

The Virginia Hills Echo



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"Pay or Lose Power" Scam

from the Fairfax County Police and Dominion Power

Police are warning residents of a scam that has re-surfaced in Fairfax County neighborhoods in recent weeks. Victims report that someone claiming to be a power company employee contacts them and states their power will be cut off if they do not pay their "overdue" bill immediately.

Dominion Power never asks for immediate payment of cash, a "green dot" card, or PayPal as a prerequisite to keeping lights on. If a customer is behind on his or her bill, Dominion typically sets up a payment plan mutually agreed upon. The company provides customers with multiple notifications before power is disconnected.

Recently, a woman who owns a business in the Springfield area received a phone call advising that her electric bill was overdue and demanded that she "go to a CVS or a 7-Eleven" to purchase a green dot card in the amount of \$499.98, allegedly the amount of the bill. The victim had recently paid her power bill. She checked with her bank, contacted Dominion Power and verified the payment. Fortunately, as the result of her actions, this victim wasn't fooled, hurt, or financially victimized.

Please help make others aware of this scam. Suspects can be convincing and often people "fall" for this in fear of being cold and without power. If you suspect you are being scammed, report suspicious phone calls or unannounced visitors to the Fairfax County Police or call Dominion directly at 1-866-DOM-HELP.

a series of meetings to gather community feedback. Overwhelmingly, I heard about the need for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements.

Home Day Care in Neighborhoods

In the past year, Virginia changed its requirements for home day care in such a way that they varied from Fairfax County's requirements. The resolution was that day care providers would meet a set of requirements that included all the Commonwealth and County requirements.

One of the results of this outcome is that approval process varies slightly between R-zoned districts (such as Virginia Hills which is partly zoned R-3 and partly R-4) and P-zoned districts (e.g. Kingstowne). This article will only discuss home day care in single family detached homes in R-zoned districts, i.e. Virginia Hills.

Home day care (also called family child care) takes place in the caregiver's personal residence. Child care centers (such as a Kindercare location) operate in separate, non-home based centers.

To operate a business in the home providing care for up to five children in addition to the caregiver's own children, the caregiver must have a County Home Child Care permit. One paid helper is allowed between the hours of 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM daily.

To operate a business providing care for six to twelve children in addition to the caregiver's own children, the caregiver must have a Virginia State Family Day Home license. If the number of children is seven to twelve, the caregiver must also have a zoning "special permit" issued by the County's Board of Zoning Appeals. As part of the special permit request, the provider can request to be allowed two additional paid helpers or additional hours beyond 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

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Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting

Tuesday, February 10 – 7:30 PM
Old Virginia Hills School, Diana Lane

Speaker: TBA

President's Corner

As president of the association and member of the board for 4 years now, I am proud to be a part of this community. When I moved here just six years ago and attended my first VHCA meeting I was very excited to hear the voices of active members showing their concerns to a community that thrives on citizen participation. That day, I decided to join the executive board as your membership director. That was the best decision I made because I knew that VHCA was a great association to be a part of.

Last December, we had our association meeting and we were joined by Wil Slaughter, lead investigator with Fairfax County Consumer Affairs. It was great to see a good turnout of our active members as well as some new ones to VHCA. As this year goes on, I hope to see more of you come to our meetings. Remember, our meetings are held only 5 times a year and the next is this Tuesday, February 10th, at 7:30 PM at the Old Virginia Hills School. Hope to see all of you there!

In December, we had a movie night at the Old Virginia Hills School. There were games, hot chocolate and other treats. Those that came donated food to the Capital Area Food Bank. It was really a fun night. VHCA is always looking for ways to bring our community together. If you have a great idea such as this and wish to volunteer to organize a similar event, just send me or anyone on the executive board an e-mail. We would be delighted to hear your suggestions.

I want to thank all of our members who continue to support our association by renewing their membership; for those of you who joined for the first time, thank you so much for your support.

The *Echo* is published five times a year, and the executive board is very involved in not only in writing it, but in delivering it as well. We have a set group of volunteers who ensure that all 847 homes in Virginia Hills receive an *Echo* at their door prior to each Association meeting. VHCA is always looking for other volunteers to help deliver, which is not only easy, but a great way to become involved in our community. If you have any interest in delivering the *Echo*, just send the *Echo* editor or me an e-mail.

Sincerely,

Warren Suyderhoud, President



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Dick Wright 1926-2015



Virginia Hills mourns the passing of Richard H. (Dick) Wright on January 12th of this year following a long illness.

At the end of his career as an Air Force and Navy navigator, Dick moved to Virginia Hills in 1969. After retiring from the Navy in 1973, he worked for the Bechtel Corporation until his second retirement in 1988. He married his second wife, Ella Louise, in 1978.

He served as president of the Virginia Hills Citizens Association in 1980-81. Subsequently, he served two one year terms as vice president for administration in 1981-82 and 1982-83.

The Citizens Association became dormant in 1985. Seeing the need to reactivate it, Dick was one of the six people to make it happen in 1991. He subsequently served as membership director until 1998 and then as treasurer until 2010.

Dick's other activities for Virginia Hills included delivering the Echo (usually two routes) until 2011 and assisting with other activities in the community. He was a director of the Virginia Hills Pool for a number of years (over 15, we believe) and was responsible for the pool's maintenance program until the year before he retired. He was known for the three socials he ran for the pool during the summer, steak night, shrimp night, and hamburger and hot dog night.

Dick was also known for his hobbies, repairing everything from antique cars (last of which was a Ford Model A) to small engines to clocks. After taking adult education classes in auto painting from the County, he painted 15 cars. He always had several projects going at a time and had a workshop that was stocked with everything imaginable, and then some. He was an avid bowler.

Dick is survived by Ella Louise, two children and two stepchildren, eight grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

The Citizens Association will greatly miss one of its most stalwart supporters in its 58 year history.

Join the Virginia Hills Citizens Association for the 2014-2015 year that began on September 1st.

2014-2015 Membership

Mail to: VHCA, P.O. Box 10837,
Alexandria, VA 22310

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

\$ _____.

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Comments: _____

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

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Home Day Care in Neighborhoods

(continued from page 1)

In both cases, the caregiver is not allowed any exterior signs or other indications that home day care is being provided, except that play equipment is permitted.

Caregiver permits or licenses require payment of an annual application fee, a background check on all persons over the age of 14 living in the home, a home health and safety visit, a fire safety inspection, a tuberculosis test for all caregivers, CPR and first aid certification, an written emergency plan, and a written sick child plan.

As part of the zoning special permit process, the caregiver must provide detailed site plans and photographs, both inside and out. Hours of operation, number of children being cared for, proposed number of employees, and traffic impact on the neighborhood must also be addressed. Information must also be provided on where outdoor play will take place.

In addition, the provider must also apply for a "business, professional, and occupational license (BPOL). Depending on income from the business, the provider may have to pay annual BPOL tax. Providers must also pay a business personal property tax on property, such as cribs, high chairs and toys, used in their businesses.

Family home day care is the most common form of day care in the United States, particularly for younger children. Many parents particularly desire small day care settings in or close to their neighborhoods, and the system is designed to accommodate this huge need for day care while providing safe, quality care for the children and minimizing the impact on the neighborhood in which the day care takes place.

Fairfax County provides a directory of permitted day care providers. According to the County, the following providers operate in Virginia Hills:

Colorado, Norma	6327 Gentele Court
Cordova, Alma	6111 Paulonia Road
Sheikh, Shagufta	6417 Virginia Hills Ave.
Steele, Freida	6317 Telegraph Road
Trijo-Sherman, Angela	6621 Berkshire Drive

The Virginia Hills Citizens Association does not endorse or recommend any home day care providers. If you do use such a provider, VHCA recommends that you use one who has a County permit or a state license as appropriate.

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The Winter Housing Market

This home pricing data is provided by Spike and Julie Williams of Williams Realty. Current data is of December 28, 2014. 2013 data is of December 28th of that year. Analysis is the product of the *Echo*.

	2013	2014
Single Family under \$1M		
Average List Price	\$644,933	\$742,535
Median List Price	\$620,000	\$760,000
Average Days on Market	88	94
Condo/Townhome under \$600K		
Average List Price	\$317,496	\$309,104
Median List Price	\$305,000	\$294,990
Average Days on Market	72	92

While prices are substantially higher at the top of the market, the data for condos and townhomes indicates that the bottom end of the market isn't doing nearly as well. The lower prices and longer time on the market indicates that first time buyer demand has dropped off in the past year. While the Virginia Hills market has been about \$100,000 higher than the condo/townhome

market, sellers in Virginia Hills will have to be aware of this issue.

The good news for sellers is that interest rates are currently near their lows and more loans are being made to buyers who are putting less than 20% down.

VHCA Hosts December Movie Night

In December the Association hosted its first ever family movie night in the main all purpose room of the Old Virginia Hills School. In attendance for "A Very Muppet Christmas" were 10 families with children ranging in age from toddlers to 8 years old. The movie began at 6:00 PM and refreshments were provided at no cost to Virginia Hills residents.

It was a great time, and the VHCA officers were thrilled to see some new faces. It was also a chance to meet a few new people, snack on some yummy treats, and enjoy a movie—or for some of the kids, run around in circles while a movie played in the background. VHCA hopes to put on more events like this in the future and would love to see even more people there next time!

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VDOT: Snow and Potholes

While hoping that Virginia Hills doesn't get any more snow this year, there is often snow in February, and sometimes even in March. VDOT is responsible for all snow plowing on public streets in Fairfax County. VDOT has a web site, vdotplows.org, that has a map with frequently updated information on what VDOT believes is plowed and what needs to be plowed, what the plow routes are, and where the plows are on the route.

Emergency snow routes are plowed first. In Virginia Hills, those routes include:

- Telegraph Road
- South Kings Highway
- The Parkway
- Dorset Drive from Telegraph to Berkshire
- Gentele Court/Memorial Street

If you are having an issue on your street, notify VDOT by phone at 800-367-7623 (800-for-road). The phone is staffed 24 hours a day. You can also submit an online report at <http://www.virginiadot.org/travel/citizen.asp>.

You can also use the phone number or the web site to report potholes. VDOT seems to be very responsive on reported potholes, applying patches within roughly two working days.

Echo Now On Line in PDF Format

The articles from the current *Echo* and the previous *Echo* have always been on the Virginia Hills web site in HTML format. With the faster speeds now available from cable and FiOS in Virginia Hills, it now seemed to be a good time to put up the full *Echo* in PDF format.

Now, on the *Echo* page of the Virginia Hills web site, www.VirginiaHills.org/echo.html, you'll see a link to the PDF of the current *Echo* and the archive page for older issues of the paper.

Each issue is about 2 megabytes in size. If you are accessing the internet with a dialup connection, an issue will load very slowly. Depending which browser you use and how up to date your version of it is, you should be able to view an issue from within your browser. Each issue is readable in the current version of Adobe Reader, so if you're having trouble viewing a particular issue, you can also download it to your computer and view it using Adobe Reader that way.

There is also a search function for the archives using a form of Google's advanced search. You can provide keywords and/or key phrases to find in which of the issues they appear. From the search results, select the one you'd like to view and it will pull up that issue. Once the issue is on your screen, find the exact location by looking at the contents of the issue on its first page or use CTRL-F to search that edition for the keyword again.

Secure Your Wireless Network!

The *Echo* published this article in December 2013, and many (estimated to be over half) Virginia Hills Residents are **still** using the WEP encryption system on their wireless network. WEP is old and extremely easy to break into. Once someone has broken into your network, they can not only share your internet service, but they can also access personal files you have made available to your family on your personal network. Windows sets some places on your computer as available to all network users by default.

You should be using WPA2 security or, on an older router, WPA. Most routers come with WEP as the default, and this is very unsafe.

Those of you using the original Actiontec routers that you got with your FiOS service can change to WPA2 in the router's settings. Go to the "Wireless Network" setting, then "Advanced Settings."

If you did not change the user name and password to access the router, you should do this immediately. The default name and password that came set on the router are widely available on the internet. With this user name and password, anyone on your network can access your router's settings and remove your security.

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Message from Supervisor McKay

This was the year of the town center—Springfield Town Center! The former Springfield Mall opened its doors on October 17 and shoppers and diners have been flocking there. Another important retail addition, Wegmans, is on track and should open this spring on Telegraph Road.

We've made great strides in transportation. This summer, Jeff Todd Way (formerly Mulligan Road) opened, connecting Telegraph Road near Hayfield Secondary to Route One near Fort Belvoir. Besides serving as an east/west link, the new road includes widening and improvements for parts of Route One and Telegraph Road.

Work on one of our worst transportation bottlenecks—the Van Dorn/Telegraph/South Kings intersection is almost complete. Two travel lanes in each direction recently opened and the newly widened intersection will help drivers using Telegraph Road reach I-495 via South Van Dorn Street and will alleviate the bottleneck east of the intersection before it splits to Telegraph Road and South Kings Highway. (I pushed for the County to fund this project because there was no state road money available and we could not wait any longer.)

Enhanced transit on Route One is progressing with the state's Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) transit alternatives study recommending bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes to Prince William County in the short term and long term, a possible extension of Metro's Yellow Line to Hybla Valley.

The \$100 million transportation bond referendum that voters approved on Election Day will help get more turn lanes, traffic signals, directional signage, and most importantly, missing sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails. These improve neighborhood safety, access to community facilities like schools and transit, and link neighborhoods. And, they relieve traffic congestion.

Quality development and good jobs are integral to our quality of life. We are one of the three finalists for FBI headquarters. The GSA is conducting transportation and environmental analyses and we hope to have a decision in 2015.

Other highlights of 2014 include turf fields for Edison High School thanks to proffer money that I was able to procure, the Banks Park stream restoration, and the rehabilitation of Brookfield Park

It's been a good Lee District year!



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Current Virginia Hills Real Estate Market

Status	Style	Address	BR	FB	HB	List Price	Close Price	Bsmt	Gar
Active	Rambler	6309 Gentele Ct	3	1	2	\$345,000		Yes	
Active	Rambler	6409 Virginia Hills Ave	4	2	0	\$390,000		Yes	
Active	Raised Rmblr	6403 Ronson Ct	3	2	0	\$459,900		Yes	
Cnko	Bilevel	6229 Virginia Hills Ave	4	2	0	\$399,950		Yes	
Cnko	Colonial	6423 Dorset Dr	3	2	0	\$350,000		Yes	
Cnko	Raised Rmblr	6601 Berkshire Dr	3	1	1	\$329,900		Yes	
Cnko	Traditional	6520 Berkshire Dr	4	2	0	\$380,000		Yes	
Cont	Rambler	6119 Algona Ct	3	1	0	\$320,000		Yes	
Sold	Rambler	6211 The Parkway	3	2	0	\$399,999	\$390,000	Yes	2
Sold	Rambler	6119 The Parkkway	3	1	1	\$330,000	\$310,000	Yes	

All information deemed reliable. Not guaranteed. Derived from the Metropolitan Regional Information System for the period 12/1/2014 - 1/30/2015

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