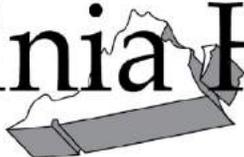


# The Virginia Hills Echo



Circulation 875

Volume 25, No. 4

April 2016

## Community Cleanup Day on May 14th

Please come join the VHCA Community Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 14th! We will meet at the parking lot of the Virginia Hills Building at 8:30am, and clean up along the Telegraph Road and South Kings Highway corridors. Ms. Crysta Cook on Virginia Hills Avenue has kindly coordinated with Fairfax County to obtain garbage bags, gloves, and safety vests, and VHCA will provide water and snacks.

Ms. Cook has also been trying to acquire some perennials to plant in the Ronson Drive flower bed and around the Virginia Hills sign. If you have extra plants you would like to donate, please contact Ms. Akiko Ueda-Zecca at 703-960-1911 or [membership@virginiahills.org](mailto:membership@virginiahills.org).

You do not have to participate in the entire event—even a half hour of your time will be greatly appreciated. If you plan on participating, please email [membership@virginiahills.org](mailto:membership@virginiahills.org) so we will have enough water and snacks for everyone. Thank you for keeping Virginia Hills beautiful!

## Community Yard Sale on June 11th

Saturday, June 11th (rain date June 18th)  
8:00am - 12:00pm

Do you have unwanted items in your basement? Perhaps kids' clothes that are too small or school supplies you don't need anymore? Well, you can get rid of them on June 11th! Unlike the

yard sale VHCA hosted last year at the Virginia Hills Pool parking lot, we ask all the participating households to set out everything in their front yard. VHCA will publish the list of participating households' addresses in the June Echo and on the VHCA website (<http://www.virginiahills.org/>) and Facebook page.

If you would like your address on our list, please email [membership@virginiahills.org](mailto:membership@virginiahills.org) by *May 23rd*. There is *no fee* for participation!

## Hayfield Secondary School: Drive 4UR School

Hayfield Secondary School is holding a Drive 4UR School fundraiser. Anyone 18 or older with a valid driver's license may come to the school Saturday, May 14, from 9 am to 12 pm to drive a new Ford vehicle. There is no cost to participate, and for every drive, Ford will donate \$20 to the school.

Come spend a few minutes trying out a new car and helping our kids' school earn up to \$6000! The program has raised \$30 million so far for communities and organizations around the country.

## Virginia Hills Real Estate Assessments

by Doug Boulter

Property owners in Virginia Hills should have received the assessments about a month ago. This year, homeowners have seen their assessments increased by 3.95 to 4.15%.

*(continued on page 9)*

### Inside this Edition of the *Echo*

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### *Virginia Hills Citizens Association Meeting*

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

**Speaker: Matt Bright, "Gardening for Nature with Local Plants"**

**The President's Corner**  
**Comment from VHCA President Suyderhoud**

Hello again Virginia Hills residents! Spring is finally here and I can only imagine many of you are so happy to see winter finally hit the road.

Now that it's spring we need to be careful when going about our household chores, but when you really start tearing the house apart and moving things around during spring cleaning, especially with all those cleaning supplies and equipment out, it is doubly important to keep safety in mind. Spring cleaning can be tiring work. Do not forget safety even if you have worked hard all day and want to get done. The better thing to do when you are exhausted is to stop and take a break, drink a glass of water, sit under a nice cool fan. Spring cleaning is also a great time to declutter your home, but you need to make sure all the boxes and bags of stuff you are getting rid of don't cause a safety concern. And lastly, one my biggest concerns is that cleaning supplies can create nasty fumes, so make sure you get some fresh air by opening windows, turning on the exhaust fan, or placing a fan in the room. In addition, do not mix ammonia and bleach together, both of which are cleaners, because they create toxic fumes when combined. When in doubt don't mix, just use one product to get the job done.

Finally, you know I always like talking about community; becoming more involved in Virginia Hills. VHCA always welcomes ideas to set-up a community event whether it's a pot luck at a neighbor's house or participating in a movie night, the board would love to hear from you. If you're interested and have an idea, you can always contact me or any one of the board members listed in the Echo. Oh, and don't forget about our next monthly association meeting at the Old Virginia Hills School on Tuesday April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm. Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,  
 Warren



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Half page	\$45		

For yearly discount rate, see [www.VirginiaHills.org/Echo.html](http://www.VirginiaHills.org/Echo.html)

Virginia Hills Citizens Association Officers 2014-2016			
President	Warren Suyderhoud	240-381-8610	president@virginiahills.org
Vice President	Ralph Zecca	703-960-1911	vp@virginiahills.org
Treasurer	Robin Jones	703-960-8131	treasurer@virginiahills.org
Secretary	Juliana Sharp	703-718-0802	secretary@virginiahills.org
Membership	Akiko Zecca	703-960-1911	membership@virginiahills.org
Echo Editor	Leah Buckley	214-714-7190	echo@virginiahills.org

## Eliminate Standing Water to Reduce Mosquitoes

Even if the Zika virus doesn't end up posing a threat to our region, what's more annoying than mosquitoes? Remember that mosquitoes need water to breed, and if we all work to minimize standing water in our yards, we'll have fewer of these pesky bugs around! Take a minute to look around your yard now for areas where water can collect. Even a tiny puddle the size of a bottle cap is big enough for a mosquito to lay its eggs. Another potential breeding area that many people forget is in their gutters. Make sure your gutters are clean of debris so water can't pool there either. If we all take action, maybe we can be a little less itchy this summer!

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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

\$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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.**

### Medicine Cabinet Clean Out April 30

Come drop off your unused or expired medications for free disposal on: Saturday, April 30, 8:00am – 2:00pm, in the lobby of the Mount Vernon District Police Station. (Pills or liquids only, no pressurized canisters or needles.) Disposal is free, convenient, confidential, and safe. Safe handling of unused or expired medications, prevents accidental poisoning, prevents drug abuse, and protects the environment.

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## Request Pothole Repairs

After all the snow, our roads are in pretty bad shape. VDOT has been making repairs but there is still a lot of work to be done. If you have a pothole to report, you can do so at the VDOT website: <http://my.vdot.virginia.gov>. If your vehicle has suffered damage due to a pothole, you can also submit a claim to VDOT at the same website.

## Tips to Get Your Yard Ready for Spring

From Fairfax County NewsCenter

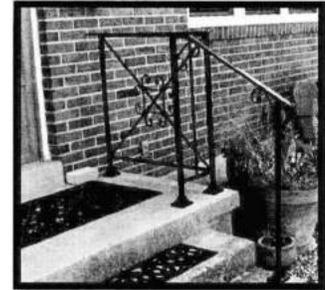
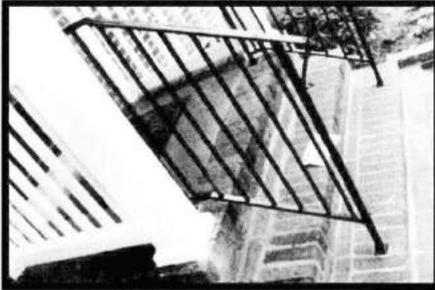
1. Spring Cleaning: Do you have insecticides, weed killers or other household hazardous waste you want to get rid of safely? We'll take those corrosive, ignitable, toxic and reactive materials items for free at our I-66 and I-95 recycling locations.
2. Seedling Sale: Get rid of some of your lawn, and replace it with native plants, shrubs and trees. They often need less water, tolerate hot, dry summers, and offer food for wildlife. The Shrub and Small Tree Package features 10 seedlings for \$16.95. The Tree Package includes 6 seedlings sold for \$11.95. Order online at <http://bit.ly/ffxseedlings>
3. Most grasses in northern Virginia should not be fertilized in the spring. Doing so can hurt the grass and the run off damages our watershed.
4. Beware of woodchucks: No, not the animal, but scammers looking to make a quick buck and damaging your trees. Woodchucks propose to do yard work, often for marked up prices and often without the proper skills and techniques of an arborist. Some woodchucks never return to do the work. They prey on the elderly and disabled, so keep an eye out for your neighbors.
5. Free mulch: Applying a layer of organic mulch in spring will help maintain soil moisture and control weeds. We operate a brush grinding operation, which produces double-shredded wood mulch for residents. The mulch is free, clean, and of good quality. Wood mulch is usually available at the I-95 and I-66 locations. Call 703-324-5995, TTY 711 to check on current supply.

## Fairfax County Election Officials Needed

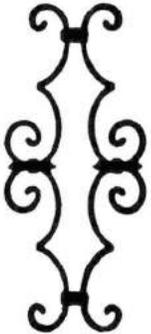
Fairfax County needs Election Officers for upcoming elections. Training begins in May. Election Officers must be registered voters in Virginia and complete required training and forms. For more information, call 703-324-4735 or their website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/working.htm>



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(continued from page 1)

Every year since 2001, I have reviewed the assessments done by the County Department of Tax Administration (DTA) for correctness. This year, DTA's data indicates that the increase is too high. Assessments were already above the 91% of fair market value that has been DTA's standard for Virginia Hills. Even using DTA's upper limit of 95% of fair market value, the increase still seems too high.

I will be contacting DTA for an explanation and will provide the results in the June *Echo*.

The Board of Supervisors has advertised a rate of \$1.13 per \$1000 of assessed value, an increase of 4 cents over last year's rate. That means that the actual rate that the Board will pass as part of the budget cannot be more than \$1.13. At that rate, and including the 4% increase in the assessed value, most Virginia Hills homeowners can expect to see a real estate tax increase of about 8%. For a house assessed last year at \$360,000, that would amount to a tax increase of about \$307.

I sampled of 40 homes to insure that the new assessments all fell within the range shown above. This year, VHCA found that almost all of the 40 homes fell in a range of 3.95-4.15%..

Given that there are 850 homes in Virginia Hills, I advise all homeowners to check their individual assessments. Homeowners can go to <http://icare.fairfaxcounty.gov> to access the County's real estate database. Search for your property by providing its address, then go to the "Values" page of the data using the links on the left. That will give you this year's and last year's assessments. To check, subtract last year's (2015) assessment from your 2016 assessment. Divide that number by the 2015 assessment. Multiply by 100. That should give you a change of approximately 4%.

To learn in-depth how DTA conducts assessments, you can read a detailed article at <http://www.dougboelter.com/policy/assessments1.html>.

For the purposes of determining the change in assessments, there were 64 sales, of which DTA determined that 42 were at fair market value. There were 3 foreclosures in 2015. Foreclosures are recorded at the amount of the loan outstanding and are not related to the market value of the home. The 3 foreclosures in Virginia Hills are up one from two in 2014. If the home is re-sold after foreclosure,

that sale may be counted. All 3 sales by lenders in 2015 were not counted as valid sales for the purpose of the assessments.

## General Assembly Session Recap

From Supervisor Jeff McKay

The regular session of the 2016 General Assembly adjourned on Friday, March 11 (one day ahead of schedule). 3,286 bills and resolutions were introduced. 1,920 bills were reviewed by County operational and legal staff. Most of which were fast moving (one of the many reasons we are lucky to be one of the only local governments who have professional staff in Richmond). The Board took formal positions on 220 bills.

Numbers only tell part of the story. Perhaps most importantly, the GA passed a new 2016-2018 biennium budget which contains very good news for Fairfax County and Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

The budget restores \$5.6 million in Cost of Competing Adjustment for K-12 support staff in FY2017 and \$5.8 million in FY 2018. For NOVA, the restoration of these funds was a tremendous accomplishment -- both the Governor and our General Assembly delegation deserve special thanks for helping to make this happen.

For Fairfax County, we are projecting nearly \$21 million in anticipated additional state funding for FCPS in FY 2017 which is almost a penny on the tax rate. County and FCPS budget staff are working together to provide additional detail about this funding. This will continue to be a long process, but strong steps were made towards the goal of more funding for education this year.

While we did not see the usual onslaught of problematic tax bills this year, the GA did consider a number of bills that diminish the county's land use authority. The most consequential of these bills, related to proffers, has already been signed into law by Governor McAuliffe. That legislation includes numerous exemptions from the new requirements that will be especially helpful for Fairfax County, but it will take the Board and staff time to fully assess and adjust to the changes brought by the new law.

Overall, this was a productive legislative session and I am proud and honored to serve as the Legislative Committee Chairman.

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### Current Virginia Hills Real Estate Market

Status	Address	List Price	Close Price	BR	FB	HB	Levels	Basement
Act	4008 Ronson Dr	\$629,000		4	3	1	3	Yes
Act	6202 Paulonia Rd	\$364,260		3	2	0	2	Yes
Act	6538 Virginia Hills Ave	\$418,800		3	2	0	2	Yes
Cnko	6518 Dorset Dr	\$454,600		4	3	0	1	No
Cnko	6514 Enfield Dr	\$349,900		3	1	0	1	No
Cnko	6308 Prospect Ter	\$449,888		4	2	0	2	Yes
Cnko	6535 Virginia Hills Ave	\$349,000		3	1	0	1	No
Cnko	6103 Pike Ct	\$315,000		3	2	0	2	Yes
Sold	6201 The Pkwy	\$339,950	\$339,000	3	1	0	1	No
Sold	6123 Algona Ct	\$429,700	\$425,000	4	2	0	2	No
Sold	6326 Gentele Ct	\$436,500	\$425,000	4	3	0	2	Yes
Sold	6317 Gentele Ct	\$332,900	\$315,000	3	1	0	1	No
Sold	6418 Dorset Dr	\$350,000	\$325,000	4	2	0	2	Yes

All information deemed reliable. Delivered for Metropolitan Regional Information Systems for the period of 2/1/16 - 3/31/16



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