

The Virginia Hills Echo



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Wilson Bridge Project Enters New Phase with Telegraph Road Interchange Work

Many of you may have been awakened in the last few weeks by major demolition in the vicinity of the Telegraph Road interchange on the Beltway. This involved the tear down of the existing ramps from Telegraph Road north in preparation for construction of three new ramps: a ramp from the Outer Loop to Telegraph Road north; a ramp from the Outer Loop directly to Eisenhower Avenue; and a ramp from Telegraph Road north directly to Eisenhower Avenue.

Contractors will build a temporary exit ramp from the Outer Loop to Telegraph Road north that will end at a traffic signal for a left turn onto northbound Telegraph Road. While the traffic signal will be timed to allow the maximum number of vehicles to pass, the temporary signal will reduce the number of vehicles that can pass on both Telegraph Road north and the Outer Loop ramp to Telegraph Road north.

Traffic delays are likely to ensue. While rush hour delays for Outer Loop traffic are not expected to worsen, Outer Loop to Telegraph Road ramp traffic may be delayed up to 15 minutes. Also, the morning north bound rush hour travel time on Telegraph Road is expected to take up to 20 minutes longer. This condition may last up to 8 months until the temporary traffic signal is removed in late 2010, when the actual ramp connecting the Outer Loop to Telegraph Road north will be finished. (continued on page 6)

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Virginia Hills Assessments for 2010

Residents of Virginia Hills should have received their assessments of their properties at the end of February. As always, VHCA has reviewed the assessments.

Fairfax County conducts a mass appraisal; properties are not assessed individually unless they have undergone renovation. Based on sales in the previous year (2009), an overall change for all the properties in Virginia Hills is determined by comparing those sales prices to the past year's assessments for the sold properties.

The bottom line is that most assessments in Virginia Hills were reduced by 10% from the 2009 assessment. VHCA does not have any complaints about that change. If your assessment increased or decreased less than 5%, you should call or e-mail the Department of Tax Administration (DTA) and request an explanation – unless you did a large renovation in 2009.

For the purposes of determining the change in assessments, there were 69 property sales in 2009, not including foreclosures. Foreclosures are recorded at the amount of the loan outstanding and are not related to the market value of the home. There were 12 foreclosures in Virginia Hills in 2009, the same number as in 2008.

DTA determined that 40 of the 69 sales were at arms-length fair market value as private party or lender sales. The other 29 sales were not included because DTA considered them not at fair market value because either the lender or property owner was forced to sell under duress or were handyman specials. (continued on page 6)

Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

***Tuesday, April 13th – 7:30 PM
Old Virginia Hills School, Diana Lane***

***Speaker: Brad Center, Lee District School Board
Representative***

Securing Your Wireless Network

Since Verizon has been installing high speed internet access in Virginia Hills, the number of wireless networks has multiplied considerably. One homeowner reports that previously he detected only three such networks, including his own. Now the number is eight. Previously all three networks were very secure. Now, only four of the eight are.

Is your wireless network secure? If it isn't, there are two possible consequences, both of them bad. First, anyone within range of your network can share your internet connection for free. If that person does a lot of downloading or uploading, it can slow your internet connection considerably. Second, if you have enabled print and file sharing, any files in shared locations can be read, downloaded, and even changed by anyone on your network, including people you don't want there.

This article presents a brief description of how to secure your wireless network, whether you have cable, FiOS, or even DSL or dialup. A more in-depth explanation will be sent via e-mail to anyone on the Virginia Hills e-mail list after the VHCA meeting on April 13th. Are you on that list? If you got the series of snow reports in February, you are. If you are not on the list and want to be, send an e-mail to echo@virginiahills.org.

Most routers activate a wireless network by default. If you don't have a computer that isn't wired to your router, or TiVo using a wireless connection, or a DVD player accessing streaming video, you don't need a wireless network. Turn it off.

If you didn't set your own user name and password for your router, do so immediately. The pre-set usernames and passwords are well known and offer no protection.

Most routers come with wireless security set to use WEP or WEP 64. FiOS routers do this. That's to ensure compatibility with the oldest wireless equipment, but WEP is easily broken by a cracker with software readily found on the internet. WPA2 is really the only good security method, but WPA is much better than WEP. You should change your security method to WPA2 if your hardware (router and computers) will support it. And use a key that is like a strong password – letters and numbers.

Look for the expanded version of this article in your e-mail.

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For yearly discount rate, see www.virginiahills.org/Echo.html

Virginia Hills Citizens Association Officers 2009-2010

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**Members for the Current 2009 -2010 Year
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Anne & Richard Frigon, John & Theresa Jeffreys,
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**Summer Concerts in Lee District Park
June Schedule**

- 02 Fairfax Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet
- 09 Still Surfin' (Beach Boys Tribute Band)
- 16 Ruthie & the Wranglers (Roots/Rock)
- 23 Machaya (Klezmer)
- 30 Tom Paxton (Folk)

Concerts begin at 7:30 PM and are free. Due to construction, this year the concerts will be held on the far side of the Rec Center (near the basketball court) where the County's Showmobile portable stage will be set up. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets.

Rose Hill Elementary Presents *Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs*, the Musical

Following the traditional storyline, the Snow White fairy tale is brought to life with an eclectic score of toe-tapping tunes in this full-scale, musical production performed by Rose Hill Elementary School K-6th graders with beautiful sets and costumes. The show is suitable for all ages. It will be held Friday, April 9th at 7:00 PM and Saturday, April 10th at 7:00 PM at Hayfield Secondary School.

Tickets will be available at the door for \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children.

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www.VirginiaHills.org**

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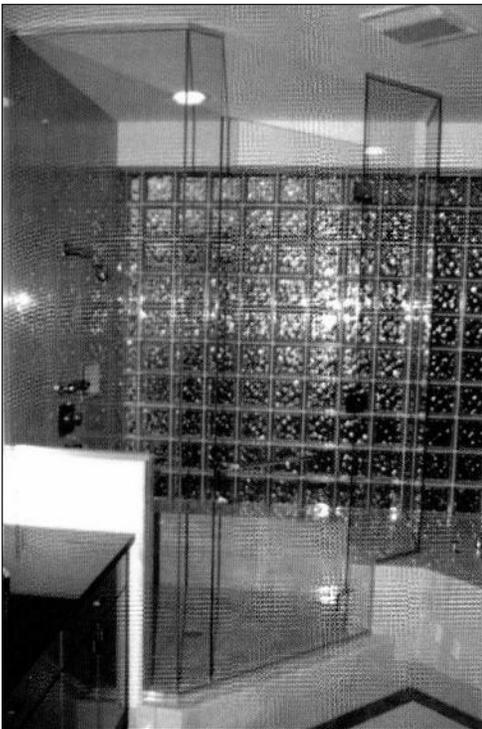
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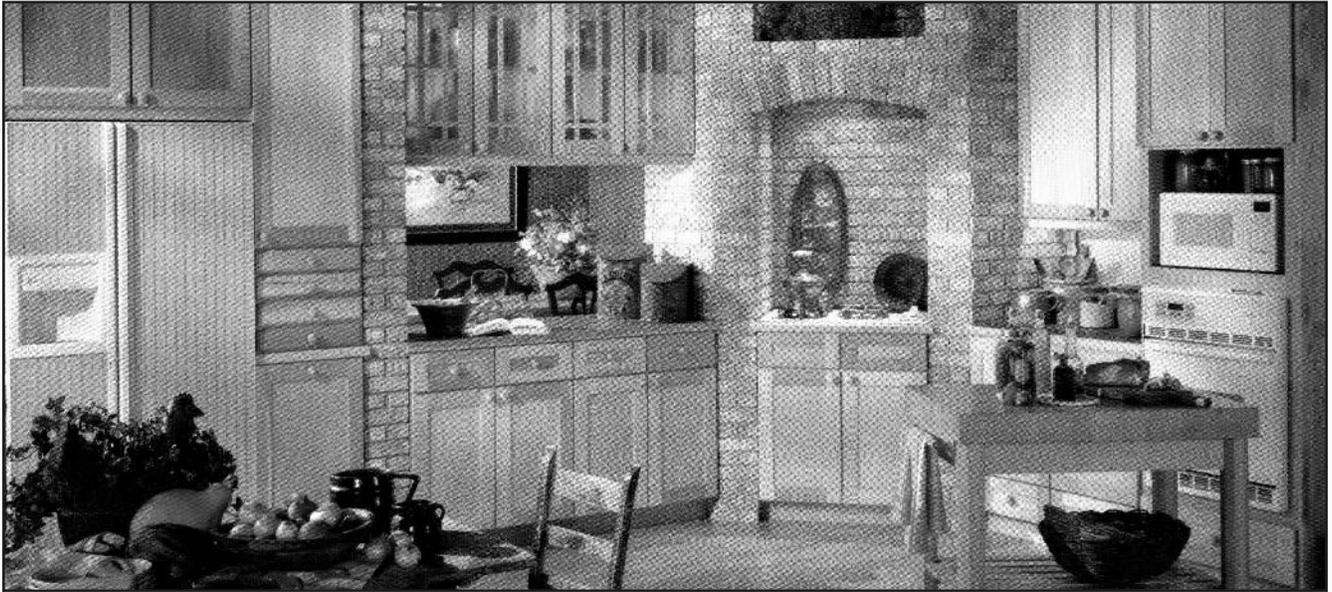
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Telegraph Road Interchange Work

(continued from page 1)

When completed, the three new ramps will decrease traffic on Telegraph Road north and Pershing Avenue, and will include new paths that will allow pedestrians and bicyclists easy access to the Eisenhower Valley from south of the Beltway.

By the end of the 2010 construction season, the goal is to have all traffic on the new local lane bridges and to have all Telegraph Road/Beltway on/off ramps in their final and permanent configuration.

By the time *The Echo* is published, all overnight demolition activities were scheduled to have been completed. This work over active travel lanes was required to be done at night for safety reasons.

Virginia Hills Assessments for 2010

(continued from page 1)

In addition to reviewing DTA's calculations, VHCA reviewed 35 properties throughout Virginia Hills to ensure that the 10% reduction was applied uniformly. As opposed to the previous year, uniformity seems to have prevailed except for a small cluster of three properties, and VHCA will discuss the issue with the homeowners involved.

However, given that there are 850 homes in Virginia Hills, VHCA advises all homeowners to check their individual assessments.

To check, subtract your 2010 assessment from your 2009 assessment. Divide that number by the 2009 assessment. Multiply by 100. That should give you a change of negative 9-11%.

Report the potholes!

Call VDOT at 800-367-7623

Or report online at

<http://viriniadot.org/travel/citizen.asp>

Recent Crime in Virginia Hills

A Virginia Hills resident reports items stolen from the front door area in the last few weeks, most recently a UPS-delivered package. The police officer who answered the call said that it had been happening a lot lately. Be aware that people walking on the sidewalks are looking at the front door area and in cars parked in front of houses for items to steal.

There have also been recent break-ins into cars, particularly on Berkshire Drive. Do NOT leave anything that looks valuable in your car, even if you lock it!

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Message from Supervisor McKay

Last year, our county budget was a wake up call to many of us who saw Fairfax as a land of plenty with quality of life for all. Slowly, we came to understand that we, too, were subject to the strong financial headwinds battering the national and state economies.

The county executive's proposed budget for the fiscal year that begins on July 1 reflects our new reality — one that is likely to continue for some time. Until a budget is adopted on April 27, my colleagues and I will be listening to constituents and fine tuning the budget to align it as closely as possible with citizen priorities and economic reality. It will be a challenge to maintain our quality of life and our school system while reducing services and turning our backs on programs that might be wonderful but unaffordable. I do believe that some government responsibilities are not negotiable. Public safety and basic human services are more important than ever during this economic downturn.

At first read, the proposed budget makes the best of a difficult situation. I am pleased that it recognizes the importance of zoning enforcement to our neighborhoods. Bringing together staff from different agencies into a centralized department of code enforcement (including the Strike Team) will let us respond to enforcement

issues more quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively. The budget also recognizes that we cannot use homeowners as a bottomless piggy bank for programs that we cannot afford. The proposed budget has a property tax rate of \$1.09; the Board of Supervisors has advertised a rate of up to \$1.12 to provide additional flexibility. This budget also recognizes the need to find other revenue sources, and I note that my suggestion last year to reinstitute the vehicle registration fee has been included. The \$33 fee is estimated to raise \$27 million a year.

Schools are the Board's priority and that's reflected in this budget with almost 54% of the General Fund. It may be possible to increase the school transfer, but it's too early to make that call until we know the state contribution to K-12.

Right now, I am concerned by the proposed elimination of middle school school resource officers — these police officers have made impressive inroads reducing gang activity in our schools. Eliminating them would cost us much more in the long run.

Our challenge is to find new ways of doing things: better and more efficient ways to stretch our revenue dollars, more partnerships with non-profits and the private sector, and diversified revenue sources to take the pressure off our homeowners. You can find more detailed information on the County budget from the link on the homepage of the County web site.

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Recent Virginia Hills Real Estate Market Activity

Status	Style	Address	BR	FB	HB	List \$	Close \$	Bsmt	Gar
ACTIVE	Rambler	6411 GENTELE CT	4	2	0	\$424,999		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6524 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	3	2	0	\$419,900		No	
ACTIVE	Rambler	3703 HEATHER CT	3	2	0	\$399,900		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Cape Cod	6214 SANDLIN CT	4	2	0	\$250,000		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Raised Rambler	6307 PROSPECT TER	5	2	0	\$349,000		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	3704 TRIGGER CT	3	1	0	\$250,000		Yes	
CNTG/KO	Raised Rambler	6502 DORSET DR	4	2	0	\$247,000		Yes	
CONTRACT	Split Level	3600 OAKWOOD LN	4	2	1	\$265,000		Yes	
CONTRACT	Rambler	3607 AUSTIN AVE	3	2	0	\$210,900		Yes	
CONTRACT	Rambler	3704 AUSTIN AVE	5	2	0	\$260,000		Yes	2
CONTRACT	Colonial	6500 BERKSHIRE DR	4	3	1	\$459,000		Yes	1
CONTRACT	Other	6615 BERKSHIRE DR	3	2	0	\$219,900		Yes	1
SOLD	Rambler	6411 WILCOX CT	3	2	0	\$330,000	\$320,000	Yes	
SOLD	Raised Rambler	6418 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$301,000	\$301,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6626 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$279,900	\$280,000	No	
SOLD	Rambler	6501 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	3	2	0	\$389,000	\$377,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	3601 OAKWOOD LN	3	2	0	\$265,900	\$240,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6308 PROSPECT TER	3	2	0	\$260,000	\$240,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6406 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$256,000	\$248,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6424 THE PARKWAY	3	2	0	\$260,000	\$300,000	No	
SOLD	Rambler	3715 AUSTIN AVE	3	1	0	\$325,523	\$300,000	Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	3709 HEATHER CT	3	2	0	\$210,000		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6513 ENFIELD DR	3	2	0	\$260,000		No	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6307 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$224,900		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6626 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$239,000		No	

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