group that values our volunteers' time and we try to make our meetings efficient and keep them to under an hour.

Please volunteer for this key role!!! It is currently being fulfilled by our Common Areas Coordinator, Melissa, which takes away from her main HFCA role.

Please email hfca@hickoryfarms.org with your interest in any of the positions.

Thanks for your consideration!!

Melissa Stark
Hickory Farms Common Areas Coordinator



SCHOOL BUS STOP ARM CAMERAS: WARNINGS BEGAN APRIL 10TH

Cameras have been installed on the stop arms of 50 FCPS school buses. The cameras will be used to identify drivers who pass stopped school buses while children are entering and exiting the bus. This is referred to as a "stop arm violation."

Warnings for violators began April 10th. After a 30-day warning period, citations will be issued starting **Monday, May 12.**

According to Virginia law, drivers must stop for stopped school buses with flashing red lights on and their stop signs extended. Motorists should stop when approaching from any direction, unless there is a barrier or median separating their lane from where the bus is stopped. Motorists should remain stopped until everyone is clear, and the bus is moving.

Source: <https://www.fcps.edu/news/school-bus-safety-program-update>

Hickory Farms 50th Anniversary logo contest

Hickory Farms is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year! We want to recognize this important milestone with an anniversary logo. The celebration planning committee is hosting a logo design contest open to everyone living in the Hickory Farms neighborhood. The contest runs until May 31, 2025, the winner will be selected by the committee and announced in June. The winning logo will be featured on souvenirs at the anniversary celebration in September and winner will receive a \$25 gift card.

Design criteria

Create an original logo and tagline that highlights Hickory Farms' 50th Anniversary

Deadline

Submissions must be received by May 31st, 2025, at 11:59 pm (Late submissions will not be accepted)

Submission

Email the electronic file with your name and contact information to social@hickoryfarms.org

For non-electronic formats email for coordination of hard-copy submission

Eligibility

All Hickory Farms residents, no age limit

Reach out to social@hickoryfarms.com with any questions



COMMON AREAS AND DOGS

By Bob Cosgriff

The common areas of Hickory Farms are for the safe and enjoyable use of all residents. Accordingly, over the years, the HFCA Board has approved various regulations, which can be found at <https://hickoryfarms.org/rules-and-regulations>.

One important regulation is that contained in RESOLUTION NO. 2 - Common Areas Rules and Regulations. Specifically, Article 2.1.k states that "Fairfax County Leash and Pet Control laws shall be strictly adhered to in Common Areas." The Fairfax County leash law (at http://www.fairfaxcounty.elaws.us/code/coor_ch41.1_art2_sec41.1-2-4), requires that dogs be leashed when off the property of the owner (and even on the property they must be controlled by a physical or electronic fence or a leash to prevent them from being able to run loose).

Since owners are responsible for knowing all laws pertaining to dogs, it is surprising how many times dogs have been seen off the leash in both the lower and upper common areas. While it is understandable that owners might like to let their pet get a little exercise, letting a dog run loose is a violation not only of Hickory Farms rules but also Fairfax County law. The reason for the leash law is to prevent people from being bitten by an unrestrained dog. While in reality most dogs are friendly, they are also protective by instinct. If they perceive an unknown person as being a threat to themselves or their owner, they might react in an unpredictable fashion. This could have very bad consequences, particularly if a child is involved. It could also involve charges being placed against the owner, as well as a lawsuit for injury. As a practical matter, this also creates an unacceptable liability for the HOA, which could be sued for any injury suffered in the common areas. This could be financially very harmful to the association.

The County has two dog parks that are not too far from Hickory Farms. One is at Monticello Park (5315 Guinea Road, Burke), only eight minutes (2.9 miles) away. It even has a new shade feature to keep owners cool while their dogs cavort. The other off-leash dog park facility is at the South Run Recreation Center (7500 Reservation Drive, Springfield, 20 minutes (7.6 miles). South Run offers restroom facilities within a short walk from the dog park.

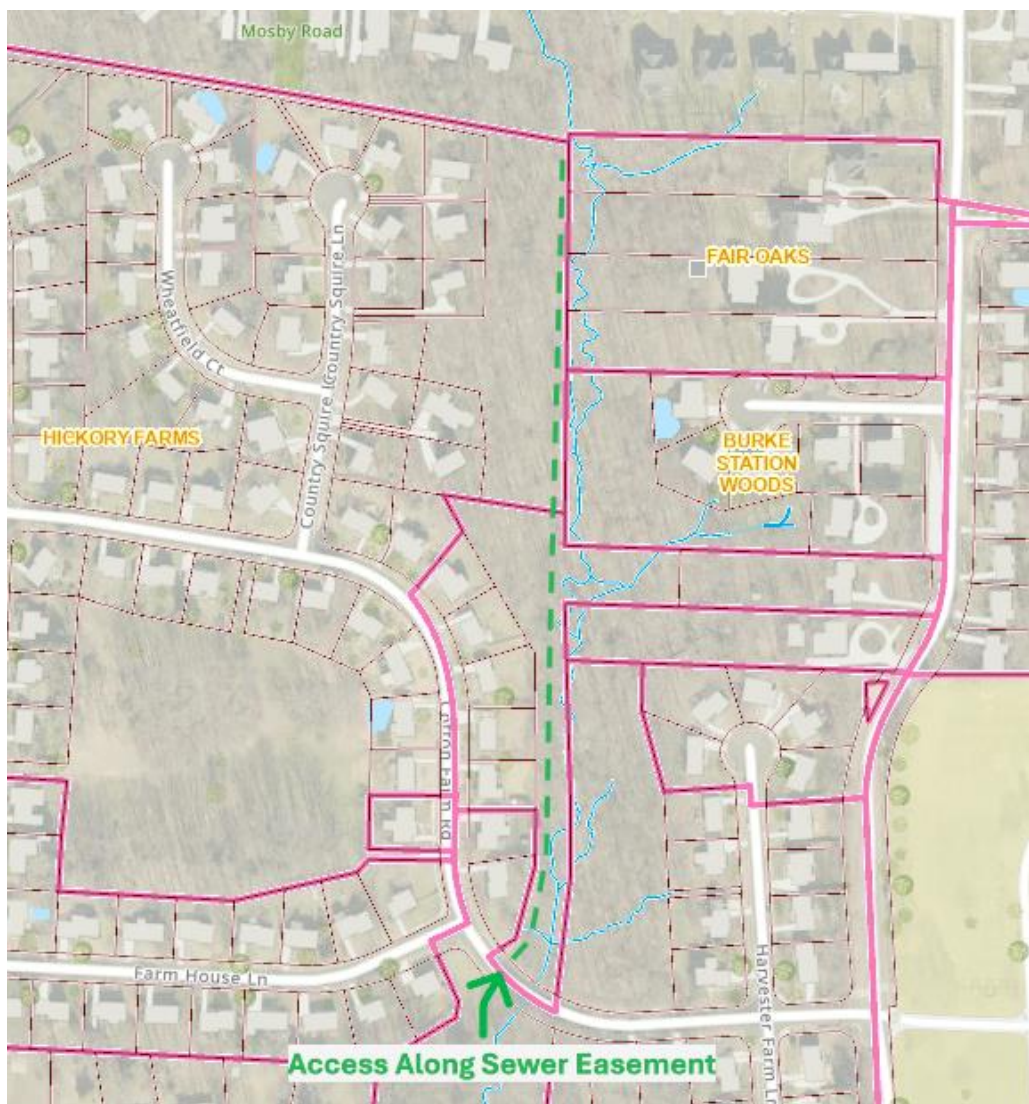
In addition to any legal considerations, it should be enough to say that owners, as matter of common courtesy to their neighbors, should abide by County law and Hickory Farms rules to ensure that their unrestrained dog does not jump on or bite another resident who is peacefully enjoying our beautiful common areas.

We thank Hickory Farm dog owners for keeping your dog(s) leashed at all times when using the common areas.

RABBIT RUN REMEDIATION PROJECT UPDATE

By Bob Cosgriff

I'm happy to be able to report some news on the Rabbit Run Remediation Project. First of all, there is a new project manager, Jim Waters. He just provided me with the current status of the project. Basically, most of the preliminary surveys have been completed, but the design engineers still need to collect soil borings along the length of the stream to help assess underlying soil conditions. The plan is to send a crew to the site this summer (June/July 2025) to complete the soil borings. The drilling rig will access the creek by entering off Cotton Farm Road (near the Farm House Lane intersection) utilizing the County's sewer easements in the Hickory Farms HOA common area parcels that run behind the houses on Cotton Farm Rd and Country Squire Lane. See the below image for reference map. This will likely require the removal of some small trees and understory growth in the process of gaining access. (Following construction, replacement trees and shrubs will be planted in areas disturbed by the remediation work.)



In my reply to him, I asked for the timeline of the project as best as it is known at present. The County is in the process of gaining easements from properties on Burke Station Road that extend into the work area. This can be a lengthy process. I also expressed our desire to be fully involved in the design phase reviews so that we can have a say in tree preservation along the creek. From past experience with the County project managers on similar projects, their goal is to disturb the existing environment as little as possible, and replanting to restore canopy is part of the deal. By improving stream flow, the overall environment should be enhanced in the long run.

Obviously, once there is equipment in the Rabbit Run RPA in June/July, the work area will be off-limits. More on that (and hopefully further updates) in a later newsletter.

TRAFFIC ADVISORY: AREA GRADUATIONS AT EAGLEBANK ARENA

As a reminder, expect heavy traffic near George Mason University's Fairfax Campus for area school graduation ceremonies at EagleBank Arena. Traffic will be entering and exiting campus (e.g., via Braddock Road, Route 123, Roberts Road).

The dates and times vary by institution and school, with some ceremonies happening in May and others in June. [George Mason University](#) has various degree celebrations scheduled in May, including their main University Commencement on May 15th.

In addition, [Fairfax County Public Schools](#) will have several high school graduations at EagleBank Arena in early June.

- Edison High School: June 3, 2 p.m.
- Herndon High School: June 3, 7 p.m.
- Annandale High School: June 4, 2 p.m.
- South County High School: June 4, 7 p.m.
- Hayfield Secondary School: June 5, 9:30 a.m.
- Justice High School: June 5, 2 p.m.
- Centreville High School: June 5, 7 p.m.
- Falls Church High School: June 9, 2 p.m.
- Chantilly High School: June 10, 7 p.m.

Loudoun County and Prince William County High Schools will also hold commencement ceremonies at the arena during these months.

THE BIRDS OF HICKORY FARMS

By Bob Cosgriff

March brought us three new backyard birds, the last of which provided an interesting spectacle. From our kitchen window, I caught a glimpse of a large bird swooping into our neighbors' yard. When I got into position to see what it was, I saw an immature **Red-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis*) on the ground with wings spread out, a position called "mantling" which birds of prey use to hide their prey from other birds. Then the hawk folded its wings and stood looking at the ground, apparently at a loss with what to do next. I could not see what it had caught. Squirrels are a favorite food of Red-tailed Hawks, but since I could not see anything that resembled a squirrel, it had to be something else. A chipmunk? A mouse?

As it turned out, it was a snake. While I could not see it well enough to identify it, I suspect it was either an Eastern Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis*) or Eastern Rat Snake (*Pantherophis alleghaniensis*), sometimes called a Black Rat Snake or simply Black Snake. In any case, the snake was very much alive and trying to defend itself. The hawk tried to subdue it by getting its talons on it and eventually was successful. It flew off towards Rabbit Run with the snake in its claws, landing on a branch, where it proceeded to eat its victim. The hawk was species #41 for the year.

April brought us eight additional species. The first was a **Gray Catbird** (*Dumetella carolinensis*) seen on 6 April. This date is the earliest arrival date since we began keeping daily records in 2013, beating last year's date of April 15 by an impressive 9 days! Catbirds are typically the first indicator that the spring migration is really underway. In honor of this new record, the Gray Catbird is our Bird of the Month. Visit https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Gray_Catbird/overview for more about this species.

Next to arrive was **Eastern Phoebe** (*Sayornis phoebe*) on 7 April. This is a relatively common bird here in Northern Virginia but we have spotted it in our yard only four times previously, the last being in October, 2020 during the fall migration. A beautiful **Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*) showed up on 20 April for only our fourth yard record and the earliest by 10 days! On 23 April, I heard, then saw, a solitary **Purple Martin** (*Progne subis*) flying up Cotton Farm Road in front of our house, headed for the cemetery. Neighbor Phil Donnelly reported seeing 5-6 martins perched on/flying around the colony at 0840 that same morning, thus confirming my sighting. This is the earliest date by far for the 3 years of our colony and is a good sign that the colony will continue to grow this year and beyond. It takes 2-3 weeks for the martins to pair off and begin nesting. I hope to have more to report in the next newsletter.

Other April birds included two new birds on each of two back-to-back days: **Red-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo olivaceus*) and a female **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) showed up on 25 April followed by **American Redstart** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) and **Scarlet Tanager** (*Piranga olivacea*) on 26 April. The arrival dates for three of these birds was much earlier than our previous dates: vireo, five days; redstart, 11 days; tanager, 8 days. While we have had six birds show up much earlier this year than in previous years, it would be premature to attribute this to the slow rise in global temperatures. The birds might have arrived in Fairfax earlier than the dates recorded but they might not have been in our yard when we were there to see them. Bird sightings are often a matter of a few seconds in timing! They are either here when you look, or they are not! It would take several more years of data to see if there is indeed a trend. In summary, as of the 26th of April we have logged **49** backyard species. We're hoping to hit 60 before ending our daily count in May.

As for the bluebird trail, we have **10** eggs in **3** boxes (one in the lower commons and two in the upper commons). Eight of our 10 boxes now have plexiglass skylights to deter House Sparrows, thanks to Jarrett Stark. This will really allow us to determine the efficacy of this measure to prevent sparrow predation of our bluebirds. So far, it seems to be working.

The biggest influx of migratory birds happens the last week of April and continues for the first 2 weeks of May. So you will have to wait for the June newsletter to see just what other birds showed up. The next couple of weeks would be a great time to get out into the commons to enjoy the warm spring weather while keeping your eyes open for the many beautiful migratory birds of Hickory Farms.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH TOP THREE "DID YOU KNOWS?"

By Allie Shaw

1. Did you know, you only need to commit to one walk or drive to your shift?
2. Did you know, teenagers can also earn service hours if they join their parent(s) during a shift?
3. Did you know our Neighborhood Watch partners closely with the local police department? Officer Tony, our liaison, recently shared some upcoming community events that might interest you.



**West Springfield District Station
Community Advisory Committee**

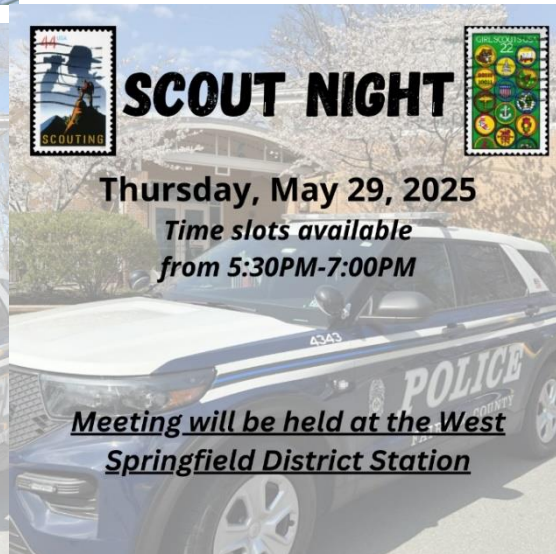
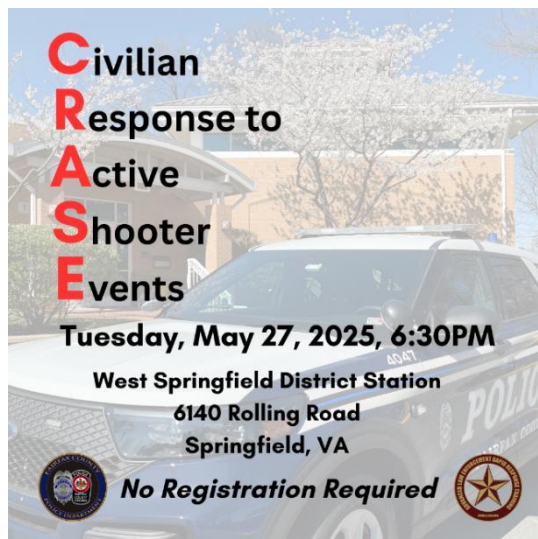
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

Tuesday, May 6, 2025, 7:00PM
6140 Rolling Road
Springfield, VA

Guest Speaker:

MPO Tony Capizzi

West Springfield District Crime Prevention Officer



STAY SAFE ONLINE: HOW TO SPOT AND AVOID PHISHING EMAILS

Submitted by Telah Jackson, HFCA Vice President

Cybercriminals are always looking for new ways to steal personal information, and one of the most common tactics they use is phishing emails. These emails may look like they come from a trusted source—your bank, a well-known company, or even a friend—but they are designed to trick you into revealing sensitive information or clicking on malicious links.

To protect yourself and your community, here are some key signs to watch out for when dealing with emails:

1. Suspicious Sender Addresses

Always check the sender's email address. Phishing emails often use addresses that look similar to legitimate ones but contain small differences, such as extra numbers, letters, or misspellings. For example, an email from "support@amazOn.com" is likely fraudulent.

2. Urgent or Threatening Language

Scammers want to scare you into acting quickly. Be cautious of emails that claim your account has been compromised, threaten legal action, or demand immediate payment. If you're unsure, contact the company directly through their official website or phone number.

3. Unusual Links and Attachments

Hover over any links in an email (without clicking) to see the actual web address. If it looks suspicious or doesn't match the sender's website, don't click it. Attachments can also contain viruses, so avoid opening unexpected files.

4. Requests for Personal Information

Legitimate organizations will never ask you to provide sensitive details, such as passwords, Social Security numbers, or credit card information, via email. If you receive such a request, it's likely a scam.

5. Poor Grammar and Spelling

Many phishing emails contain spelling mistakes, awkward phrasing, or grammatical errors. Official emails from reputable companies are usually professionally written and free of such mistakes.

What to Do If You Suspect a Phishing Email

- Do not click on any links or download attachments.
- Report the email to your email provider or the impersonated company.
- Delete the email from your inbox and trash folder.
- Warn others in your household or community to stay alert.

By staying vigilant and educating yourself on phishing tactics, you can help protect your personal information and keep our community safe online. If you ever feel uncertain about an email, it's always better to verify before taking action. Stay safe!

YARD SALE UPDATE

By Pete Scala

Since there was very little interest from homeowners, we will not sponsor a yard sale this spring. We may do one in the fall if there is interest.

STUDENT YELLOW PAGES



Lily Bucher
Kiera Stark
Cedar Batz

Lrbucher4@gmail.com
commonareas@hickoryfarms.org
571-398-1467

Babysitting/mother's helper, pet sitting
Pet sitting
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.

JOIN OUR LISTSERV!

Don't miss any news! There's no better way to stay in touch than through our Hickory Farms email listserv. Visit <https://hickoryfarms.org/>, click "Email Listserv" in the "For Residents" menu and follow the instructions.

HFCA BOARD MEETING NOTICE

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

For further information, contact any HFCA Board Member or hfca@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 will be distributed via paper copy to residents' homes and can also be accessed via our Hickory Farms website, <https://hickoryfarms.org/>. If you would like to opt out of receiving the paper copy and would like to receive it digitally, please email us at hfca@hickoryfarms.org.