

The Virginia Hills Echo



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3701 Heather Court

Over the past year, VHCA has received more questions about this property and the home being constructed there than any other issue. After the December VHCA meeting, President Boulter followed up on the status of this property with the County, particularly asking about potential "attractive nuisances" to include the unsecured windows into the crawl space and the temporary electrical service.

Recently the Director of the County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services provided the following information:

Permits to demolish the existing house and to construct a new house on existing foundation were issued on 8/15/2007. The building permit was extended twice, once to December 31, 2009, and then to December 31, 2010. The extensions were granted because DPWES determined that that construction had been suspended for causes beyond the control of the permit holder -- her extended military deployment overseas -- and could reasonably be expected to resume upon her return. Contact with the permit holder in December revealed that she was still deployed, but expected to return sometime in January.

DPWES inspectors re-inspected the building envelope January 13th and found the structure to be fully secured against unauthorized entry, except for several crawl space covers which they secured on the spot. Except for missing the street address numbers, construction on the exterior appeared near complete, and the grounds are tidy. (continued on page 3)

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Additional County-Wide Parking Restrictions

In the last *Echo*, we reported that the Board of Supervisors was holding a hearing on additional limits on commercial vehicle parking on County streets. The Board did establish additional county-wide regulations beyond those that apply in the Lee District Community Parking District.

In particular, the new regulations are more restrictive about the parking of pickup trucks and vans. These may not be longer than 21 feet, or 252". A review of 2010 pickup trucks revealed that a number of these trucks with long (8 foot) beds and crew cabs are longer than 252". Specific examples include Dodge Ram, GMC Sierra, and Chevrolet Silverado Pickups in the 2500 series and higher with the long beds and crew cabs. They must be parked in driveways, not on streets. Additionally, Ford and Dodge trucks in the 350/3500 model series may violate the gross vehicle weight limit of 12 tons and must also be parked in driveways.

If you own a long van or heavy duty pickup truck, you should check the manufacturer's web site or Edmunds.com to determine the overall length and gross vehicle weight. As always, trucks and vans making deliveries or working at a job site are permitted.

Brad Center to Speak at VHCA Meeting

Lee District School Board Representative Brad Center will speak at this Tuesday's VHCA meeting on the school system's budget for the upcoming year and on other school issues.

Mr. Center has been the Lee District representative on the Board since 2003.

Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

***Tuesday, February 9th – 7:30 PM
Old Virginia Hills School, Diana Lane***

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

Verizon FiOS Update

As promised in the previous Echo, here are some of the experiences Virginia Hills residents have had with newly installed Verizon FiOS service.

FiOS installation is usually scheduled as an 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM window or a 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM window. Installation may take four hours or more, and if a Verizon technician arrives at 5:00 PM, the tech may stay well into your evening. If this is a problem, tell the technician in advance when you'll need him or her to leave. Verizon may have to reschedule all or part of your installation. Verizon assumes that all residents in Virginia Hills currently have aerial runs of their outside phone line into the house, even if Verizon had buried the phone line in the past. If your electric service and your phone line are buried, and you want your FiOS line buried, it will take active intervention from you to make that happen. If the installation technician arrives and the fiber optic cable hasn't been buried to your house, he or she will want to install it overhead. If you insist, he or she will try to persuade you to take the option of running a temporary cable until the contractor can come out and bury cable. If you reject that and insist the cable be buried before installation begins, the technician will reluctantly agree and leave after rescheduling your appointment.

On the day of your installation, your plain old telephone system (POTS) line will be cut off, sometimes as early as midnight of that day. Your callers will get a message saying that your phone has been disconnected. If you have Verizon voice mail, it will also stop working. If you don't have a cell phone, the tech will be unable to contact you to tell you when he or she is on the way. If the tech doesn't arrive, or can't complete the installation, your old line will NOT be automatically turned back on, and you'll need to contact Verizon to make that happen. Ask the tech to help, which may get you quick service. Otherwise you may wait up to 24 hours after you call -- longer if you use Verizon's online problem report.

Verizon will attempt to use your existing cable inside the house as part of their installation. If there is no cable, or they can't use it, they'll run cable for you, but they won't "fish" cable through the walls. If you want a clean installation with no cable running along the baseboards, you'll need to either run cable through the walls and ceilings yourself or hire someone to do it.

FiOS technicians can hook up the internet portion of your connection with cat 5e wire instead of cable. This

is a good idea because almost no other consumer router will work with cable, and you may want to replace Verizon's router with one you buy separately. One reason to do this is that the current Verizon router does not support wireless N, the most modern protocol with better speed and range.

The FiOS technician seems to always have a second tech along to train. This means that the tech will have less time to spend training you, and you'll be dependent on online information to learn how to use your FiOS.

The good news is that once the installation is complete, users seem happy with the service. While the second tier of internet service promises speeds of 25 megabits/sec (about 3 megabytes/sec) downloading and 15 uploading, Verizon is actually delivering 25/25. Users also report better TV picture than they had been getting, from "slightly better" is they had previously been getting HD to substantially better if not.

As the previous Echo article suggested, Cox Cable has been offering concessions to retain their customers. Verizon salespeople have been undercutting published FiOS prices substantially if subscribers are willing to sign on for one or two years.



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The Virginia Hills Echo

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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Officers 2009-2010

President	Doug Boulter	President@virginiahills.org
Vice President	Ralph Zecca	VP@virginiahills.org
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**Members for the Current 2009 -2010 Year
Added Since December 8th**

Mary Ann Bennett, Sandra & Ed Conrad, Pete & Betty Galbaugh, Gene & Marie Gordon, Richard & CoraLee Hevenor, Jim & JoAnn McCracken, Rachel McDaniel, Kimberly Munch, Al Sobel, Gary & Pam Thomas, Jo Thompson, Kevin Wright & Elizabeth Anderson.

Please Renew Now! Save Us 44¢

VHCA is preparing the membership solicitation letter for this membership year. If you haven't yet paid your dues (since last August), would you send them to us now using the form at the right and save VHCA the cost of first class postage to send you the letter?

3701 Heather Court
(continued from page 1)

Re-inspection of the temporary electrical service and its ground fault protection, for which a permit had been pulled, found the service in good order; there is no electrical hazard.

Roof height is approximately 28 feet. Setbacks are in agreement with the approved plat, and greater than the prescribed minimums. This is a corner lot, so it has two "front yards": one is 37 feet, the other is 34 feet. The other two yard setbacks are 16 feet and 15 feet respectively.

Supervisor McKay's office is familiar with this problem and has made police from the Franconia Station aware of the homeless issue. Christina Manning of McKay's staff asks that if residents of Virginia Hills observe that the property is unsecured they notify her immediately.

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From the Fairfax County Police:

Lock Doors While Working in Yard

There have been a rash of burglaries of homes in the past year where the occupants were outside doing yard work or shoveling snow. Thieves entered side or rear doors and stole valuables or credit cards. In some cases, accomplices distracted the homeowners while the thieves entered the homes.

Police remind residents across Fairfax County to secure their doors when they are not present in their home, even if they are in their own yards or visiting nearby neighbors. Police also encourage residents to notify them of suspicious persons or solicitors in their neighborhoods.

Haitian Earthquake Relief Fraud Alert

The FBI reminds Internet users who receive appeals to donate money in the aftermath of last month's earthquake in Haiti to apply a critical eye and do their due diligence before responding to those requests. Past tragedies and natural disasters have prompted individuals with criminal intent to solicit contributions purportedly for a charitable organization or good cause.

Before making a donation of any kind, consumers should adhere to certain guidelines, to include the following:

- Do not respond to any unsolicited e-mails or click links contained within those messages.

- Be skeptical of individuals representing themselves as surviving victims or officials asking for donations via e-mail or social networking sites.
- Verify the legitimacy of nonprofit organizations by utilizing various Internet-based resources that may assist in confirming the group's existence and its nonprofit status rather than following a purported link to the site.
- Be cautious of e-mails that claim to show pictures of the disaster areas in attached files because the files may contain viruses. Only open attachments from known senders.
- Rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf, make contributions directly to known organizations to ensure contributions are received and used for intended purposes.
- Do not give your personal or financial information to anyone who solicits contributions or you may compromise your identity and make yourself vulnerable to identity theft.

Anyone who has received what appears to be a fraudulent e-mail requesting a contribution or anyone who may have been a victim of such a solicitation should notify the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov.

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**Message from Supervisor McKay
Walking to School**

A year ago, I first suggested looking at the walking school bus concept that is expanding into a number of communities across the country. While potential budget savings exist, the real value would be improving the health and safety of our children and our community.

In the past, driving made sense because schools, stores, and other community uses were far apart. Kids took the bus, or their parents drove them to school. However, many of our older schools can't accommodate large numbers of parents dropping off and waiting for their children. Now, this not only increases traffic congestion, but also affects safety, with a dangerous mix of cars and children in school kiss-and-ride lots.

Today, schools are required by law to provide bus service for every child who qualifies. This leads to many half-empty buses plying our roads, adding to congestion and pollution and costing the school system money that could otherwise be spent on teachers' salaries and the classroom. Wouldn't it make sense to rethink school bus routes to encourage children to walk or bike to school in areas where it is safe to do so?

Let's look at the safety aspect. My interest is personal as well as professional because it won't be too long before my daughter is ready for her first day of class. In

some areas of Fairfax County children can't and shouldn't walk, especially where sidewalks or trails are missing and heavy traffic makes walking hazardous. In those areas, it would make absolutely no sense to change busing boundaries. I am working with the school system to identify those areas so that the County can do its part to complete missing sidewalks and trails.

Government also has a strong responsibility to promote good health. We've all read about the childhood obesity epidemic, but there's another epidemic that's also of concern. According to the American Lung Association, asthma has become one of the most common childhood diseases. Studies show a strong link between asthma and air pollution -- and a good part of that pollution is attributable to the vehicles on the road. The EPA continues to classify us as an air quality nonattainment area, and every vehicle we get off the road will help.

Also, our financial reality can't be overlooked. Last year, we increased the tax rate and cut school and county services to cover the \$600+ million shortfall. This year, our combined shortfall is almost \$500 million and could go higher. When we can save teachers' jobs, hold the line on class size, and put dollars directly in the classroom without compromising health or safety, we ought to do it. I've been told that it costs about as much as the average teacher salary to put one school bus on the road. I am pleased that the County and the school system are working together on this issue .



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Recent Virginia Hills Real Estate Market Activity

Status	Style	Address	BR	FB	HB	List \$	Close \$	Bsmt	Gar
ACTIVE	Rambler	3601 OAKWOOD LN	3	2	0	\$265,900		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6411 WILCOX CT	3	2	0	\$330,000		Yes	
ACTIVE	Colonial	6500 BERKSHIRE DR	4	3	1	\$459,000		Yes	1
ACTIVE	Rambler	3703 HEATHER CT	3	2	0	\$399,900		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	6501 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	3	2	0	\$389,000		Yes	
CNTG/KO	Raised Rambler	6502 DORSET DR	4	2	0	\$247,000		Yes	
CNTG/KO	Raised Rambler	6418 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$340,000		Yes	
CNTG/KO	Rambler	6513 ENFIELD DR	3	2	0	\$260,000		No	
CNTG/KO	Rambler	6406 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$256,000		Yes	
CNTG/KO	Rambler	6308 PROSPECT TER	3	2	0	\$260,000		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	
SOLD	Rambler	6301 GENTELE CT	3	1	0	\$274,900	\$277,500	No	
SOLD	Raised Rambler	6611 THE PKWY	4	2	0	\$275,000	\$250,000	Yes	
SOLD	Raised Rambler	6214 HOUSTON CT	4	2	0	\$270,000	\$275,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6606 BERKSHIRE DR	3	2	0	\$349,900	\$360,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	4002 RONSON DR	4	2	0	\$244,900	\$280,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6317 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$349,950	\$346,450	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6308 TRACEY CT	3	3	0	\$419,000	\$419,000	Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6626 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$239,000		No	
WITHDRN	Rambler	3601 OAKWOOD LN	3	1	0	\$245,900		Yes	
TEMPOFF	Rambler	6307 PROSPECT TER	4	2	0	\$224,900		Yes	

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