



The Forest Hill Neighborhood
Association Newsletter

Winter 2013

Forest Hill Flyer

**Forest Hill Neighborhood Association meetings
are held every third Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the
Forest Hill Presbyterian Church. See you there!**

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
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Vanishing Ham Biscuits, Pinot, a Kid that Devoured Five Snow Cones, and the Best Neighborhood Event of the Year!

By Bo Williams

The first annual Forest Hill Fall Fest, brain child of our president Shannon Dion Taylor and board members Dorna Braswell and Sue Cline, was a huge success. This was an event exclusively for members of the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association. More than 150 of those wonderful people congregated on West 42nd Street on October 5, 2013.

The success of the event was the work of many hands. FNHA board members Dorna Braswell and Linda Mills volunteered their time to canvass their block on West 42nd Street between Dunston and Reedy. They went door to door to get the approval of the home owners on the block so that the street could be closed. Carolyn Paulette coordinated the portable potty and one of the bands. Other officers and board members took the initiative to get the insurance certificates, ABC licensing, and all the other paperwork in order. Who could ask for anything more



Penny Anderson, Bo Williams and Mary McNeil wowed the crowd with epicurean delights! Photo by Shannon D. Taylor

than Linda volunteering to have the portable potty in her yard?!

The two bands, Herro Sugar and MacBeth, set up and played on a stage in front of Dorna's yard at the end of the block. They both sang fabulous cover songs in distinctly different styles that had attendees singing and swaying for the afternoon. Herro Sugar is a neighborhood band, and they seemed to draw a young following. MacBeth crooned lovely harmonies later in the evening. What better way to enjoy your glass of wine or beer that was included with the ticket price?

I was in charge of food and drinks. I can't thank my neighbors enough for helping me out at the last minute when the caterer fell through. Mary McNeil made tortellini skewers with fresh mozzarella, cherry tomatoes and olives. Penny Anderson and John Butcher made chicken salad rolls, and David Lynch made the ham biscuits, that really did seem to vanish into thin air.

Ron McNeil helped with pouring and manning the wine and beer table. It was a lot of pouring with two reds, two whites and two types of beer. Desirea Schmidt, or "D-Bomb," as I call her, came to my aid as assistant-snow-cone-maker. She even brought extra ice! Mary and Penny also helped maintain the food table and did a wonderful job of doing so! More than one person asked, "Who did the catering?" We all smiled and said, "We did!"

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Friends and neighbors chatted, listened to music, and enjoyed excellent food and beverages along West 42nd Street. Photo by Ian Mills

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It Doesn't Get Much Better Than This



By Shannon D. Taylor

We recently completed a major Forest Hill Neighborhood Association goal by hosting the first-ever Forest Hill Fall Fest. It was a day of music, food and conversation. My favorite part of the day was hearing story after story about why

people love Forest Hill. One neighbor said that of all the neighborhoods she's lived in the Richmond area, Forest Hill was by far her favorite because of the connection she felt to other people. Folks in our neighborhood acknowledge each other with a wave, a smile, or a chat. Those little interactions play a big role in making us feel content and "at home."

Two other neighbors finally connected at the Fest. One's son attended a prestigious state college and really admired his faculty advisor who lived somewhere in Forest Hill. After listening to a professor from the same college talk about a student advisee who lived here, I was able to bring these two people together to finally catch up in person. Another group of neighbors described a Campbell's Soup Challenge whereby each person whipped up an amazing, and sometimes not so amazing, dish using a can of Campbell's soup. Chocolate tomato soup cake sounds like it should work, right?! As the festivities came to a close, I left with a content heart, filled with the memories of smiling faces and endearing stories. My hope is that we will be able to host the second Forest Hill Fall Fest next year.

And speaking of looking forward, the FHNA has many exciting plans for 2014. Guest speakers for meetings include University of Richmond President Edward Ayers on January 21, 2014. On February 18, Nancy Krauss will discuss how to utilize historic tax credits to lower your home renovation costs. Later in the year, FHNA meetings will feature a gardening expert, and hopefully someone from the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Our annual 5K dog-and-stroller-friendly race on March 22 will likely draw another large crowd of residents and "wish-we-were-residents!"

In August we will present our second FHNA Community Service Scholarship award of \$500 to a college-bound neighborhood senior. Next year, we also will explore the idea of installing official "Welcome to Our Quaint, Awesome, Friendly, Highly-Sought After and Historic Neighborhood" signs (or something like that) to welcome passersby traveling on Forest Hill Avenue and Riverside Drive. Better yet, perhaps we should host an official Forest Hill Campbell's Soup Challenge? I'm game if you are!

Shannon D. Taylor is the president of the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association. She will be experimenting with soup for the next few months.

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association 2013-2014

www.foresthillneighborhood.com

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Vanishing Ham Biscuits, continued

I made most of the snow cones and, yes, there was one young gentleman who devoured five. I think he had every color of the rainbow represented between his tongue, mouth and the drips down his shirt. How good of a time did he have? Almost as good a time as I had. One girl asked me if it was my snow cone machine and when I replied, "Yes," her look told me I was the coolest person on Earth. And that is exactly how I feel about owning my own industrial snow cone machine. You never know when you need to get it out and have a Tiger Blood and Blue Raspberry snow cone.

Carolyn Paulette brought Keith Brinker, Mr. Tatootwister, to the event. He made some of the most amazing balloon swords, rings and animals I've ever seen. His wife also did face painting. Ravenchase Adventures, a local company, donated a scavenger hunt where clues had to be found and compiled up and down the block. The gold rat hiding behind the food did have a purpose.

Richmond's Department of Fire and Emergency Services was kind enough to bring a fire truck for all to see and play with. One "young" woman sat in the driver's seat with a huge smile and said, "I've wanted to do this all my life." Other children played corn hole and drew on the street with chalk.

With more than 150 people in attendance, the afternoon was a great indication that the Forest Hill Fall Fest should continue next year, and a great testament to our neighborhood. Everyone seemed to have a good time, and even after it was over, neighbors lingered in the street and in the yards talking and catching up with each other. Our goal as an association was to strengthen our community. The Forest Hill Fall Fest accomplished this that day. Thank you all for attending, and if you did not, I hope to see you next year. Don't miss the Best Neighborhood Event of the year!

Bo Williams stayed calm when the caterer called the day before the event to say, "Sorry, oops, can't do it." He knew that in a neighborhood like ours, folks would pitch in and help. So true.



*The golden rat was the king of the Ravenchase Adventure.
Photo by Ian Mills*



Ravenchase Adventures created a scavenger hunt for the younger crowd, many of whom were armed with awesome balloon swords from Mr. Tatootwister.

Photo by Ian Mills



Four-legged neighbors joined their two-legged pals in the fun. Photo by Ian Mills



*The MacBeth sisters harmonized on a sunny afternoon.
Photo by Ian Mills*



*Herro Sugar kicked off the day with rock and roll!
Photo by Dorna Braswell*

David Lynch

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Celebrity Pet – Mini

By Britt Farrar

Meow!

You may have seen me prowling the sidewalks around Stonewall Avenue near Forest Hill Park. I'm Mini Farrar, and I'm a 12-year-old tabby cat who hails from Boston.

I have a pretty big family. My human parents are my mom, Britt, who adopted me as a little tike, my dad, Bill, and my human siblings, Billy, 17, and Sam, 16 months. I also have two sister cats, Tipper and Nina, a sister cattle dog, Dixie, and a brother bearded dragon, Fonzy.

I've been in Richmond for more than 10 years and lived in the Forest Hill area for about eight. Many of my neighbors consider me to be a neighborhood fixture. I'll quickly drop to my back if there's a chance a passer-by might give me a scratch.

I'm an indoor/outdoor cat, so a lot of my adventures are mysteries and I plan to keep it that way. Sometimes in cold weather, I come home smelling like a wood fire. Let them try to figure that one out!

My favorite activity is taking evening walks with my parents, Sam, and Dixie. Many people laugh and are surprised I follow

along. What's so funny about that?

I'm not very popular with our feathered neighbors that live in the trees. They often dive bomb me as I make a run from under a car back to my home base.

So if you see me, don't be shy. I make friends easy and I would love to let you hear my very loud purrrrrrr.



Photo by Bill Farrar

Britt Farrar loves working out around the lake in Forest Hill Park. You can spot her on Saturday mornings panting her way up Heartbreak Hill.

Editor's note: If your critter has been pawing at you to write up their story for Celebrity Pet, please feel free to contact foresthillflyer@gmail.com. At the Flyer, we love our pet neighbors, any variety.

New Shopping Options in Forest Hill Delight

As you plan your holiday shopping this year, keep in mind our newest local venues. An undercover Forest Hill Flyer shopping team visited all three of these wonderful shops on a recent Saturday. In the team's opinion, they are all worth supporting with your designated holiday dollars.

Epoch Furnishings

Their Facebook page describes their mission: "We strive to provide our customers with quality home furnishings at a price significantly below retail. We seek out decor from all eras of furniture design such as art deco, midcentury modern, antique, present day and even custom-made wood furniture."

The undercover team agrees and found the store to be airy, organized and well stocked. It's obvious the proprietor, Colena Hammond, who was friendly and welcoming, takes pride in presenting only the best vintage and custom furniture and accessories. The evening we visited, a group of guitar players and vocalists was rehearsing in a corner of the store. We sat on a lovely vintage sofa for a bit and listened. All in all, it was a warm and wonderful shopping experience.

Visit Epoch Furnishings at 4813 Forest Hill Avenue.

The Nest

The Nest offers fabulous finds to feather your nest, according to their Facebook page. The antiques they sell range in age and come from a variety of sources, including estate sales, auctions and items sold on consignment.

The undercover team got a bit stuck, in a good way, at the hand-made jewelry as they entered The Nest. The store

highlights many local jewelry artists, including one of the proprietors, who create elegant and unusual accessories. The variety of local items in the store was excellent, as was the scope of unusual and fanciful choices. The Flyer team circled the store at least three times, sampling the cookies and cider offered to shoppers while enjoying looking at everything from original paintings and silver napkin rings to hand-made soap dishes and felted-wool lapel pins.

Visit The Nest at 3404 Semmes Avenue.

Muse Me - Metropolitan Sign Shop

Don't be confused. The Metropolitan Sign Shop is still there between O'Toole's and the Exxon. They have just expanded.

Proprietor Anne Purser and her colleague Lisa Smith are still making wonderful signs for all occasions. Just visit and have a chat about what they can do—they will welcome you and amaze you with the variety of signage they can produce.

In addition to the signs, they are providing a comfortable and enticing shop in the front of the store—Muse Me. The Forest Hill Flyer undercover team was met with paper "blessings" offered at the front door. We were wished, "perfect health, abundant prosperity and complete and utter happiness." We'll take it.

The shop is a combination of quality consignment and new items, well displayed and interesting. It's friendly and warm and we all felt at home. A perfect place to shop. One member of our team bought a sweet little McCoy vase to display in her kitchen window and may go back for the funky kitchen wall clock.

Visit Muse Me or the Metropolitan Sign Company at 4806 Forest Hill Avenue.

Green Practices Are Worth It

By Natalie K. Stickel

Stepping onto the newly-landscaped property was like entering a different world. Red bee balm flowers were in full bloom alongside tall, fountaining grasses, attracting a rotating cast of birds and insects absent from the adjacent yard. It had rained the previous night, but the only evidence was the lush, verdant garden—all of the water had been absorbed into the earth. Now this is what a yard should look like, echoed over and over in my head with each new discovery. Nothing needed mowing, nor looked like it should. This wasn't a manicured lawn, but the arrangement wasn't quite wild, either. Both wildlife and homeowner seemed overwhelmingly pleased with the landscape.

If you've observed a scene in Southside Richmond like the one described above, then you've almost undoubtedly encountered the work of The Reedy Creek Coalition (RCC) and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Teaming up to educate the community in stormwater runoff and its effects on our waterways, especially Reedy Creek, the James River, and the bay, the two organizations have been awarding financial assistance to eligible participants for the installation of stormwater-specific Best Management Practices (BMPs). These efforts collectively reduce pressure on the city sewer system, improve water quality, and nurture native wildlife.

As an RCC volunteer and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay intern, I've had the opportunity to get involved in the positive transformation that many homes have undergone. Our team may have already audited your home this summer. If so, I commend your effort to conserve our local, and even broader, environment. If not, and you're intrigued, please consider the plethora of benefits stormwater mitigation can have, not only for the natural world, but also for our wallets and our consciences.

During a storm, water leaving impervious surfaces (roads, rooftops, sidewalks) easily overwhelms the sewer system, causing it to overflow into local streams without being treated. Runoff carries with it chemicals such as fertilizers, oil and soot from the streets, pet waste, and trash. Simply holding water on your property and allowing it to slowly infiltrate the ground can help prevent overflow, and the best way to accomplish this is by implementing BMPs at your home. Along with rain barrels, the plants and trees used in rain gardens and conservation landscaping are extremely effective at capturing and filtering rainwater. The shade and moisture they create are known to lower heating and air conditioning costs, while they provide habitat for wildlife that prey on common pests such as mosquitoes. Furthermore, native plants evolved to thrive in Richmond's variable climate, so they require little to no maintenance once established.

For all you lawn-lovers out there, I hear you. I, too, enjoy a game of bocce ball, a fetch with the family pup and a friendly game of corn-hole. But the truth is, many of us only use a fraction of our meticulously-groomed lawns—the rest is for aesthetics. For me, a richly-textured colorful landscape is far

more beautiful. The benefits of such a meaningful cause far outweigh the costs, especially when the monetary ones can be subsidized. So instead of mowing and watering, you can spend more time with the family playing croquet on the grass you really do use.

Natalie K. Stickel is a program intern at the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. For more information on the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, please visit www.allianceforthebay.org. To see if your property qualifies for a free stormwater audit, go to www.reedycreekcoalition.org/watershed-audits.



This new BayScape of native plants in Forest Hill was created through a grant from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay.

Stormwater Credits Available

The City of Richmond Stormwater Utility offers customers the opportunity to receive a reduction in their stormwater fee for being river-friendly citizens. To qualify, customers need to reduce stormwater runoff from their property, or improve the quality of the stormwater runoff from their property. Stormwater runoff in our area goes from the Richmond stormwater system into the James River, then the Chesapeake Bay. By installing "green practices" such as rain barrels and rain gardens you can qualify for the credit.

To find out more about the credit program, how it works, and how to apply, go to www.richmondgov.com/PublicUtilities/StormwaterCredits.aspx.

A Message from Our Council Representative

Dear Neighbor,

I hope all is well!

Fall is such a beautiful time in Richmond. Now that it's getting dark so early, please be on the lookout on the road for pedestrians, especially children.

The Leaf Collection schedule for the Forest Hill neighborhood is Cycle 1 – 12/02-12/13 and Cycle 2 – 2/17-2/28. The pick-up is a bit later this year because the city heard from residents last year who thought the collections had started too soon.

With the cold weather here, a great activity for the whole family is ice skating downtown on Broad Street between 6th and 7th Streets. Please go to www.rvaonice.net for more information.

Please consider serving on a city board or commission. Not sure which board or commission to serve on? If you have an interest or concern about development, you may want to apply for the Planning Commission. Interested in accountability? Consider applying for the Audit Committee. All citizens interested in being appointed to serve as a member of a local or regional public government body or non-government organization are invited to review the descriptions, purposes and individual membership requirements and apply online at www.eservices.ci.richmond.va.us/applications/boardscommissions/index.aspx or contact my office.

Large recycling cans with wheels (the size of supercans) are available for \$65. They are a great way to store items you are recycling, then roll the can out for pick-up. I love mine! To order a can, go to the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority website at www.cvwma.com.

If you are renovating your home, you may be able to save on your taxes! The City of Richmond offers partial exemption from real estate taxes for qualifying improvements of 20 percent or more of the assessed value of your home. For those properties that qualify, the increase in market value caused by improvements will be exempted from taxable assessment for up to seven years. For qualifications and requirements please go to www.richmondgov.com/EconomicCommunityDevelopment/documents/TaxAbatementBrochure.pdf or contact my office for more information.

I invite you to call or stop by my district office at 6948 Forest Hill Avenue to share your ideas, concerns, and 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.

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



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Halloween Howl Was a Barking Success

By Laura Dysart

This year's Halloween Howl was a treat for both four-legged and two-legged spooks alike! More than 27 dogs in costume brought their owners to Forest Hill Park on October 27 to the delight of dozens of admirers and fans.

The event was sponsored by Friends of Forest Hill Park and Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior (youth volunteer group for middle school and high school students). The event was free, but the volunteer groups were eager to accept donations to support Ring Dog Rescue, a group that places "bully" breed dogs into loving and responsible homes. Ring Dog Rescue and our local Crittertown Bath House both had tables at the event. Thank you to Crittertown Bath House for donating prizes and giving out treats at the event.

Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior organized all the activities and judged the costumes. Dogs and owners participated in Egg Spoon Races, Farthest Fetch Competitions and Best Pet Trick Competition. The event culminated with a Dog/Owner Parade. Winners of all events and the costume parade were given a tasty bag of goodies.

The following dogs won the events and prizes:

Dog/Owner Egg Spoon Race: Nunzio

Farthest Fetch: Bentley

Best Pet Trick: Lucy

Best Dog/Owner Duo: Moose and Leonard (with devils)

Scariest Costume: Cosmo (zombie)

Cutest Pooch: Ozzi (bumble bee)

Dog Who Stuts His Stuff the Best: Wenslow

Best Overall Costume: Cornelius (homemade turkey costume)



Ozzi, winner of the Cutest Pooch, is a real honey and would like to bee your friend.



Cornelius, Best Costume winner, is a cute turkey who we are happy to report, shed his costume before Thanksgiving.



*The force behind the Halloween Howl is Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior, a hard-working group of neighborhood students.
Photos by Keith Ashley*

Westover Hills Library Advisory Group Wants You!

The Westover Hills Library Advisory Group (WHLAG) is a volunteer organization of dedicated individuals who help promote wider use of the library. We welcome anyone interested in the library to attend our meetings. We discuss and plan special events, and support the library as needs arise. Clay Dishon, our librarian, keeps us up to date on library news and we try to be sure the staff knows that they are appreciated.

Join the fun and take an active part in our wonderful and special neighborhood library. The WHLAG meets on the first Saturday of each month from 9-10 a.m. Contact the library by phone at 804-646-8833 for more information.

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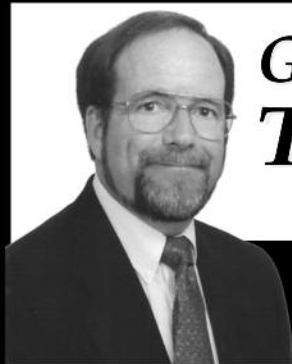
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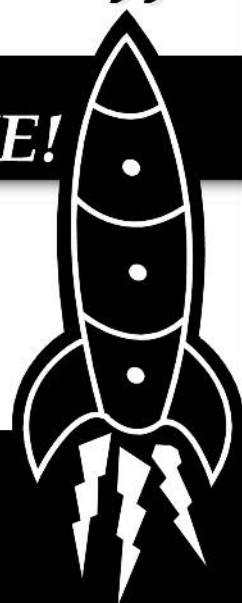
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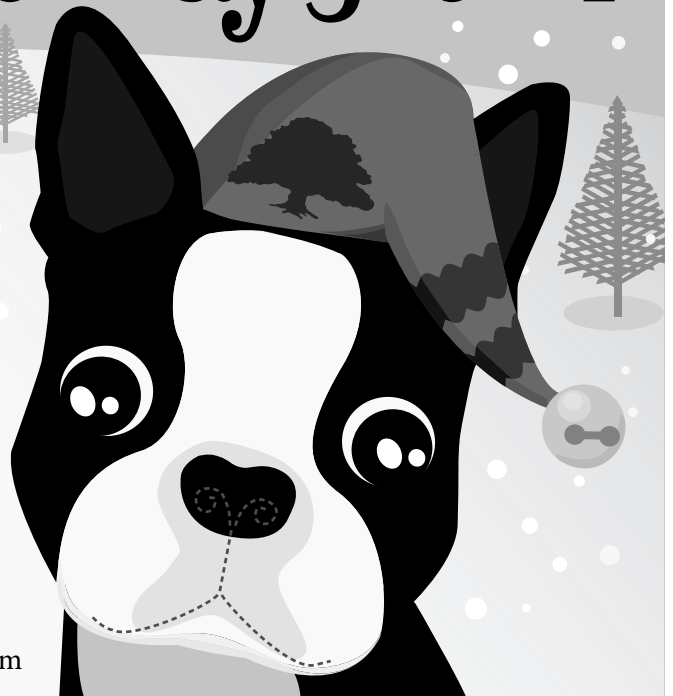
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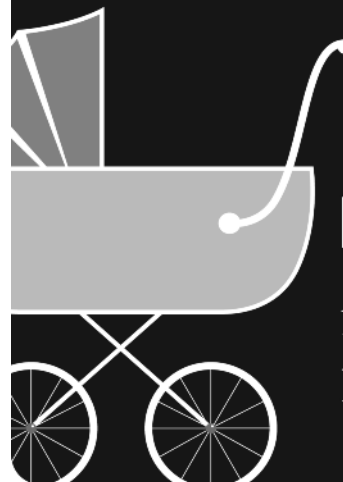
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Take a Book, Leave a Book at the Little Free Library

By Judith Warrington

What do Bangalore, Reykjavik, and the Forest Hill neighborhood have in common? They are all home to a Little Free Library, the worldwide movement of little lending libraries established and maintained by people who love books. The concept was started in 2009 in Hudson, Wisconsin by Todd Bol as a way to honor his mother, a retired school teacher who loved to read. Soon his idea of erecting little boxes where a community can share the books they enjoy began to spread. By January 2014 there are expected to be between 10,000 and 12,000 Little Free Libraries registered on the organization's site, www.littlefreelibrary.org.

Forest Hill boasts the first Little Free Library south of the James River in Richmond, registered with the organization as #2502. It is located on Dunston Avenue between West 41st Street and Roanoke Avenue. Stephanie Jefferson is the library's steward. She said that her husband, Pete, surprised her with the library as a birthday present after they had seen their first Little Free Library in the Museum District last winter.

"Many people in the neighborhood are as delighted as I was when I first saw one," said Stephanie.

Her library's first books came from the Friends of the Richmond Public Library sale and from donations from neighbors. She started stocking her library with children's books and even asked some of the neighborhood kids for suggestions. One day she was thrilled to see a group of 12ish-year-old boys get off their bicycles to take a look at the books, and ride away with a few of them.

Now, about a year later, the library has become a multimedia resource. Neighbors have stocked the library with tapes, movies, toys and puzzles. Stephanie was surprised when a musical instrument appeared in the library. "A woman stopped me to thank me, although I didn't put it

there, because she teaches music and gave the instrument to one of her students. But mostly I come home to find that a wide assortment of books have been added to the box. I never know what to expect."

While Stephanie has worked in libraries large and small where she has access to literally millions of books, you can tell she loves being a steward of her own little library. The library has also had an unexpected benefit for Stephanie and Pete. She said that they met more people the first week the Little Free Library was open than they had in the entire 10 years they've lived in neighborhood.

The second (yes, second!) Little Free Library (#5575) will be opening soon near the children's tot lot in Forest Hill Park. Laura Dysart, sponsor of the Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior, is overseeing the project.

"Lee Shewmake, president of the Friends of Forest Hill Park, brought the idea to a FFHP board meeting. We all agreed it was a perfect project for the youth group and they accepted the project eagerly," she said. "This past summer the youth group asked surrounding neighborhood organizations to contribute to the cost of the box and they agreed."

"The Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior chose a pre-made library from the Little Free Library to ensure that it would be entirely waterproof. They are painting each side panel with historic and current scenes of the park, including the trolley, the amusement park, the lake and the gate to the park. The members are taking their time to make it right!" said Laura.

As for stocking the newest library, Laura said, "People have already donated many books. We are especially asking for children's books and have received picture books and children's chapter books. Members of our own youth group have donated a lot of books they no longer read."

In our neighborhood and throughout the world, Little Free Libraries are creating a sense of community through a shared love of books. If you know of other Little Free Libraries in Forest Hill, existing or planned, please let the Flyer know and we will be sure to share the word.



The Little Free Library on Dunston Avenue continues to delight neighbors and passersby with its literary offerings. Photo by Ian Mills



Members of the Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior volunteer to paint the new Little Free Library that will be set up near the Forest Hill Park tot lot. Photo by Laura Dysart

Judith Warrington is a longtime Forest Hill resident and a lifelong bibliophile.

Editor's note: Laura hopes people will contact her at lauradysart@verzon.net to make book donations, or if you are a middle or high school student interested in joining Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior.

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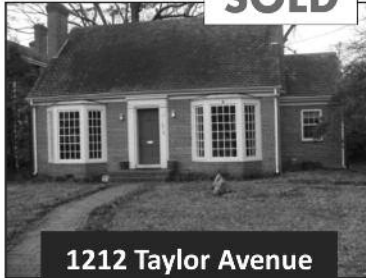
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SOLD



1105 W 43rd Street
3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath
Sold Price: \$242,000

SOLD



4306 New Kent Avenue
4 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath
Sold Price: \$260,000

SOLD



1205 W 45th Street
4 Bedroom, 2.5 Bath
Sold Price: \$275,000

SOLD



4407 Forest Hill Avenue
5 Bedroom, 4 Bath
Sold Price: \$499,950

FOR SALE



518 W 31st Street
3 Bedroom, 1.5 Bath
List Price: \$325,000

FOR SALE



1211 45th Street
2 Bedroom, 1 Bath
List Price: \$199,950

FOR SALE



4010 Forest Hill Avenue
3 Bedroom, 1 Bath
List Price: \$144,000

FOR SALE



1248 Keswick Lane
4 Bedroom, 2.5 Bath
List Price: \$165,000

FOR SALE



1018 W 48th Street
3 Bedroom, 3 Bath
List Price: \$189,950



Order Your Plaque!

Look for the Forest Hill Historic District plaques as neighbors install them. They are visible from the street and add a touch of class and distinction to the homes they adorn. Show off our historic district by displaying a plaque on your house.

FOREST HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT PLAQUE ORDER FORM

PLEASE PRINT

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

BRONZE PLAQUES: _____ cost is \$200.00

including delivery and the construction date for the individual house.

MOUNTING

TYPE: _____

(Screw mount is recommended for wood or siding over wood.

Invisible Mount is recommended for brick and stucco.)

- 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. 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.
- The next order for plaques will be sent in on December 16, 2013. Get your order in today!

Westover Hills Elementary School a Perfect Match

By Paige Turner Holbert

When my husband and I, pregnant with our second child, moved to Westover Hills three years ago, we heard so many people say, "This is such a great neighborhood until your kids get old enough to go to school." It seemed unreal to us that a neighborhood full of young families like ours would not send their children to the neighborhood elementary school. But, we watched as several friends and neighbors left the area or chose schools in other parts of the city as their children reached school age.

In January 2013, we got in contact with Dr. Ginny Loving, the principal at Westover Hills Elementary School, who was in her second year there. My husband and I met with her and liked her confidence and spirit immediately. She loved Westover and all the children, and she clearly had a vision for the diverse neighborhood school it could become. Our oldest son turned five in August and started at Westover Hills Elementary School in September. We have not doubted our decision for a second.

We are no different from any parents of two inquisitive, growing boys. We want the best for our children. Choosing to send Carson to kindergarten at WHES was not a decision we took lightly. It was an unknown since we were not acquainted with people whose kids had gone to school there. We spent a significant amount of time meeting teachers and observing classes before the first day of kindergarten arrived. There was a lot of excitement on the morning of September 3 as we got on our bikes and headed towards the school.

Dr. Loving, Ms. Moore, assistant principal, and other energetic teachers were greeting children as they walked from the bus or from the school parking lot. As we walked through the hallways, trying to hide our watery eyes, we realized that we were joined by many other tearful and loving parents who were dropping off their children. Kids were showing off their backpacks and reuniting with friends from last year. Carson spotted his classroom and his teacher, Ms. Gray, and ran inside to get a desk next to his new best friend, Christopher. We waved goodbye and knew he was in good hands.

Since that first day of school, we have become comfortable in our choice. My husband and I feel nostalgic about our own childhood because Carson can choose to ride his bike or we walk to school as a family. He loves that his day at school starts with a morning meeting so the children can share their thoughts with each other as a group. Dr. Loving instituted morning meetings two years ago as a part of her focus on discipline and says the difference in the kids has been astounding.

Richmond Public Schools offers the humanities, which includes Art, Music, Spanish, Physical Education, and Library, beginning in kindergarten. With the rezoning that occurred in May and some gentle prodding from the neighborhood parents, we recently were given full-time humanities teachers so the kids get one of these subjects every day. We listen at night as Carson counts and sings in Spanish, shows us how he learned to draw an iguana, or tells us about the Dewey Decimal system. The arts are so important for children and we believe RPS is working to keep them in the schools.

Is it the best education our son can get? We aren't sure yet...but one thing that we know is that he is a happy five-year-old kid who loves school and his new friends. And, the joy it brings our family to be part of our neighborhood school has made every day worth it.

Paige Turner Holbert is an endodontist by day, but loves coming home to her husband and two active boys in Westover Hills at night. WHES is the zoned school for Forest Hill.

WHES Open Houses

Are you curious to learn more about our local school? WHES is hosting Open Houses for prospective parents and interested parties on December 5, 2013, January 14 and March 5, 2014 at 10 a.m. These Open Houses will start with a presentation by Principal Dr. Loving. The next activity will be a school tour, to be followed by a question and answer session. Attendees will also get the chance to meet faculty members and see the school "in action." Please plan to attend. Check our Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/CuriousAboutWestover, or email us at CuriousAboutWestover@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Westover Hills Parent Forum

Please join us for our first WHES Parent Forum on Thursday January 9, 2014 at 7 p.m. at taZa, 5047 Forest Hill Avenue. This will be a casual opportunity to hear first-hand accounts about WHES from our neighborhood families with students enrolled in kindergarten and pre-K classes this year. Come hear a parent's perspective of what is going on at our school. Check the Facebook group for more details. We hope to explore WHES together with you soon!

Green Thumb?

The Forest Hill Gardeners met on Sunday, October 27, 2013 for a pumpkin decorating party. This casual group of gardeners meets on the fourth Sunday of the month at a member's home and garden. An annual wreath-making party is being planned for early December. For more information on the Forest Hill Gardeners, send an email to fhgardeners@aol.com or join us on Facebook.



On November 2, 2013, more than a dozen Forest Hill neighbors came together to build rain barrels to aid the Reedy Creek and James River watersheds. The workshop was sponsored by the James River Association who provided all the materials and welcomed the participants into the flock of Forest Hill River Hero Homes. Rain barrels help decrease runoff that might carry pollutants to Reedy Creek and the James River.

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Save the Date! January 21, 2014 FHNA Meeting to Feature University of Richmond President Edward L. Ayers

By Shannon Taylor

Don't miss this exciting opportunity to hear from President Ayers who will discuss his thoughts about Richmond, its future, and how we can contribute to its success. President Ayers is a nationally-recognized expert, teacher and scholar of American history. He has authored several books, including the award-winning *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863*. His book, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, was a finalist for the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize, as well as being named the best book on the history of American race relations and the history of the American South. He is quite simply, a dynamic person and an engaging speaker. We are so lucky he accepted our invitation, so let's give him a warm Forest Hill welcome!

As a graduate of the Universities of Virginia and Richmond, Shannon is especially giddy at the prospect of meeting President Ayers who can also cheer for both the Cavaliers and Spiders.

Save the date!
Run 5K
for the Hills!
Forest Hill

6th Annual Fun Run SATURDAY: 9AM
Sign up early and get a cool shirt.

For more information visit
www.foresthillneighborhood.com

MARCH 22

Victorian Open House at the Stone House

The Friends of Forest Hill Park is holding a free "Victorian Christmas Open House" at the Stone House in Forest Hill Park on Saturday, December 7 from noon until 4 p.m. Activities include music, house tours and more. There will be refreshments and maybe even a visit from everyone's favorite Jolly Old Elf. For more information, contact Friends of Forest Hill Park at www.friendsofforesthillpark.org.

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.

☐ **Yes**, I'm interested in volunteering with FHNA!

Pay online at www.foresthillneighborhood.com
or by check made payable to Forest Hill Neighborhood Association
ATTN: Ramon Puzon, FHNA Treasurer
4400 Stonewall Avenue, Richmond, VA 23225

FREE
Tote Bag & Decal
when you join!



Forest Hill

For more information visit www.foresthillneighborhood.com