

The Virginia Hills Echo



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Managing Snow in Fairfax County

Are we done with snow for the year? The occasional warm days may make us think or hope so, but historically there have been large snow storms as late as the end of March. The good news is that there have been some major improvements in the way Virginia handles snow this year.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is responsible for snow plowing in Fairfax County. To report unplowed roads or hazardous conditions: Email novainfo@vdot.virginia.gov or call 1-800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623).

Here's a list of what's new for winter 2012-13:

- More equipment: Nearly 4,000 trucks and plows, mostly contracted, are available for snow and ice removal in northern Virginia. That's 1,200 more trucks than during the severe winter of 2010.
- A super-sized salt dome located at the Beltway and Van Dorn Street was added to help ensure that crews don't run low on materials during severe storms. The dome will hold 22,000 tons of salt—about three times the capacity of a typical salt dome.
- Four super-sized front loaders that can push snow with 20-foot wide blades or scoop snow with massive buckets. This new equipment will help clear interstates during severe storms.
- Seven high-pressure flush trucks are dedicated to clearing snow and ice that accumulate around the bollards that separate the new 495 Express Lanes from the regular lanes.

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Jefferson Manor Land Use Changes Proposed

On February 4th, the Lee District Land Use Committee heard the report from the County staff on the preliminary changes to the comprehensive plan to allow redevelopment of the portion of Jefferson Manor opposite the Huntington Metro station. The area is bounded by North Kings Highway to the east, Fort Drive to the south, Monticello Road to the west, and Farmington Drive to the north.

Property owners, developers, and residents of the Jefferson Manor community have been struggling with possible redevelopment for years. A plan was presented by the property owners as part of the area plan review in 2005, but it was withdrawn after the Land Use Committee recommended disapproval. The current plan came out of a working group of county staff, property owners, and community residents that met throughout 2012.

The current plan envisions a mixed use development for the shopping center site and the apartment complex behind it consisting of 300-600 apartments with 50,000-80,000 square feet of retail and office space on the ground floors of new buildings. Building height would be 110', 10 stories, on North Kings, tapering down to 4 stories on the other three roads where the complex would back up to existing homes.

Staff has proposed that all traffic enter and leave the complex via North Kings Highway, with no access to or from Farmington and Monticello, and only a possible ingress from Fort Drive.

Land Use Committee members raised a number of
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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

**Tuesday, February 12th – 7:30 PM
Old Virginia Hills School, Diana Lane**

**Speaker: Tammy Derenak-Kaufax
Lee District School Board Representative**

The President's Corner
Comment from VHCA President Ralph Zecca

For years, the Virginia Hills Citizens Association (VHCA) printed and distributed membership cards to each and every dues paying household. One reason for this was that certain local businesses gave our members discounts toward certain purchases, which in turn helped small businesses and fostered a sense of community. Unfortunately, due to the current economic times and the dramatic decrease in participating local businesses, the VHCA has decided to stop printing membership cards. However, if a dues paying member would specifically like a membership card, the VHCA will produce one for him or her.

That said, I would like to present a challenge to all of us here in Virginia Hills. If you or someone you know owns a business that would like to not only advertise in the Echo, but also provide a discount to our members, please contact the members of the VHCA Executive Board. What better way is there to generate advertising, encourage a sense of community, and promote support for local small businesses? As always, I wish you the best and hope to see you at our next meeting!

With sincerest respect,

- Ralph Zecca

Managing Snow
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- A portable snow melter will be used in park-n-ride lots where massive piles of snow take away needed parking spaces.
- A truck-mounted weather station provides mobile measurements of road conditions (dry, moist, wet, snow, ice), as well as surface, dew point, and air temperatures, humidity, and thickness of ice. This helps ensure that crews do not over- or under-apply chemicals.
- A web tool at <http://novasnowplowing.virginia.gov/> shows the status of plowing in northern Virginia neighborhoods. Once it snows more than two inches, residents in Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties can enter their address and see a color-coded snow map that shows whether plowing is underway, completed or not yet started in their neighborhood.



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Publisher	The Print Shop

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Full page	\$85	Business card	\$15
Half page	\$45		

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

Virginia Hills Citizens Association Officers 2010-2012		
President	Ralph Zecca	President@virginiahills.org
Vice President	Warren Suyderhoud	VP@virginiahills.org
Treasurer	Robin Welsh	Treasurer@virginiahills.org
Secretary	Vacant	Secretary@virginiahills.org
Membership	Vacant	Membership@virginiahills.org
Echo Editor	Doug Boulter	Echo@virginiahills.org

Members Joining Since December

Since December 2012, the following have joined the Association for the 2012-2013 year:

Chuck Boyer & Heather Young, Marilyn Doebel, Otho & Tammy Easterday, Jr., Richard & Anne Frigon, John & Barbara Garilli, Gene & Marie Gordon, Linda Kidd, Thelma Lam, Brian & Barbara Marvin, Nicole Parent, Debie Takajy, Joyce Taylor, Jim & Kathy Tucker, Woodie Wilson, Dick & Ella Louise Wright.

Police Warn Public of "Inheritance Scam"

The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) has received numerous reports from across the U.S. involving a phony inheritance proclamation. These typically arrive in the form of an unsolicited email announcing that the recipient has been awarded a multi-million dollar inheritance, but they must contact a FCPD police investigator in order to claim the funds. Presently, the scammers are identifying themselves as authentic FCPD personnel and using official email addresses, phone numbers and street addresses in order to appear more convincing to the victim.

The Financial Crimes Unit is aware of at least a dozen reports that have taken place since January 10, 2013. Detectives warn residents that, due to the potential international origin of this scam, there is little that can be done to re-claim funds that have already been wired. **DO NOT WIRE MONEY** based on instructions received in unsolicited emails.

The FCPD does not send unsolicited emails concerning inheritance. If you receive such an email, you should delete it immediately and should not open any files attached to or linked from the email.

Anyone having questions about the validity of unsolicited, suspicious emails appearing to come from the FCPD and that request money to be wired or personal information to be sent, should contact police. Any resident of Fairfax County who has already sent money due to this scam should report it through the Financial Crimes electronic reporting site at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/financialcrimes/>.

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\$ _____.

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.

Route 1 Updates

Office Depot is planning to move from its current location at Beacon Mall to the former Rite Aid building at Penn Daw. The move is expected to take place this month.

Costco is proceeding with its redevelopment of the former Mount Vernon Multiplex Cinema site. The multiplex building was demolished in April 2012, site work has been completed, and construction has begun. The store is plans a May 2013 opening. Costco estimates that the \$24 million project will bring 250 jobs to the area.

The discount at the Royal Restaurant is only available to VHCA members on presentation of a valid membership card. (See President's Corner on Page 2.)

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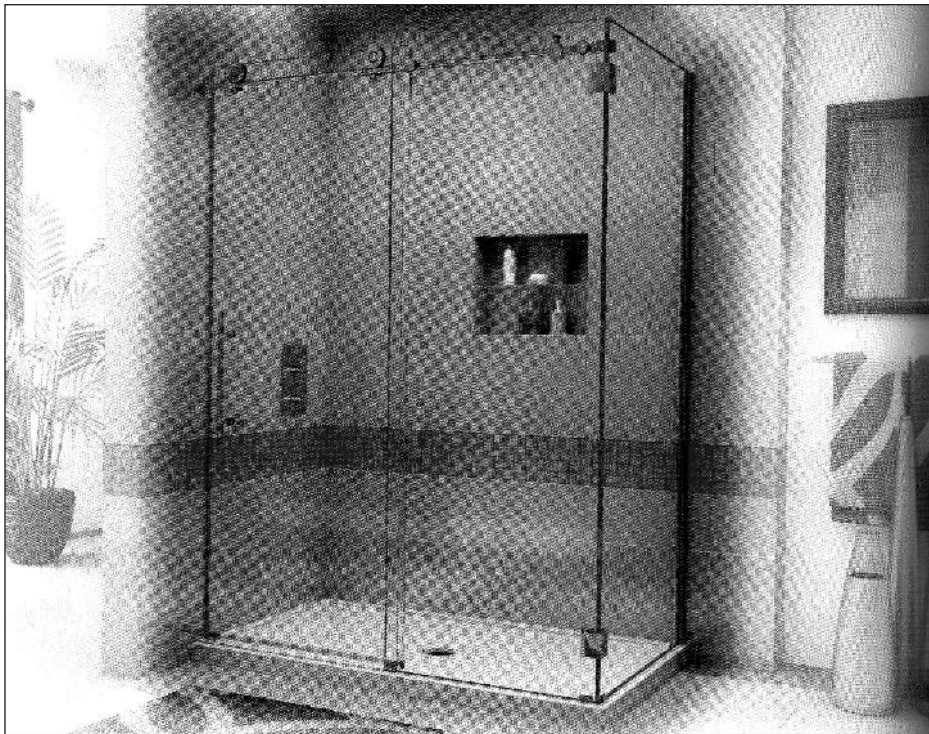
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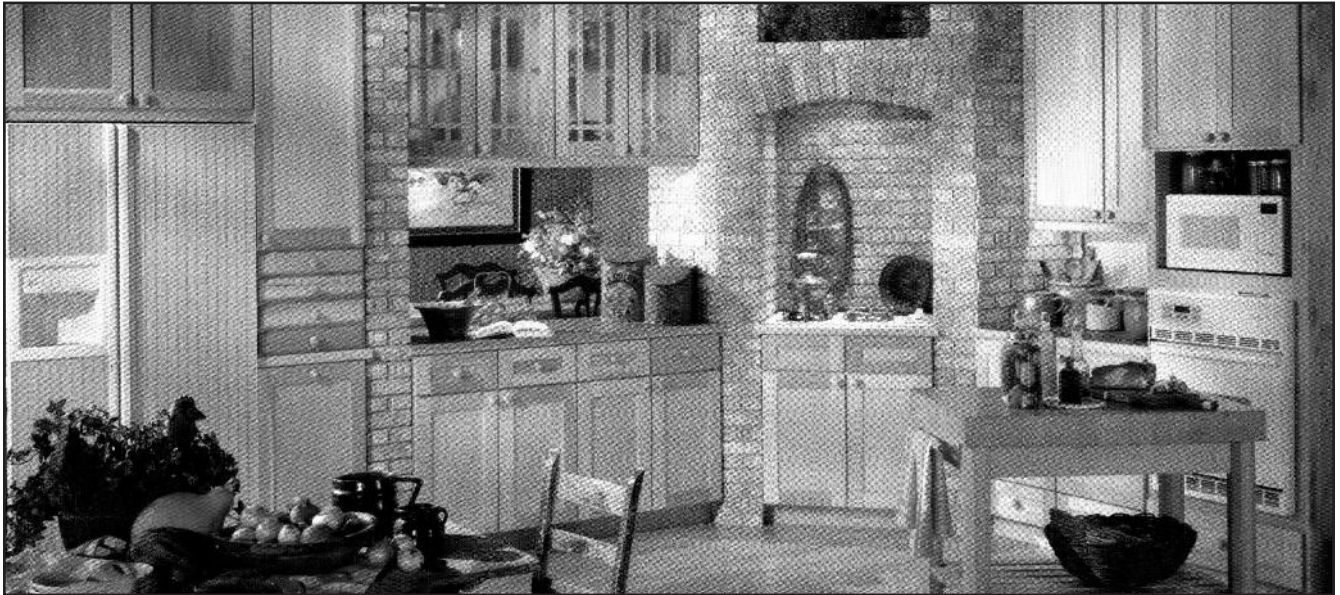
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Jefferson Manor Land Use Changes Proposed

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objections and concerns with the plan. Given that between the redevelopment of Penn Daw and the Fast Eddie's site there may be up to 1000 news apartments in the area, the traffic on North Kings might increase exponentially. Storm water would require careful handling. The 10-story building height might shade homes surrounding the development.

More general concerns reflected committee members' concerns about the comparatively small amount of retail and office space in what is supposedly a mixed use development. Concerns were raised about the lack of retail serving the large number of residences and Metro riders, and the lack of office space that might take advantage of the proximity of the development to Metro; the area had been designated a transit development area (TDA) where development is supposed to utilize proximity to mass transit to reduce vehicle traffic.

County staff will take Land Use Committee concerns and return to the committee with responses. Staff has also agreed to bring more specific information about the transportation demand management (TDM) reduction the development should achieve to minimize traffic impact on the area.

February 23rd Community Shred Event

Have personal or financial papers you'd like to dispose of securely? Shredding helps prevent identity theft. Swing by and drop off your papers Saturday, February 23rd between 9:00 and 12:00 at the Mount Vernon district Police Station on Parkers Lane. Suggested donation is \$5 per bag/box to benefit Fairfax County Crime Solvers. Donation is tax deductible.

Paper will be shredded on site and recycled.

To learn more about Crime Solvers, visit their web site at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org

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View from the Hills

Doug Boulter's Advice on Home Repair:



Understanding Gas Furnaces and Their Repair

Gas furnaces are reliable and much less difficult (and much less expensive) to maintain and repair than an oil fired system. They're much less expensive than electric resistance heating or a heat pump. Still, repairs can be costly, so it's helpful if you know how to maintain your system and can make obvious repairs yourself. To do this you need to understand how a gas furnace works. This article will mostly discuss furnaces that are under 90% efficient. While high efficiency condensing furnaces are similar, their problems are not identical.

Everything begins with the thermostat. When it's colder in the house (near the thermostat) than the set temperature, the thermostat calls for the furnace to heat the house. When that temperature is reached, or just a bit above that point, the thermostat tells the furnace to turn itself off.

Once the furnace receives the thermostat's on signal, most non-condensing furnaces start by creating a draft up the chimney. They do this for the same reason you create a draft in the chimney when you light a fire in a fireplace; if air isn't moving up the chimney, the smoke and invisible products of combustion, such as carbon monoxide, come back into the room and could kill you. The furnace uses a powerful fan to create and sustain the updraft.

Once the updraft exists, a sensor tells the furnace to light the burner. Fifteen years ago, this meant that the gas valve released gas in the vicinity of the standing pilot light which ignited it. To save energy, furnaces eliminated the pilot light that wasted gas and replaced it with an electronic spark igniter (you hear clicking when it's creating sparks) or a hot surface ignition that ignites the gas. If the burner doesn't quickly ignite, another sensor tells the gas valve to shut off the gas.

Once the burner has ignited, a different sensor measures the temperature in the heat exchanger. Until the heat exchanger warms up, this sensor won't let the fan start running because it would just blow cold air into the house and waste the heat being generated. If the heat exchanger gets too hot, a sensor will shut off the gas valve to stop combustion, as this would be dangerous.

When the heat exchanger is sufficiently warm, the blower will run and warm air will circulate to the registers in the house. When the thermostat determines that the house temperature has reached the desired level, it tells the furnace to shut down. Then the cycle begins again.

As you can imagine, the furnace is designed to fail if any of these sensors malfunction. So if the furnace won't start or won't stay running, it's likely to be a sensor problem. Very few homeowners will want to replace sensors, circuit boards, or other parts and will want to call a repair person. However, before you make that call, there are some things you can check.

If the thermostat is malfunctioning, the furnace will never get the start command. Most thermostats these days are totally electronic and are powered by household batteries. If the thermostat information screen is blank, either the thermostat is off, in which case turn it on, or the batteries are dead, in which case change them.

If you are experienced and have the wiring diagram for the thermostat, you can essentially bypass the thermostat by jumping or touching the appropriate wires. If the furnace starts and keeps running until you stop touching the wires, the problem is the thermostat. However, I'm not giving you more information on how to do this because **WARNING!** touching the wrong wires can do some expensive damage.

Next, check your circuit breakers and ensure that the breaker for the furnace (not the air conditioning compressor) is on. Flip it off and back on to be sure.

There also should be a switch next to your furnace as an emergency shut off. It will look like a light switch and may have a red cover. Flip it off and on. If you have a multimeter, you can test to see if power is going through the switch. If it is, and the thermostat is ok, you likely have a sensor or electronic problem with the furnace.

Then check the gas shutoff on the pipe next to the furnace. Is it open? It should be, of course. It's worthwhile, however, to see if other gas appliances such as your stove will work to be sure that the gas supply to the house is still functioning.

If the furnace starts but won't stay running, check the filter. If it's so dirty that the airflow is seriously restricted, that may cause the heat exchanger to get too hot and the furnace will keep shutting itself down until it cools. A new filter will fix that.

If the blower in the furnace won't run at all, turn the fan switch on the thermostat to auto. If the fan runs, it's a sensor problem.

Next time, we'll talk about furnace maintenance and I'll update my old article on set-back thermostats which is now extremely outdated.

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Did You Miss the Dog License Deadline?

January 31st was the deadline for obtaining your dog license for the year. All dogs four months of age or older must be licensed. The fee is \$10 for all dogs except service dogs who assist people who are visually impaired, deaf, or need mobility assistance. Those are free.

To obtain a license by mail, send a completed copy of the Dog License Application, a check payable to the County of Fairfax, and a current certificate of rabies vaccination to the County of Fairfax, Department of Tax Administration, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 223, Fairfax, VA 22035.

To obtain a license in person, bring a completed copy of the Dog License Application, a check payable to the County of Fairfax, and a current certificate of rabies vaccination, to: 1) The Department of Tax Administration, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 223, Fairfax between 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM weekdays (8:00 AM to 6:30 PM Thursdays), or 2) the Animal Shelter at 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax between noon and 7:00 PM Tuesday through Friday or Saturday between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

Dog owners who bought tags in the prior year will automatically receive new application forms in the mail in October.

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Message from Supervisor McKay

2012 was an interesting year. Derecho joined our vocabulary and we spent some time peering over a fiscal cliff, one that still threatens at this writing. With 2012 in the rearview mirror, here are some of its highlights.

While the financial markets stagnated, so did the Springfield Mall renovation schedule. Now, with improved market conditions, the redevelopment is finally moving forward. Renovation began with inside work in July and demolition of the outside shell in November. The 700,000 square feet of new stores, restaurants, and theaters will have a totally different look and feel from the old mall. While we're waiting for the 2014 ribbon cutting, we can still shop at Macy's, Target, and JCP.

County Budget: In 2012 a better economic climate and our work over the past several years to maintain core services and trim the non-essential put us in a far better position than many other localities. Today, however, significant potential cuts at both the federal and the state level are concerns. My citizen budget committee will again study the budget and provide valuable input.

Transportation: Improvements to the intersection of Van Dorn St., Telegraph Road, and South Kings Hwy continue. Right of Way acquisition is done and utility

relocation is underway. The project includes widening Telegraph Road and building turn lanes to improve traffic flow. Construction should begin this spring.

Mulligan Road, connecting Telegraph Road and Route 1, is back on track after a lengthy bid protest and should be open to traffic in early 2014.

The Woodrow Wilson Bridge has been almost done since August—only a small amount of final surface pavement and roadway markings remain.

The 495 Express Lanes (Hot Lanes) opened in November. This January, Connector bus service will be available to Tysons from Burke and in the spring, new Connector routes will open from Springfield/Saratoga to Tysons and from the Lorton VRE station to Tysons. This will be limited- stop direct express bus service—even during rush hour buses will travel on average 55 MPH.

We've made a number of pedestrian and bus stop improvements throughout the district.

Parks and Recreation: We've continued to grow our fully accessible family recreation area in Lee District Park, funded through a public-private partnership. In June, to compliment our spray park, we opened the Tiki Village playground as part of Chessie's Big Back Yard.



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Recent Virginia Hills Real Estate Market Activity

Status	Style	Address	BR	FB	HB	List Price	Close Price	Bsmt	Gar
Cnko	Rambler	3515 Pike Rd	4	2	0	\$250,000		Yes	0
Cnko	Rambler	6329 Gentele Ct	4	2	0	\$250,000		Yes	0
Cnko	Rambler	6110 Paulonia Rd	4	1	0	\$290,000		Yes	0
Sold	Rambler	6302 Gentele Ct	2	1	0	\$339,000	\$335,000	No	0
Sold	Rambler	3712 Logan Ct	4	2	0	\$369,950	\$362,000	Yes	0
Sold	Contemporary	6320 Gentele Ct	5	3	1	\$379,000	\$375,000	Yes	0
Sold	Rancher	4105 Ronson Dr	4	2	0	\$379,500	\$374,000	Yes	0
Sold	Rambler	6205 Paulonia Rd	3	2	0	\$389,900	\$394,000	Yes	0
Sold	Rambler	6325 Gentele Ct	5	2	0	\$399,900	\$399,000	Yes	0
Sold	Rambler	6201 Hillview Ave	4	2	0	\$420,000	\$418,000	Yes	2
Sold	Rambler	6404 Prospect Ter	4	2	0	\$429,000	\$429,000	Yes	0
Cnko	Rambler	6600 Berkshire Dr	4	2	0	\$429,500		Yes	0

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