

The Virginia Hills Echo



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Brad Center's Final School Board Report

This is the last time I'll have the privilege of writing to you as your elected School Board member. I'd like to thank you for allowing me to serve two terms as your representative. For the past eight years, we've been a team. We tackled some pretty impressive challenges and made substantial progress in addressing those problems and improving student achievement in Fairfax County. I've always asked for your input on Fairfax County Public School issues, and you've responded with constructive feedback and informed suggestions. Through the strength of our partnership, we made strides in transforming the philosophy and focus of FCPS for the betterment of our students.

In 2005 when the Board embarked on a new operating structure, Strategic Governance, I met with you in a series of community dialogues. Together, we identified a new set of beliefs, a new vision, and mission. Based on your input, the School Board established Student Achievement Goals, which focused on "the whole child." In addition to academics, we included Essential Life Skills and Responsibility to the Community – skills that would ensure a successful future for our students. I was and continue to be proud of that partnership and accomplishment.

With the opening of South County Secondary School, our community worked through the boundary adjustments to relieve overcrowding, without burdening Hayfield Secondary. Listening to your concerns and wishes helped me prepare for the debate and enabled me to advocate for the best option for all our children, and it made us realize we could do better with the overall boundary determination. To that end, we have made several changes to improve that process.

(continued on Page 2)

November General Election Results

The following are the official results for the Virginia Hills precinct for the November 8 general election. These results include voters from Wilton Woods who now vote in Virginia Hills. Turnout was 30.7%.
* indicates County-wide or District-wide winner

State Senator, 30th District

McGhee	95
Ebbin*	113

State Senator, 36th District

Frederick	133
Puller*	235

County Sheriff

Cooper	235
Berry*	304

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

Williams	166
Bulova*	325
DeCarlo	38
Radle	12

Soil and Water Conservation Director

Cranmer	199
Gagnon*	264
Lamb*	297
Marchetti	126
Peterson*	245

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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

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

Speaker: Dominion Power

The President's Corner

Comment from VHCA President Ralph Zecca

As many of you may have noticed, this issue of the Echo is slightly different. The Virginia Hills Citizens Association (VHCA) inserted a letter from our Membership Director, Mr. Warren Suyderhoud, along with a self-addressed envelope. The purpose of the letter is less about raising money and more about raising awareness and encouraging you to join us. For those of you that were once active members, we are asking you to come back. For those of you that have never been members, we are welcoming you to join us. In either case, we are hoping to bring together a group of people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to transform our neighborhood into a community.

So what are the benefits of joining? Well, there are no tricks or gimmicks. Those who join are not required to do anything, but are always encouraged to be active. Like with any endeavor, it is what you personally make of it. For some, it is the satisfaction of just donating some money toward a worthy cause. For others it is a chance to volunteer and help their fellow neighbor. And yet for others, it is merely the chance to meet and talk with their neighbors at our bi-monthly meeting. In any case, we ask you to join.

Of course the holidays times are rapidly approaching, and from our families to yours, we wish you the best and that the new year brings you and your much love, health, and happiness.

- Ralph Zecca

Brad Center's Final School Board Report

(continued from Page 1)

We successfully implemented full-day kindergarten in every Lee District elementary school, years before it became a county-wide standard. Our youngest students benefited from the increased instruction time. Additionally, we have seen a continued rise in test scores and a decline in the minority student achievement gap that has widened in many other places throughout the country – and we've done all of this during very difficult budgetary times.

These are just the highlights of our accomplishments over the past two terms; there were many more, too numerous to list. Without your support, your

commitment to our students and schools, and your willingness to step forward when needed, none of this would have been possible. I leave the Board knowing we have made great strides and that the new Board has the opportunity to build upon those successes to do even more for the children of Fairfax County. Thank you, once again! I wish you and your family a successful future.

- Brad Center

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Publisher	The Print Shop

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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Officers 2010-2012

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Members Joining Since the September Meeting

Kathleen Alwes, Rivas & Jose Bertolo, Marilyn Doebel, Brian Jacobs, Natalie Nestor, Martha Singleton, Norman Speicher, Guntis & Inta Sradars, Gary Staub.

If you are on this list or paid your dues prior to or at the September meeting, you are already a member for this year and can disregard the letter enclosed with this newspaper. If you have not received your membership card and want one, please contact Membership Director Warren Suyderhoud.

Pets Outdoors in Virginia Hills

Various residents have asked *The Echo* to mention the following items concerning pets outdoors.

All dogs must be leashed when outside. If you want to let your dog play "off-leash" with other dogs, try the County's Grist Mill Park, not to be confused with Mount Vernon's Washington's Grist Mill area. The dog park is at 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy.

Please clean up after your dog when you walk him/her.

Foxes and coyotes are out in Virginia Hills and they have attacked, killed, and eaten cats left out at night. Consider keeping your cats indoors at night.

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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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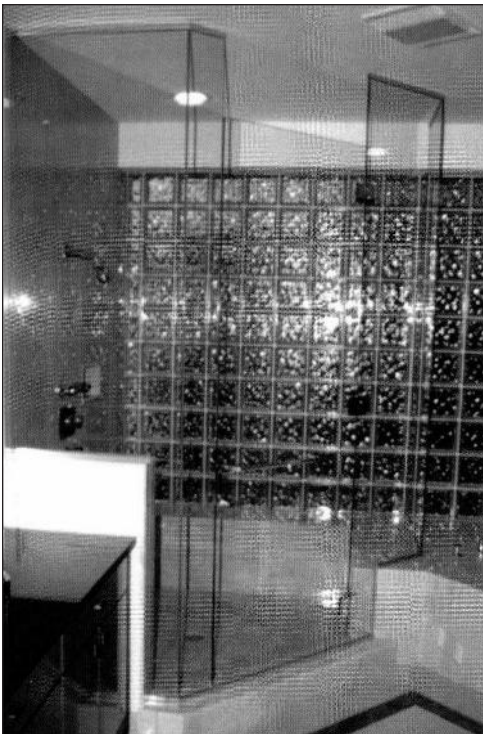
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Pet Safety -- Winter Preparedness Tips (from Fairfax County)

If a pet is outdoors, **by law, it must be provided with shelter**. The pet's house should be elevated off the ground to prevent moisture accumulation and have a door of some kind to keep out winter winds, sleet, and snow. Shelters should be insulated or heated. In severely cold or inclement weather, no pet should be kept outside!

Other tips to keep pets safe include:

- **Don't let dogs off their leash** or they may get lost and suffer cold-weather related problems.
- Snow and salt should be removed from pets' paws immediately to avoid burning the paw pads. Use a pet-safe de-icing salt.
- **Frostbitten skin is red or gray**. Apply warm, moist towels to thaw out frostbitten areas slowly until the skin appears flushed. Contact your veterinarian as soon as possible for further care.
- Outdoor pets require extra calories to keep warm so feed your pet a little more during cold winter months.

- **Be sure your pet's water doesn't freeze** while outdoors.
- Cats, house pets, and wildlife may climb onto vehicle engines for warmth during cold weather. **Be sure to check under the hood before starting your vehicle and honk the horn** to startle any animals seeking shelter inside.

**Happy Holidays
From
The Officers of the VHCA!**

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View from the Hills

Doug Boulter's Advice on Home Repair:

Preparing for Flooding, Hurricanes, and Heavy Snows, Part II

Last time we talked about problems with power and communications, as well as the dangers posed by trees and tree limbs. This time, we'll focus on wind, water, and snow damage.

Wind

Wind is a problem in two situations, hurricanes and tornadoes. While it's unlikely that our neighborhood will experience the same kinds of conditions that occur in Florida and the Gulf Coast for hurricanes, or in the south and Midwest for tornadoes, we had a hurricane this year, and have suffered small tornadoes in the past.

We now know enough to build houses that can withstand both hurricanes and small tornadoes with no or minimal damage. This usually involves using metal connectors to hold together the frame of the house. However, it is often difficult to retrofit older houses like ours since these connectors need to go on before the drywall. But if you are building an addition, it's a good idea to ask the contractor to use the connectors to help hold things together. Building codes, even in non-coastal areas, are demanding the use of such connectors as well.

The real danger of wind is that it will propel objects such as tree limbs and lawn furniture through your windows. Once a window is broken, the high winds can pressurize the house and blow out walls or blow off parts of the roof, causing catastrophic failures. You can help prevent this by bringing inside anything outside that might blow around, especially heavy objects. Ask your neighbors to do the same. Anything left outside is a potential missile that can break a window. And the discussion of trimming dead wood from trees is especially important.

If our area is warned of the approach of a very severe hurricane, you can do what homeowners at the beach do – board up windows with plywood. Use lots of nails, or better, screws, to hold the plywood on, or it will be torn off and become a missile as well. Your priority should be to board up the windows facing the direction from which the storm is coming. Roll-down hurricane shutters and hurricane panels are probably overkill for this area, as is hurricane proof glass. The latter will break, but at a much, much higher threshold than regular glass, and it will hold together to some degree even when broken.

In case of a tornado, go to your basement, preferably to a room with no windows or as far from windows as you can get. If you don't have a basement, go to an interior room with no windows, and/or get under a heavy piece of furniture.

Water

While the most serious danger from water is sudden flooding, more common in this area is failures of sump pumps that cause water to fill up basements. If you have a sump pump, it should have a backup battery, and if you're expecting a long storm, a second backup. If you need such a large pump that it goes through backup batteries quickly, you'll need a generator. Remember to use the generator only outside. A generator running inside a house can produce levels of carbon monoxide high enough to cause poisoning and even death.

If your basement would flood without a sump pump, it's not a good idea to store valuables, mementos and memories down there.

As always, if we're expecting a severe storm, make sure your gutters are clean and in good working order.

Remember that regular insurance policies don't cover flooding or water backup. Your insurer can sell you coverage for water backup, and will sell you government flood insurance with the cost based on your risk.

Snow

While snow can cause great inconvenience, it isn't a major threat to your house in this area, even the major snows we had two years ago. Roof framing in Virginia Hills homes is very strong, and going up on your roof to shovel off the snow isn't required. In fact, it's very dangerous to do that, and you're much more likely to fall and hurt yourself than you are to do much good. Just remember not to use any devices that vent through the roof – range hoods and bath fans come to mind – that will release warm air and melt the snow. The resulting water will usually run down the roof and freeze again near the gutters. The frozen water will cause ice dams, potentially forcing water under the shingles and causing roof leaks.

If snow builds up along the sides of your house, be sure to clear any dryer vents, particularly if you have a gas dryer. Carbon monoxide from the combustion of the gas can back up in the house. Even with an electric dryer, warm moist air can get into places where you don't want it, soaking insulation and destroying its insulating value or even rotting the wood framing.

Finally, try to keep your sidewalks shoveled so that you can get out of the house if necessary, emergency personnel can get to you, and your neighbors can walk in the neighborhood without having to walk in the road.

November General Election Results

(continued from Page 1)

School Board at Large (three elected)

Brown-Kaplin	231
Kendall	155
Mancheno-Smoak	170
McElveen*	253
Moon*	247
Stuban	138
Velkoff*	230

School Bonds

Yes	379
No	182

Also unopposed on the ballot, and therefore elected, were Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, Delegate Mark Sickles, and Lee District School Board candidate Tamara Derenak Kaufax.

Upcoming elections include the Republican presidential primary on March 6, 2012 and primaries for senator and member of the House of Representatives, if the parties choose to have them, on June 12, 2012.

**Visit our web site at
www.VirginiaHills.org**

Prevent Auto Break-Ins

Thieves are always looking for opportunities for easy pickings, and the holiday season offers them some added benefits. Wrapped presents, purses, cell phones, and tablets are just too tempting. Never leave any valuables in plain sight in your car. If you can't take them with you, lock them in your trunk.

As we've written here before, lock your car! Even when you're in your own driveway, an unlocked car is the easiest target for thieves. If a car is locked and nothing of value is visible, most thieves won't break in.

Park in well-lit places where lots of people are present. Thieves will not break car windows if they're being observed. The reason valuables in your car aren't safe in your driveway at night is that no one is around at 3:00 in the morning to see the thief breaking in, no matter how well lit the driveway is.

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Message from Supervisor McKay

Some days, you don't know whether to laugh, cry, or move to a town with a population of 50. We're living through those days right now, especially concerning Route 1 and BRAC where there's both good and bad news to report.

It's no secret that Route 1, traffic-choked on the best of days, has been gridlocked since before BRAC implementation. The problem has been growing since September 2001 when Woodlawn Road, the connector between Telegraph Road and Route 1, was closed for security reasons. We've been counting on the opening of a new connector road — Mulligan Road — to relieve some of the congestion. Construction began last year, only to be halted by two bid protests. Federal procurement law gives the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) 100 days to issue a decision on the protest, and, should FHWA adhere to that schedule, we'll have needlessly lost more than a year of construction time and countless hours of lost productivity and revitalization opportunities.

Mulligan Road is a critical connection for the region and the South County area and road construction can't be

held hostage to a chain of bid protests that appear without merit. At the November 1 Board of Supervisors meeting, Chairman Bulova, Supervisor Hyland, and I presented a board matter asking the County to send a letter to the FHWA urging it to minimize any further construction delays. My motion was unanimously approved and we are now working with our federal elected representatives to obtain relief.

Then, there's the good news. We've just learned that thanks to Representative Jim Moran's efforts, Virginia will receive a federal grant of \$180 million to widen Route 1 from two lanes in each direction to six lanes between Telegraph Road and Mount Vernon Highway. Today, this portion of Route 1 carries 56,000 vehicles a day. Not surprisingly, it has one of the highest accident rates in Northern Virginia. Construction on this 3.5 mile section of the road should begin in 2013 and be completed in 2016. While that's several more years of congestion to endure, at least there's hope.

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Recent Virginia Hills Real Estate Market Activity

Status	Style	Address	BR	FB	HB	List Price	Close Price	Bsmt	Gar
ACTIVE	Colonial	6309 GENTELE CT	3	1	1	\$270,000		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6500 HILLVIEW AVE	3	2	0	\$340,000		No	
ACTIVE	Raised Rambler	6520 BERKSHIRE DR	4	2	0	\$364,950		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6309 THE PKWY	3	1	0	\$339,000		No	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6106 PIKE CT	3	2	0	\$329,900		Yes	
ACTIVE	Rambler	6516 BERKSHIRE DR	3	2	0	\$324,888		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	6316 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	5	2	0	\$389,990		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Raised Rambler	6311 GENTELE CT	4	2	0	\$295,000		Yes	
CNTG/NO KO	Rambler	3712 LOGAN CT	4	2	0	\$360,000		Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6212 DADSON CT	5	2	0	\$244,900	\$275,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6213 THE PARKWAY	2	1	0	\$319,900	\$311,000	No	
SOLD	Colonial	6515 ENFIELD DR	5	4	0	\$429,000	\$415,000	No	
SOLD	Rambler	6417 PROSPECT TER	3	2	0	\$299,000	\$265,000	Yes	1
SOLD	Rambler	6618 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$350,000	\$350,000	Yes	
SOLD	Raised Rambler	6633 DORSET DR	3	1	0	\$349,990	\$342,000	Yes	1
SOLD	Rambler	6327 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$389,900	\$385,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6049 TELEGRAPH RD	3	2	0	\$347,550	\$347,550	Yes	1
SOLD	Rancher	3914 SPECT CT	3	1	0	\$299,900	\$273,000	Yes	
SOLD	Rambler	6316 VIRGINIA HILLS AVE	2	2	0	\$274,900	\$270,000	Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6204 HOUSTON CT	3	1	0	\$339,000		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6108 PIKE CT	4	2	0	\$345,000		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6607 DORSET DR	3	2	0	\$325,000		No	1
WITHDRN	Rancher	3915 SPECT CT	5	2	0	\$399,900		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6204 HOUSTON CT	3	1	0	\$339,000		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6403 WILCOX CT	3	1	1	\$354,900		Yes	
WITHDRN	Rambler	6514 ENFIELD DR	3	1	0	\$300,000		No	1

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