

The Virginia Hills Echo



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Voting Precincts Redrawn; Virginia Hills Precinct Expands to Include All Virginia Hills Residents, Remains a Split Precinct

In June, the lead *Echo* article discussed the large number of split voting precincts resulting from the recent state senate redistricting that divided many precincts between two senate districts. In an effort to reduce the number of these "split" precincts, Fairfax County has redrawn some precinct boundaries to reduce the number of splits. The new precinct boundaries took effect September 1st and will apply to the November election.

Both Virginia Hills and Wilton precincts were split, with parts of each in the 30th and 36th Senate districts. The County has eliminated Wilton Precinct, and its voters will become part of either Virginia Hills Precinct or Mount Eagle Precinct.

This means that Virginia Hills residents who formerly voted in the Wilton Precinct will now vote in the Virginia Hills Precinct at the Virginia Hills Admin Center. The Virginia Hills Precinct will also gain the Kings Landing neighborhood just off Memorial Street.

Virginia Hills will remain a split precinct, with residents voting for state senator in either the 30th District or the 36th District. This split and the larger number of voters in the precinct may cause longer wait times to vote and voters should plan accordingly. It will help election officials speed things along if the voter knows his or her state senate district when coming to the poll book table.

The new voter card received this summer is still correct for voters who have always voted in Virginia Hills. Voters switched into the precinct from Wilton will be getting new voter cards before November

Primary Election Results

The following are the unofficial results from the Democratic and Republican Primaries on August 23. Official results are not available until 30 days after the election. Residents of Virginia Hills voted either in the Virginia Hills or Wilton precincts.

Democratic Primary, State Senator, 30th District

	<u>Va Hills</u>	<u>Wilton</u>
Ebbin*	10	35
Garvey	23	17
Krupicka	13	8

Republican Primary, State Senator, 36th District

Frederick*	15	11
Munoz	3	17

Republican Primary, Fairfax County Sheriff

Cooper*	21	16
Kammerer	20	10

As a result of these primaries, Democrat Adam Ebbin will oppose Republican Tim McGhee in the 30th District and Republican Jeff Frederick will oppose incumbent Democrat Toddy Puller in the 36th District on November 8th. Republican Bill Cooper will oppose incumbent Democrat Stan Berry for sheriff.

* indicates County-wide or District-wide winner

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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

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

Speaker: TBA

The President's Corner

Comment from VHCA President Ralph Zecca

The summer is coming to an end, which means one thing; the beginning of a new fiscal year for the Virginia Hills Citizens Association (VHCA) is at hand. It also means that VHCA will launch its annual membership drive. Many people ask what good is the VHCA? I often point out that it is only as good as its members.

Currently, there is a very dedicated, but small group that has devoted time and energy to get us to where we are. Just imagine what we can do if we all participate? The benefits of joining are threefold:

- Your participation will help focus the efforts of VHCA in addressing the concerns of our community to our elected officials. For example, earlier this year VHCA addressed its concerns to the Lee District Supervisor regarding the no thru truck restrictions on South Kings Highway;
- Your participation ensures that the needs of this neighborhood are actually met. This can be done by attending our VHCA meetings and participating in our discussions. Recent concerns addressed via the meetings and/or email include the need for monitoring speeding traffic; the need for increased police patrols; or the need to repair roads, etc.; and
- Your participation helps promote the sense of community between you and your neighbors (i.e. guest speakers at the VHCA meetings; helping in establishing social events; etc.)

Now please do not read that participation means devoting a boat load of resources to include money and time. We are not asking that. Like you, all of us have work, family, and many other commitments. Instead I suggest that you look at participation as being a spectrum of options. It could be just attending our meetings and participating in our group discussions. It could be volunteering to lead a social event (i.e. I would like to have a family movie night, but lack the volunteers to make this viable). It could be helping in fixing the Virginia Hills sign on Telegraph Road. Or there are those who are discussing the idea of a Neighborhood Watch. It could even be to help deliver this very Echo that you are now reading. All of these things require leadership and volunteers to make them possible. I hope that you will join us this year in some capacity and

help us make this a community that we can continue to proud of and love.

- Ralph Zecca

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New Membership Year Under Way

The new membership year began on September 1st, coinciding with the start of the Association's fiscal year. Please join or renew your VHCA membership now using the form on the right.

Lee District Resource Fair on September 24th

Supervisor Jeff McKay is sponsoring a resource fair for Lee District on Saturday, September 24 from 9:00 AM until Noon at the Franconia Governmental Center, 6121 Franconia Road.

County experts and Lee District staff will be on hand to help residents with issues such as:

- Property maintenance
- Building without permits
- Parking issues on public streets
- Junk vehicles on public streets/private property
- Trash
- Blight
- Police and safety concerns
- Health concerns
- Hoarding
- Traffic calming

Kingstowne Area Artists To Host Art Exhibit and Sale October 1-2

The Kingstowne Area Artists Association will exhibit and sell its work on Saturday, October 1st, from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM and on Sunday, October 2nd, from 12:00 to 5:00 PM at the Snyder Center at 6450 South Van Dorn Street. The event is free and open to the public. Work in a variety of media will be shown, including acrylics, oils, watercolors, mixed media, pastels, photography, pen and ink, and digital media. Refreshments will be served. For directions to the Snyder Center, please go to www.kingstowne.org.

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2011-2012 Membership

Mail to: **VHCA, P.O. Box 10837,
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I'd (We'd) like to join / renew my (our) membership in the Virginia Hills Citizens Association. Enclosed are the annual membership dues of \$7.00 per household. I am also including a contribution in the amount of

\$ _____.

Name (s) _____

Address _____

City _____

Zip Code _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Comments: _____

Checks for dues may be made payable to VHCA or the Virginia Hills Citizens Association.

Note:

Discounts at the restaurants below are only available to VHCA members upon presentation of a valid VHCA membership card.

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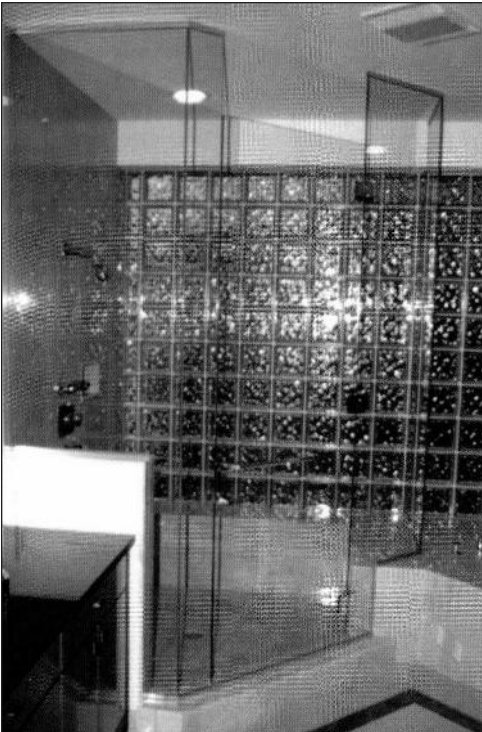
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County Pickup of Yard Waste and Brush

Many homeowners have been confused by the rules for pickup of yard waste and brush. Here's the explanation from the County collections guidelines.

To be picked up with the trash, yard waste (leaves, weeds, grass clippings) must be in a separate container or in clear plastic bags and should be set a bit away from regular trash. Limbs and branches must be tied together in bundles no longer than 4 feet. Bundles, bags, or containers may not weigh more than 50 lbs.

Yard waste that doesn't follow this rule, primarily large amounts of brush, will only be picked up as a special collection. To schedule a special collection, call 703-802-3322 or go on line to the DPWES web site.

Under the rules for special collections, limbs may be no longer than 6 feet and no more than 6 inches in diameter. The pile of brush may be no more than 12 cubic yards, or about 5' by 6' by 10'. Root balls and stumps may not be present. Do not mix lumber with brush and limbs. If your pile of brush exceeds 12 cubic feet, you will be charged under the MegaBulk program, designed for large collections to include disposal of whole trees. Minimum charge for MegaBulk is \$60.

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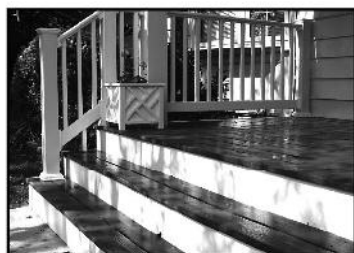
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View from the Hills

Doug Boulter's Advice on Home Repair:

Preparing for Flooding, Hurricanes, and Heavy Snows

Given the serious storms and power outages we've experienced in the last few years, it's time to talk about preparations we need to take to protect our homes and ourselves. There are lots of articles out there about what emergency supplies you need to keep on hand, so I won't talk about them. I will try to mention things that might not be so obvious in the way of preparations.

Generators

Should you get a generator to solve power outage problems? For an old (2002), but still fairly accurate article I wrote about generators, go to

<http://www.dougboulter.com/repair/electric.htm#generators>

Phones and Communications

Losing power has a somewhat different impact today than it did 15 years ago. The old telephone system was powered by current delivered over the phone line, so as long as the phone lines weren't down, you still had phone service. Then came cordless phones that failed in a power outage when their batteries died, so the advice was to keep at least one corded phone in your system.

Today, however, phone systems may be connected to cable or fiber optic systems and plugged into your household power – with a battery backup. This means that with a long outage, you could lose phone service. For many of these systems, the battery backup doesn't apply to internet connections, which then go down as soon as the power is shut off. One step you can take is buying a UPS (uninterruptable power supply) into which you can plug your cable or fiber optic system. Depending on the size of the UPS and the draw you place on it, you may be able to gain a day or two of internet service. However, you'll also need a UPS for your internet router/modem and one for your desktop or laptop computer – or a really big one to handle both.

Now that many people have cell phones, in theory they have telephone access until the battery in the phone dies. We've seen the general unreliability of the cell networks in an emergency, but often once the panic stage has passed, the cell system will be usable. There are inexpensive battery powered chargers you can use to provide roughly one charge to your cell per set of AA batteries. If you depend on your cell, you might want to investigate such a device.

Finally, in regard to phones, it's a good idea to keep a written list of key emergency numbers (power company, gas company, etc.) and family and friends' numbers written down somewhere. Once power is gone and batteries die, any phone numbers on electronic devices won't be accessible.

Trees

As much as we like trees, no one likes falling trees. A large tree that lands on a house can cause major damage and serious injury to anyone in its path. Many tree problems can be prevented, however, through tree care done on a routine basis.

Dead limbs will fall from trees in high winds and heavy snow loads. Dead or near dead trees will topple over, particularly if there has been heavy rain and the ground is saturated with water.

A good arborist can help prevent both types of problem. Obviously dead trees and dead limbs and branches should be removed. What most homeowners don't realize, however, is that thinning out the crown of a tree will help it resist wind and snow loads. Thick crowns can become sails in heavy winds, and if there is nowhere for the snow to fall through the tree, wet snow will accumulate much faster than it otherwise would.

I say that you need a good tree specialist to thin a tree because it's very important that it be done right, and the work takes far more skill and experience than a guy operating a chain saw with brute force. A real tree specialist will take 1-2 hours minimum to thin a tree 25' in height. It's a real art.

Normal growing trees should be thinned every 3-4 years. However, a crown should have no more than 25% removed in a given year, so if you have neglected thinning for a very long time, you may need work two years in a row to start out.

Your arborist can also advise you on problems with the roots (killed by heavy vehicles, too much mulch, not getting enough water, etc). Remember that prevention is much preferred to the tree falling!

To Be Continued

In the next part of this article, we'll discuss wind and water damage.

Maintaining Your Sidewalk

Several residents have recently asked about their obligation to maintain the sidewalk in front of their home. It is the homeowner's responsibility to sweep the sidewalk, shovel snow off the walk within 24 hours after snow has stopped falling, and prune shrubbery and ground cover so that the full sidewalk is clear. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the concrete of which the sidewalk is built.

If a homeowner fails to keep trees or shrubs pruned back so that pedestrians cannot use the walk or drivers cannot see, this creates a safety hazard. VDOT's maintenance supervisor will give the homeowner a certain number of days to address the complaint before sending out a crew to do the work **at the homeowner's expense**. Having VDOT do the work is not a desirable option as their crews are more interested in safety than aesthetics or the health of the plants in question.

Sidewalks are key to the "walkability" of any community with busy streets. And the ability to walk in a community is a key factor in its quality of life. While Virginia Hills generally has good sidewalks, it is up to each resident to keep the sidewalk clear for their neighbors to walk on.

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The Alexandria Water Company

Some homeowners looking at survey maps of their properties may notice that an easement to a small section of the property is held by "The Alexandria Water Company." A search reveals no current company by that name, and even a search on the internet isn't helpful. Who is the Alexandria Water Company?

A recent bulletin to customers of Fairfax Water provides the answer. There was an Alexandria Water Company; it built the Upper Occoquan Dam in the late 1950s. Fairfax Water purchased the company in 1967.

As a result, Fairfax Water now holds those easements. The *Echo* knows of no plans by Fairfax Water to use those easements to do any construction in Virginia Hills, but would have the right to use them. It wouldn't be a good idea to build an addition to your house on that or any easement.

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Message from Supervisor McKay

As your local elected official, I take sidewalk level issues seriously and make a point to spend time in our neighborhoods. While I often tour my district with the police, it's usually daytime, in a police cruiser. Recently, I hopped on a police mountain bike and peddled for miles with the Mount Vernon bike team on a 9:00 PM to midnight ride-along (the Mount Vernon station serves a good part of Lee District).

The ride-along included much of the Route One corridor, focusing on neighborhoods where residents requested additional police presence or where there were numerous calls for service. That's why it's important for you to call the police if you see or hear something worrisome in your neighborhood — police resources are allocated partly by calls for service. The ride-along included patrolling shopping centers and neighborhoods; clearly the bike team knows every inch of our district. With a sidewalk-level perspective and the flexibility and mobility of a bicycle, the team can do things that police in cars cannot. It's one of the reasons why our police officers are on a first name basis with many of our residents — good ones and bad ones. The officers know how to get to every corridor neighborhood — by trail, sidewalk, woods, or what have you.

During the ride-along, we approached a seemingly innocent parked car and found it held individuals high on PCP. The officers knew one of the miscreants by name — a criminal frequent flyer. This stop resulted in three arrests and valuable intelligence for our war on illegal drugs.

Overall, Fairfax County and Lee District are very safe — among the safest communities in the entire country. As we patrolled, residents waved, wished us a good evening, and were happy to see officers out of their cars and on the sidewalk.

Safe streets don't happen by accident and this ride-along has renewed my appreciation for our public safety forces and their dedication and commitment. We are fortunate to have these men and women. And that's why I've insisted that our budget reductions spare our public safety forces as much as possible.

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ACTIVE	Rambler	3712 LOGAN CT	4	2	0	\$360,000		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rancher	3914 SPECT CT	3	1	0	\$349,900		Yes	
ACTIVE	Raised Rambler	6633 DORSET DR	3	1	0	\$349,990		Yes	1
ACTIVE	Rambler	6417 PROSPECT TER	3	2	0	\$345,000		Yes	1
ACTIVE	Raised Rambler	6311 GENTELE CT	4	2	0	\$325,000		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6516 BERKSHIRE DR	3	2	0	\$345,555		Yes	
ACTIVE	Colonial	6515 ENFIELD DR	5	4	0	\$429,000		No	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6316 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	2	2	0	\$289,900		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6607 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$349,000		No	1
ACTIVE	Rambler	6106 PIKE CT	3	2	0	\$329,900		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rancher	3915 SPECT CT	5	2	0	\$399,900		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	6049 TELEGRAPH RD	3	2	0	\$347,550		Yes	1
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	6327 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$389,900		Yes	
SOLD	Colonial	6108 THE PKWY	4	2	0	\$379,900	\$370,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	3709 AUSTIN AVE	3	2	0	\$349,000	\$343,000	Yes	

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