

The Forest Hill Neighborhood
Association Newsletter

Winter 2012

Forest Hill Flyer

**Forest Hill Neighborhood Association meetings
held every third Tuesday at 7 p.m.
at The Stone House - Please Attend!**

We are always looking for stories
about our neighborhood and the
people who live here. Please send
ideas and comments to Linda Mills,
foresthillflyer@gmail.com.

Published by the Forest Hill
Neighborhood Association

For Ad Sales please contact David Lynch at
adsalesforesthillflyer@gmail.com



*Plaques announcing that your home is
one of the historic homes in Forest Hill
are now available for order.
See page 14 for details.*

New Officers Elected at November Meeting of the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association

At the November 20, 2012 meeting
of the Forest Hill Neighborhood
Association members elected
officers and board members
(for the 2013-2014 term.)

President - Shannon Taylor
Vice President - Luke McCall
Treasurer - Zach Sheldon
Secretary - Robely Jones

Board Members

Janet Bowers
Dorna Braswell
Sue Cline
Richard Day
Linda Mills
Carolyn Paulette
Bo Williams

Volunteer to Green the Neighborhood!

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the Reedy Creek
Coalition are sponsoring a tree planting event in the Forest Hill
neighborhood. On Saturday, December 8 from 9 a.m. until
noon, the two groups, as well as our intrepid neighborhood
volunteers, will plant 40 trees on the property at the end of
West 44th Street. The trees will not only beautify the area, they
will help with the flooding problem posed by Reedy Creek,
improve water quality, and provide shelter for our native
creatures.

If you would like to volunteer or want further information,
you may contact the Reedy Creek Coalition at
www.reedycreekcoalition.org.



This view of the area on West 44th Street looks toward
Reedy Creek which flows along the area's border.
Photo by Ian Mills

The President's Message



By Richard Day

This will be the last column I write for the newsletter, as my role of association president comes to an end this year. A new president will have been elected by the time this Forest Hill Flyer comes out. All the great work we experienced from the group will surely continue in fresh and capable hands.

It is rewarding to look back on what has happened in the last two years. Our board and many volunteers have helped to bring to fruition so much. Accomplishments include the flashing crosswalks, the historic district designation, an ever-growing Forest Hill 5K, Music in the Park, and much more. Without our board, and a gang of volunteers, none of that would have happened. So when you see them around the hood, please thank them!

We look forward to many more happy years here in Forest Hill and ever-evolving enhancements to our immediate area, and beyond. The retail districts to the east and west will surely continue to be innovative and smart by offering a variety of services for us to take advantage of and support. In addition, please support your council person and school board member all you can. Great cities and schools are built with human capital, and like many things, what we put in is reflected in what we get in return.

The park continues to be a focal point for all of us. As many of you saw in the recent issue of *Style Weekly*, Kitty Snow's great grandfather, Harris Stilson, took hundreds of photographs all over the city, which she recently discovered. One of the shots was of the old roller coaster that used to inhabit the park. More than a hundred years young, the park continues to draw us, entertain us, give us opportunities for peace and reflection, and be a place for our children to frolic. I don't know about you, but our children are a bit more compliant after they have worn themselves out at the park. It's a good thing.

Last week, I was riding my bike on the Forest Hill trail, and began to notice a few more rogue paths jetting off on either side of me. If you frequent those trails, please remind other visitors that the singular Forest Hill Loop is to be just that...singular. A few years back, a lot of volunteers worked hard setting up that trail and other less planned trails were reclaimed by the forest. The reason for keeping the singular loop is that too many trails create a lot of runoff. That is bad for the forest and the watershed.

Speaking of watershed, I hope that the great work of the Reedy Creek Coalition will continue. If you are not aware, please look them up online. They will do free audits of your

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association 2011-2012

www.foresthillneighborhood.com

OFFICERS

Richard Day, President
Luke McCall, Vice President
Vicky Hamrick, Secretary
Zac Sheldon, Treasurer

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Janet Bowers
Dorna Braswell
Sue Cline
Martha Cooper
Robley Jones
Carolyn Paulette
Shannon Taylor

FLYER

Linda Mills, Editor
Bo Williams, Design and Production
foresthillflyer@gmail.com

property's water runoff in order to study, monitor, and improve the health of the watershed, which includes all that goes to Reedy Creek, and of course the James River.

Finally, I must put in my two cents about Halloween. We had a lovely time as boys scoured the neighborhood for treats (and Woodland Heights, too). But the attendance was about as low as I recall. If anyone has any ideas for drawing more kids, opening up more doors, and making it more festive all around, please come to a Forest Hill Neighborhood Association meeting soon to share your great ideas. Or you can post them at the website.

Thanks to everyone that helped make the last two years so rewarding. Let's all continue to have a good time living in the Shangri La of Forest Hill. Happy holidays!

Richard Day is the outgoing president of the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association. The association appreciates all his hard work for "south of average, closer to paradise."

From Our Council Representative

Dear Neighbor,

The leaves are falling and so are the temperatures. The air is crisp with the hint of winter and smell of fireplaces burning. The leaves crackle under foot as I play in the park with my grandchildren. I don't know about you, but autumn in Richmond is one of my favorite times of year!

Speaking of leaves, the city has scheduled leaf pick up in Forest Hill for December 3-14, 2012. If it should snow during your scheduled pick up dates, please be mindful that the same equipment used to pick up leaves is used for snow removal, so unfortunately your pick up schedule may be interrupted. If you have any questions about leaf pick up, please do not hesitate to contact my office (320-2454) or email me at Kathy.Graziano@richmondgov.com.

In September, I held the first bi-monthly meeting of the Neighborhood/Civic Association presidents. These meetings will give the presidents of all the Neighborhood/Civic Associations within the 4th District the opportunity to discuss ongoing issues affecting their communities, as well as to exchange of ideas. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of January.

I also want to remind you that applications for Real Estate Tax Relief for elderly and disabled persons will be available in January 2013. The applications can be accessed through the Department of Finance on the city's website at <http://www.richmondgov.com/Finance/index.aspx>. You can also call 311 or my office.

The next 4th District Quarterly Meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on January 29, 2013 at Saint Luke Lutheran Church, on the corner of Chippenham Parkway and Custis Road.

I want to thank each and every one of you who supported me this past election season. Running for Richmond City Council is bigger than a one person job! They say it takes a village to raise a child—well I say, "It takes great friends, neighbors and supporters to win an election!" So once again—THANK YOU!

I invite you to call or stop by my district office at 6948 Forest Hill Avenue to share your ideas, voice your concerns, and/or to discuss issues. It's probably a good idea to call before you stop over. Your involvement with my office has and will continue to be vital to setting policy and providing services that improve our community and quality of life. I value your input.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

Kathy Graziano

The Honorable Kathy Graziano is councilwoman for the Southwest 4th District in Richmond and president of the Richmond City Council. You can reach her at Kathy.Graziano@richmondgov.com or 804-320-2454.



Holiday Safety Tips

With the holidays drawing near, now is a good time to review simple ways to keep your home safe and secure.

- Keep lights on inside and outside your home. This is the easiest and most effective crime prevention tool.
- Lock doors. Use dead bolts. Don't leave the inside key in the deadbolt lock.
- Remove fans and AC units from windows. This is a great deterrent to thieves looking for an easy way inside your home.
- Keep your cars clear of presents, electronics and pocket change. These things invite car thefts and break ins.
- Never advertise all the wonderful expensive gifts you received by putting electronic/appliance boxes out on the street for recycling. Cut up the boxes instead.

If you're traveling for the holidays, ask a trusted neighbor to check on your home and pick up mail and newspapers. Leave lamps and radios on timers to trick outsiders into thinking you are home. You can also notify the police of your absence, and they'll check on your house. Visit <http://www.richmondgov.com/police/documents/HWBW.pdf> for a form to give to police with your vacation dates.

Finally, be a good neighbor and call police at 911 (emergency) or 646-5100 (non-emergency) if you see anything suspicious. Your neighbors will thank you! The police also will thank you for being their eyes and ears!

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43rd Street Festival of the Arts 2012 a Success!

By Robin Cage

Well, if it is all about the weather, this year's 43rd Street Festival of the Arts hit the jackpot! It was one of those gorgeous fall-like days we pray for each year.

The delicious weather, good advertising, and fine art and crafts brought in the crowds. The music was fantastic. We raised record amounts for Freedom House. Some of the food booths ran out of food. The great attendance even had the artisans happy with sales and customer response.

Many thanks go to Good Shepherd for their support and fund raising, to the Bluz Catz for music and support, and to all the neighbors who clean up and allow us to bring in folks from near and far to enjoy our Forest Hill neighborhood. Hope you enjoyed the show!

Robin Cage is the owner of the 43rd Street Gallery.



At the 43rd Street Festival of the Arts, the creativity is not only in the booths, it's also on the street!
Photo by Geri Dibiase

Save the date!
Run
for the **Hills!**



Runners, Walkers, Joggers, Strollers
and Canine-types are invited to join
this Fun Run in Forest Hill Park.

For more information visit
www.foresthillneighborhood.com

SATURDAY: 9AM
MARCH 9

Do Your Plants Have a Purpose?

By Suzette Lyon

When adding trees, shrubs or perennials to our yards, most of us make plant choices based on what is available at the local nursery, that lovely specimen we saw in another yard, or a perennial a neighbor has to share. Our goal is to make our yards lovely and they are! But, in addition to being beautiful, plants have a purpose in nature and they should have a purpose in our landscapes as well. Here's why...

We have drastically changed our landscapes from their natural beginnings. A significant problem in urban and suburban areas is the predominance of non-native plants—those plants that did not exist here before the Europeans arrived. Most large trees in our neighborhood are native species. Most small trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals, however, are non-native. We have removed native plants that feed and shelter small critters and have replaced them with non-natives the animals cannot use. These plants do look pretty, but they do not fulfill the purpose of supporting the ecosystem. Since so much of our land is now developed, our parks and forests do not provide enough space to support the native fauna. Our yards, therefore, have become important habitat.

A good example is a little butterfly, the Baltimore checkerspot (*Euphydryas phaeton*), which has been in rapid decline since the early 1990's throughout the Mid-Atlantic. The primary reason for decline is habitat loss, specifically loss of the primary host plant for the butterfly's larvae, white turtlehead (*Chelone glabra*). Many insects lay their eggs on the specific plants that their larvae will use for food. These insect-plant relationships have developed over thousands of years and insects are typically dependent on just a few (or only one) plant species for



Photo by AcrylicArtist



Photo by James Henderson

survival. So, when the white turtlehead disappears, so does the Baltimore checkerspot. Some of our other activities contribute to the decline as well. For instance, the checkerspot caterpillars hibernate in rolled leaves on the ground and are disposed with our leaf litter!

There are now hundreds, perhaps thousands, of stories like the one above. These insect declines have much more impact than just losing a pretty butterfly. Consider this example: Many of those beautiful song birds that come to your feeder are in decline as well. Their decline is directly related to the absence of native plants. Adult birds spend the day finding food for their nestlings. (You may see them at your feeder, but they are there to feed themselves.) The parents must find caterpillars to feed their rapidly growing young. Since we have removed the food source (native plants) for many caterpillars, they are fewer in number, harder to find, and the job of feeding baby birds is a much more difficult task. Declining bird populations are related to our plant choices.

We have an opportunity, perhaps an obligation, to reverse this trend of using non-native plants. By using native species in our gardens, we can have beauty AND plants with a purpose. And the more yards that have native plants, the better. Just one more example will explain why: According to the Baltimore Checkerspot Restoration Project of Maryland, "for long-term survival, the Baltimore checkerspot requires a patchwork of suitable sites, each located no farther than a quarter-mile from the next." We can only hope that native plants go viral!

Suzette Lyon has been a resident of the Reedy Creek Watershed for more than 20 years and is a member of the Reedy Creek Coalition, <http://reedycreekcoalition.org/>. Her interest in and concerns about native plants began with walks through Crooked Branch Ravine where native species are rapidly being replaced by invasive non-natives such as English ivy, oriental bittersweet and Vinca. For more native plant information, visit <http://www.nativeplantcenter.net/>.

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My Amazing Story

By Hermie

So, I was sitting in my shell, minding my own business on a lovely little beach in the marshes of Ocracoke Island when suddenly I found myself being lifted up in the air. I immediately retreated deep within my shell, and apparently was deposited in some sort of cloth bag along with a lot of other empty shells that did not contain other crabs. I stayed in that bag for a long time, like two days. I was hungry, but otherwise okay because I can breathe through my skin. When my shell was lifted out of the bag, however, I was not put back on my beach! I was put on some sort of shelf above some sort of container that holds water. So, after a while, I came out and started walking around. It was dark. Since I didn't know where I was, I fell down into this container and must have made a big noise because this huge being came clomping into the place where I was and yelled, "Janet, there's a hermit crab in this shell! It's walking around the sink!"

Duh, I thought, what did you expect! Of course, I'm walking around—that's what I do all day. Anyway, the huge beings freaked out and went away. But they came back eventually to put me in a bucket with some powder called Instant Ocean and water, which I guess was supposed to simulate my marine environment. I'm like, whatever, and walked around on the bottom while they figured out that they needed to get me some oxygen through a bubbling mechanism, food to eat (Crab Bites, my favorite!), and some liquid to put into my water so I didn't get poisoned by the chlorine in the tap water.

Suffice it to say that my humans (yes, I figured out that's what they were), Eric and Janet, ended up setting me up in a cushy ten-gallon saltwater tank with real coral rocks and sand, a cool bubble bar that puts oxygen into the water, a heater in the winter, and a power head that blows the water around in my tank so bacteria can't grow easily and cloud up the tank. Wow! Plus, they put in a few more shells for me to explore.

Eric and Janet also found out that I am a thin-stripe hermit crab. My kind usually live in the coastal waters from Delaware to Florida. I'm a marine crab, which means I usually live under water, but I can go out of water for short periods of time. (Thank goodness—remember the bag and the shelf!) I've been here more than two years now and have grown, molted, and moved into three bigger shells. Eric and Janet exchange two gallons of water out of my tank every two weeks to keep ammonia from building up and clean my tank while I wander around on my "beach," a plastic tub with sand in it. When I'm in my tank, I love crawling around on my rocks. I'm a

very good climber, if I do say so myself! But by far, my favorite thing to do is to climb on the bubble bar and have my very own Jacuzzi!

All in all, life is grand in my plush tank. What more could a hermit crab want?

Hermie shares his home with an 18-year-old cat and his humans, Eric Oritt and Janet Smith. They have lived in Forest Hill for 13 years. They love kayaking, the beach, the Rivah, traveling, and hanging out with their wonderful neighbors! They return to Ocracoke as often as possible to visit Hermie's extended family.



Hermie mugs for the camera. What a smile! Photo by Eric Oritt

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Leaves, Leaves Everywhere!

This year, leaf pick up for Forest Hill is scheduled between December 3 and 14, 2012. There are many ways of dealing with your leaves. Perhaps the best for your yard would be to compost them. If there are way too many leaves to compost, the remainder can be loaded into biodegradable brown paper lawn or leaf bags. These bags are environmentally friendly and can be recycled with the leaves. There is no limit to the number of **biodegradable** bags you can leave for the crews during leaf vacuum collection days.

If you plan to rake your leaves to the street, please remember that leaves should be raked to the property line that is adjacent to the street. **Leaves and other debris should never be placed in the street or culvert.** Putting leaves in the street wreaks havoc with the stormwater drainage system. Leaves blocking the street also make it difficult for your neighbors to drive and park. Please be considerate. You should remove any dirt, rocks, metal or branches from leaf piles or the city crews may not collect them.

You can also dispose of your leaves by taking them to one of several locations: East Richmond Road Convenience Center at 3800 East Richmond Road, Maury Street Landfill at 2900 Maury Street, or the "Powerline" at 8600 Huguenot Road at the

northwest corner of Chippenham Parkway. If you have any further questions, visit the city's website at www.richmondgov.com. The pick-up schedule is also available by calling the leaf hotline at 804-646-LEAF (5323).



Know Your Neighbor: Bill Thornton

By Judith Warrington



Bill Thornton was aboard *USS Tennessee* at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He continued to serve on that battleship, as well as other ships, in the Pacific during World War II and afterward.

December 7th is the day when the nation remembers the attack on Pearl Harbor, and one of our neighbors remembers it better than most people. He was there. On that Sunday morning in 1941, Bill Thornton was a young Electrician's Mate Third Class in the U.S. Navy serving aboard the battleship *USS Tennessee*, moored in the harbor along what was called "Battleship Row." He was lucky. *USS Tennessee* was hit only twice, but the neighboring ship, *USS West Virginia* was hit by nine enemy torpedoes and sank, wedging *USS Tennessee* at its mooring. To *USS Tennessee's* stern was *USS Arizona*. *USS Arizona* was bombed and sank killing more than 1,000 sailors.

Like many WWII veterans, Bill doesn't say much about his war experiences. But he is most definitely proud of his service to his country. Since moving to Richmond in 2003, Bill has attended each Pearl Harbor Day observance at the Virginia War Memorial. Last year his photograph appeared in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* shaking hands with the governor. For many years he attended *USS Tennessee's* annual reunion, and was a member of the Pearl Harbor Survivors' Association, a group that disbanded recently because of the decline in membership. Of the 84,000 service men and women stationed on Oahu that day in 1941, only an estimated 3,000 are still with us.

Originally from Rusk County in East Texas, Bill still retains a bit of his Texas twang even after decades of living in Oxon Hill, Maryland, a suburb of Washington D.C. A tall Texan, he has a wry sense of humor and loves a good story. Having worked for the federal government until he retired, Bill moved to Forest Hill with his wife, Sylvia, also a Navy veteran, to be closer to his family. Sadly, Sylvia passed away before they could completely move in. His son, Steve, now lives in San Antonio, and his daughter and son-in-law, Linda and David Mills, and grandson Ian live just two blocks away. His other grandson, Kendall, who grew up on West 42nd Street, lives in Brooklyn.

Since moving to Richmond, Bill has become an avid bingo player, grows amazingly large tomatoes in his sunny backyard, follows politics closely, and enjoys dining out with his family and friends. But moving from suburban D.C to Richmond meant that Bill had to make a few transitions. Perhaps the biggest was getting used to the lack of traffic such as he encountered around Washington. In Richmond he didn't have to leave two hours early for a doctor's appointment across town!

He likes his friendly Forest Hill neighborhood where so many people are out and about. He continues to be amazed and delighted at how many people he always sees walking their dogs, strolling with their kids and talking with their neighbors at all hours of the day and night.

Having moved from a neighborhood where no tree was more than 30 years old, he just wishes there weren't so many leaves to rake. But that's what strong grandsons are for!

Judith Warrington is a long-time Forest Hill resident and a freelance writer.

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Invisible Mount for brick and stucco)

- These prices are valid until December 30, 2012
- Make checks payable to the Forest Hill Historic Designation Committee and deliver/mail to Carolyn Paulette, 4312 Forest Hill Ave., Richmond, VA 23225.
- Turnaround should be 4 to 6 weeks depending on meeting minimum orders. Please submit your order as soon as possible if you would like to have them up for Christmas. Contact Carolyn at 232-6644 or cmp4312@yahoo.com with questions. We would like to verify the construction date for your property with you before we have it engraved on your plaque. We will use the date that the city tax records provide or the date our research provides unless you have other documentation.

Get Your Forest Hill Historic District Plaque for the Holidays

By Carolyn Paulette

We are all delighted that Forest Hill neighborhood has been listed on both the state and national registers for historic designation. There are 725 properties listed, and yours may be one of them! If so, you are entitled to display this plaque emblazoned with the date your home was built to show that yours is one of the many historic homes listed in our area.

Many residents have already placed orders for their plaques. We will order another batch of plaques on December 15, 2012. After December 15, the foundry tells us the price on the bronze plaque will increase 11 percent. The Historic Designation Committee will continue to send in orders quarterly in 2013 and 2014. The orders will be placed on March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15 of each year.

Some residents also are taking advantage of the tax credits available for the listed properties. Owners renovating the apartments on West 47th Street and a house on West 42nd Street are taking advantage of the tax credits available for houses listed on these registers. Contact the Department of Historic Resources for information about tax credits for renovations that cost 20 percent of the assessed value of your house. The tax credits may be taken over a period of five years. Some properties that have been renovated in the past 10 years might even qualify. Having historic designation is a wonderful gift for this neighborhood.

Carolyn Paulette is chairman of the Forest Hill Historic Designation Committee.



Do You Love Your Block?

The City of Richmond is offering neighborhood groups \$500 in Home Depot gift cards for projects that will improve their communities. The Love Your Block grant is awarded to projects that adhere to these criteria:

1. The project improves resident perception of safety with improved lighting, landscaping, or other modifications.
2. The project reduces crime incidents and other gang/drug-related vandalism with graffiti removal and community garden initiatives.
3. The project reduces trash by organizing street clean-ups and increasing recycling.

The Forest Hill Neighborhood Association would like to apply for this grant in March 2013. And we need your ideas!

If you have an idea for a project (or projects) located within the Forest Hill area, please contact Shannon Taylor at foresthillsafety@hotmail.com.

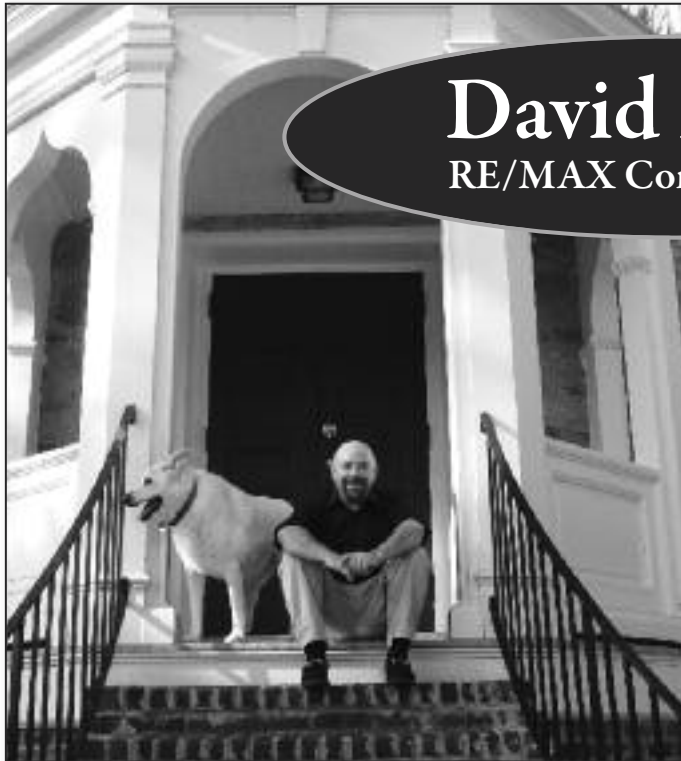
Join Friends of Forest Hill Park, Junior*

The volunteer group, Friends of Forest Hill Park, Junior, is looking for new members! All that's required is that you be in middle school and have a love of Forest Hill Park! What could be easier?

The group meets four times a year (typically on a Sunday at 1 p.m. at the Stone House in the park). Volunteers participate at a youth activity table at Sunday in the Park with Friends, host Halloween Howl in the park, and assist with park clean ups. Volunteers make all the plans with adult supervision.

Please contact Laura Dysart at 231-7662 or lauradysart@verizon.net if you or a middle school student you know is interested in being an active volunteer with the park!

*BONUS! Volunteer time may be eligible for required Community Service hours at your school.



David Lynch
RE/MAX Commonwealth



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Happy Holidays
and a Safe and
Prosperous
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Forest Hill
Neighborhood Association

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

6:00-8:00PM

AT THE 43RD STREET GALLERY

43rd Street
GALLERY

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Your Neighborhood Wants You! Please join the FHNA and become part of a friendly and active group that works for the good of the neighborhood.

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association

Membership Form

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

☐ Household Membership \$15 ☐ 2 Years \$25 ☐ Corporate Annual Membership \$30

☐ **Yes**, I want to join the Neighborhood Watch and receive e-mail updates about crime and safety in our neighborhood.

☐ **Yes**, please send me email updates on current neighborhood events.

☐ **No** emails please.

Pay by cash or check payable to
Forest Hill Neighborhood Association
ATTN: Zac Sheldon, FHNA Treasurer
4114 Springhill Ave
Richmond, VA 23225

For more information visit www.foresthillneighborhood.com

FREE
Tote Bag & Decal
when you join!



Forest Hill