



Hallcrest Herald



April 2016

President's Report

COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR ALL

One of the more significant results of our recent community-wide survey was the near-unanimous appreciation of the several events enjoyed by our residents. Most of these, except for Santa's arrival and our annual meeting are held in the spring or early summer. Thus, now is the time to mark your calendars and plan to participate.

- First is the ever-popular **Dumpster Day**. This year it will be the weekend of April 23-24. This is when the Association places two large dumpsters centrally located in the two parts of the community – one opposite 7347 Eldorado Street at the North end of the oval; and the other opposite 7416 Hallcrest Drive near the grassy area by the sound wall. The purpose is to unload most of the stuff that the trash contractor cannot usually take – mattresses, furniture, bedframes, small appliances, used toys etc. – everything *except* hazardous wastes (oil, paint, insecticides, tires, car batteries etc.) The company we rent dumpsters from will deliver them on Friday afternoon, April 22, and pick them up on Monday morning, April 25. The dumpsters usually fill up by late Saturday and it is important not to have anything overflow them (over the top) or left beside them.
- Also, that Saturday, April 23, from 10 AM to noon, is our annual **Volunteer Day**. The purpose is to get a dozen or more volunteers to do those small tasks that are not possible (or economic) to contract out – painting of common area railings, picking up branches, moving a pile of wood chips to our perimeter path along the sound wall, or peeling vines off trees in this area. Usually we are fortunate to have teens with community service requirements from school. Tickets will be given out to volunteers and winners drawn at noon with prizes including a credit at McLean Hardware and a dinner at a local restaurant. Call me at 703-893-3336 if you can contribute 2 hours to make this community look its best.

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Reminders:

Return all trash containers to yards after pick up.

Blue recycling bins should not be left on the front stoop.

Seek AC approval before any changes to home's outside appearance.

Leave outside lights on (front & rear) on at night for security.

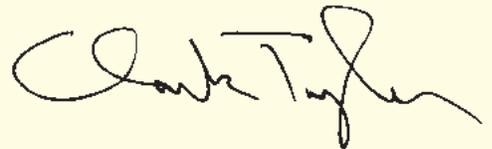
Pick up after your dog!

THANKS!

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- **The International Cookout** will be held on Saturday, June 4 from 1PM until the food (or propane) runs out. This is when our many residents with ties to other countries prepare a national dish to share with residents. Thanks to past wonderful neighbors, we have a collection of nearly 50 flags which we place around Dibner Park, the open area between Montcalm Drive and the Hallcrest Drive cul de sac. The Association provides soft drinks, hotdogs and hamburgers, chips and cookies to go with the marvelous Indian, Korean and South American (and even Estonian) dishes we have been blessed with in the past. In the unlikely event of rain, we postpone the feast to the next day.
- **Remodeling Project open house tour.** Every two years, we ask those residents who have had a remodeling project to open their homes for other residents to see what creatively can be done with a 40-year old town home. This will happen from 2 PM to 4 PM on Sunday, June 26, and we already have three upgrading projects signed up. Since there is time to visit only six or so homes, call me at 703-893-3336 to be included. Residents who open their homes to show off these projects usually write up a page describing what they have done, including contractor's name, costs, special problems faced and overcome. Posters will be placed to identify those homes which are participating. In the past, we have had kitchen and bathroom projects, new patios, upgraded lower levels, creative decorating efforts, new wood-paneled doors, flagstone entry porches and even "sun tunnels" added. My favorite comment was one lady who, upon seeing a new project, said: "My! ... her utility room looks better than my living room!"

In addition, our annual architectural control review of maintenance efforts will take place around this time. I strongly urge those owners who had problems noted last year should complete addressing these so as not to be subject to charges.



CHAIN BRIDGE ROAD SIDEWALK CHANGE

Sadly, after several years of trying to get the sidewalk along Chain Bridge Road completed up to Anderson Road, the Association learned that a problem with moving utility lines could not be solved. As a result, the County will only put in a crosswalk somewhere near where the present sidewalk ends (at the access road to the water tower). Thus, instead of giving Hallcrest residents a chance to walk on the north side of Chain Bridge Road, they can only cross this busy street and walk on the narrow sidewalk up to access the McLean Metro station. The Association will continue its efforts to get street lights placed under the Metro crossover bridge at the toll road. Why this situation took four years to "resolve" is one of those great mysteries of bureaucracy and land ownership! However the other sidewalk along Route 123 from Great Falls Street up to the Metro station continues on its tortured path of planning, design and construction so that hopefully, we will see it happen this year. This is where Hallcrest residents had to grant the County an easement so we could add a connection from our community to this sidewalk.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

After a number of requests made during the community survey last year, the Board decided to set up special resident committees to research and examine the possibility of resolving interest in an improved web site, adding accessible ramps to our streets, and possibly pursuing a small community playground. After requesting volunteers to serve on these committees at last year's annual meeting and in several subsequent notices, the Association only had responses to deal with the web site and accessibility ramps on part of our streets. The web site committee will meet later this month. No one agreed to serve on a playground research committee, so the Board tabled that idea.

However, after a couple of residents worked on the how, where, and costs of installing suitable ramps for accessibility, an interesting alternative was uncovered. There are several companies that offer temporary and movable ramps that would assist those who have mobility problems.

At present, there are only two or three homes who may have such a need, so we are investigating the cost and availability of providing and storing such a product(s) for use when the need appears. We should have such a proposal for discussion at this year's annual meeting, now scheduled for November 10th.

2016 ANNUAL MEETING

This year's Hallcrest Annual Meeting is on **Thursday, November 10** at 7 PM at the Lewinsville Presbyterian Church fellowship hall. Those who have recovered from the stress of this year's national and local election, should find sufficient relief in the fellowship and discussion from the agenda, refreshments, documents, and notices that usually provide the 100 or so attendees with useful and interesting facts plus answers to residents' questions.

Our local member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, John Foust, has been invited to come and present various initiatives that our local government is undertaking. John's office has been most helpful in supporting our concerns about such things as sidewalks, streetlights, VDOT concerns, taxes, and dealing with County agencies and utilities. Another area that the County has been most active in, is the area of planning and preparing for how to deal with various emergencies that might arise – be they natural (hurricanes, earthquakes etc).or medical, fires, or other disruptive occurrences. The Association has invited a representative of the County's Emergency Management Department to come and brief us on what sort of actions or plans we should prepare for in the event of the unexpected. There will be lists of needed items and a display of same, plus important documents to help residents plan and prepare for such emergencies.

For the second year, Fairfax County has held a community leadership conference so HOAs and others can speak with Departments and other associations on a wide range of problems, opportunities, and best practices. That is where we had a chance to discuss what residents might do to get substantive information on how to plan and prepare for protection of homes and family members. Since we live in an area that might very well have to deal with emergencies, Hallcrest residents should be aware of what is available.

The Association will prepare an Annual Report, much like last year, to keep all residents aware of major efforts of 2016 involving property values, sales, finances and pending problems – plus we will undoubtedly make a special appreciation award or two to worthwhile friends or neighbors whose efforts have blessed the community.

PROGRESS WITH VERIZON

After a number of problems with aging copper phone lines, cables lying around and not having sufficient (or widespread) access to FIOS, the Association finally got to a creative engineer who has turned out to be a “disciple of forward progress.” This engineer and a number of Verizon technicians came to the community, recognizing the fact that only about a third of the community had FIOS. The Association made clear that the goal was to somehow have FIOS be made available to the rest of Hallcrest Heights. If that would be possible, then the individual homeowner/resident might be able to have reliable phone service, internet access and HD television (or any one of those three). Verizon technicians and their engineer have visited Hallcrest several times and are plotting out various pathway options to try and make this possible. In some cases, FIOS access may be available in the front – in others it may have to be in the rear (through the patio).

To do this, the Association would agree to allow the necessary cable to be put under the rear sidewalk or buried in a common area. We would replace the involved parts of our sidewalks as part of our Spring concrete work. Making the FIOS connection for the individual home would be the responsibility of the resident/homeowner. The precise details on all this have yet to be worked out, but the goal is to have the whole community have access to FIOS. For those residents who are concerned about those green pedestals in their back yards, some may be able to be removed – but only if all the homes served from these pedestals choose to have FIOS then it might be possible to remove them. The problem is that these pedestals contain land line wires which involve deteriorating copper, having been installed some 40 years ago, and these serve a number of nearby homes. The FIOS lines provide fiber optic cables which can accommodate phone, internet and television (it’s the resident’s choice). The Verizon team has replaced one of the cables that was left exposed on the ground and will be removing the other one which had been mistakenly placed on top of the sidewalk. As this plan is developed and finalized, the Association will notify the community of the details. Stay tuned.

NEW FACES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hallcrest’s Board of Directors has a few new faces, and it is important that all residents know them, and who to contact for any concerns or questions. Our treasurer, Cindy Landrum, has resigned. Her replacement, who was elected by the Board at the March meeting is Richard Matsko. Richard and his wife, Barbara have been residents of Hallcrest since 1981. As Richard said: “I graduated from Penn State University with a BS in accounting, Widener University with an MBA, and Marymount University with a Med in education. I have worked in the business world in accounting and management. I spent the last thirteen years of my working life as a 6th grade teacher in Fairfax County Public Schools.”

The Association is most fortunate to have a knowledgeable long-time resident like Richard on our Board. In addition, he is a superlative remodeler having totally redone his patio plus a new bathroom all by himself! Last year’s Annual Report showed a picture of his patio, and hopefully this year his bathroom work will be featured in our Home Remodeling Project tour.

Other new Board members whom you may not know are Rahul Saddy who will be taking over Membership duties, and Ben East, who is heading up our Planning efforts. See next article about Ben’s literary efforts.

SPECIAL CREATIVITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This community is blessed with many creative and accomplished residents. Last year's annual meeting was treated to a special violin performance by Hidetaro Suzuki, the former concertmaster of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra who regularly with his pianist wife, Zeyda, plays chamber music concerts at the Alden Theater in McLean. Architect, Martha Suzuki was one of the designers of our own Dibner Park, and is currently designing our new project, Little Free Libraries. Former Board member Thom Shanker's book, *Counterstrike* was published by Times Books Henry Holt & Co. a couple of years ago; and former Board member Daniel Lee's son, Justin was the concertmaster at the McLean Youth Orchestra. Speaking of that venue, young Andrew Visocan is currently an accomplished violinist there and will be part of a performance at the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center on May 8 and again at Oakcrest School in McLean on May 14 at 4 PM (both concerts are free to the public). You will remember Andrew, who helped shovel out 20 residents who suffered during this year's blizzard.

Another major accomplishment is by new Board member, Ben East, who will have published this month his first novel, *Two Pumps for the Body Man*. After ten years developing the story, Ben is excited to team up with New Pulp Press to publish this exciting look at diplomacy on the front lines in the war on terror. Set in Saudi Arabia during the months after the invasion of Iraq, Ben's literary satire is an unserious look at a serious situation – a grim reminder that no matter how high the barricade, how sharp the razor wire, there is no front line to the war on terror. And the enemy is everywhere, even within. For the record, it should be noted that Ben studied writing at Central Connecticut State University and education at the University of New Haven. He presently is a Foreign Service officer at the State Department and has served in Saudi Arabia, Nicaragua, Ghana and Mexico. His book is available as an ebook or in paperback. Enjoy!



Next we offer this picture of Heidi Deger who will be featured as the Fairy Godmother in McLean High School's production of Rodgers & Hammerstein's "Cinderella" on April 8, 14-15-16 @ 7PM and April 9 @ 2 PM. You may remember an earlier picture of Heidi in a Washington Post article about Hallcrest Heights that ran on April 16, 2005. Once a star, always a star!

Board of Directors

President	M.L. Clark Tyler	7327 Eldorado Street	703-893-3336
Vice President	Jack Schwab	7370 Montcalm Drive	703-627-4389
Treasurer	Richard Matsko	7400 Hallcrest Drive	703-734-9746
Secretary	John Aranha	7317 Eldorado Street	703-462-9791
Director	Glenn Crumley	1744 Chain Bridge Road	703-790-9760
Director	Rahul Saddy	7376 Eldorado Street	704-277-2056
Director	Ben East	7404 Eldorado Street.	919-522-4472

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See our website at:
www.hallcrestheights.org

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**The next Board meeting will be held on
April 12 at 7:30 PM at 7327 Eldorado St.**

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