

The Forest Hill Neighborhood
Association Newsletter

Winter 2016

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association meetings are held the third Tuesday of the month 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 adsalesforesthillflyer@gmail.com

Forest Hill Flyer

43rd Street Festival... Sunny Day Full of Art, Music, and Food!

By Robin Cage

The 25th annual festival of the arts went off without a hitch this year. Great weather, music and food made the event fun for all involved. Artisans loved the attention that customers paid to their work and the good sales. CARITAS raised awareness and funds to support the important work they do in the community. Folks from RVA and surrounding areas again got to see the vibrant energy and lovely setting of this neighborhood show.

Many thanks go out to Forest Hill friends and the FHNA for supporting the show for these many years. One of our members, Carol Snow, was kind enough to surprise me with a commemorative 25th anniversary cake and generous gift certificates from many local businesses. That was much appreciated and very tasty!

Special thanks always goes out to John Sankey of the Bluz Catz for handling the fine music line up and keeping the energy rocking. Finally, another note of appreciation goes out to Good Shepherd Episcopal Church and School for the use of their facilities. We could not do it without all of you. And that is what makes it such a wonderful event.

Many thanks!



Robin Cage is the owner of 43rd Street Gallery. Check out the gallery's Facebook page for up-to-date information and photos of new art at the gallery. You can find more information about CARITAS at caritasshelter.org.

FHNA Officers and Board Elected

At the November 15, 2016 Forest Hill Neighborhood Association membership meeting, the following neighbors were elected for the 2017 term:

Officers

Whit Clements, President
Robley Jones, Vice President
Vacant, Treasurer
Shannon D. Taylor, Secretary

Executive Board

Janet Bowers
Dorna Braswell
Winnie Canup
Stacey Maples
Linda Mills
Carolyn Paulette
Bo Williams

Congratulations and thank you to our neighborhood leaders!

What's Inside!

GSES 45th Anniversary—page 5

Halloween Howl—page 7

Leaf Collection—page 9

The President's Message



By Whit Clements

A lot can happen in a year. Last winter at this time I was just getting my feet wet within my role as the president of the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association. Now, a year later, we can reflect on what has been accomplished in the neighborhood and the city we all call home.

- New signs were installed on Forest Hill Avenue welcoming folks to the Forest Hill Historic District.
- Another successful year for the Forest Hill 5K. Check out the FHNA website to get the date for next year's 5K.
- Music in the Park celebrated 10 years of bringing great bands to Forest Hill Park in the summer with outstanding attendance from our neighbors in the city, as well as the counties.
- A mayoral forum brought together all eight candidates to address issues of the district and our neighborhood.
- Elections resulted in new faces for our district on Richmond City Council, the Richmond School Board, and in the mayor's office.

We had a wonderfully successful membership mailing campaign that brought in 35 new memberships and dozens of renewals. Thank you to everyone who recommitted to the FHNA, and for giving us the mandate to continue supporting the needs of the neighborhood and its residents.

Moving forward we have some great opportunities to engage with our new representatives. Kristen Larsen will take over as our new 4th District city council representative. Jonathan Young will represent us on the school board. I look forward to their contributions and involvement with our association.

Remember that the FHNA is **your** association, and the best way to make sure that it represents your needs and interests is to actively participate. Do you have a problem on your street? Safety concerns? A suggestion for the city? At the FHNA's monthly meetings, there is a representative from the Richmond Police Department, and either our city council representative or the council person's liaison. Let them know directly your concerns or compliments. You can't get more direct access to your elected official than that!

Get out and enjoy all that the area has to offer this winter and have a happy and healthy holiday season.

Whit Clements is looking forward to cold morning rides to WPA for hot egg and cheese biscuits.

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association 2016-2017

foresthillneighborhood.com

P.O. Box 13201, Richmond, VA 23225-9998

OFFICERS

Whit Clements, President
Robley Jones, Vice President
Secretary (open)
Treasurer (open)

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Janet Bowers
Dorna Braswell
Winnie Canup
Linda Mills
Carolyn Paulette
Diane Pendleton
Bo Williams

FLYER

Linda Mills, Editor
Bo Williams, Design and Production
David Lynch, Advertising Manager

43rd Street Gallery

Holiday Open House



— Extended Hours —

November 25th – December 23rd
Mon-Fri, 10-6 • Sat, 10-5 • Sun, 12-4
OPEN DAILY IN DECEMBER

1412 W 43rd Street • Richmond, VA 23225
233-1758 • www.43rdstgallery.com

Reedy Creek Stream Restoration Voted Down

The Reedy Creek Project, as proposed, is officially halted as of the November 14 Richmond City Council meeting. In a vote of 8 to 1 (that one "yes" vote being made by the retiring 4th District council representative Kathy Graziano), Richmond City Council voted not to accept the \$635,000 in grant funding from DEQ to do a massive stream relocation project designed to reduce stream bank erosion and the resulting sediment run-off. This project was designed as part of a larger project to help the locality meet water pollution reduction levels set forth in the Chesapeake Bay Cleanup Plan.

There was impressive participation from our neighbors. They spoke out at the council meeting on both sides of the issue in practical, scientific, and heartfelt terms.

At the meeting, council decided to further review the stream project with options that might be more amiable to the neighborhood and perhaps less destructive to the creek's existing environment. Some council members acknowledged that the project had not considered the views of the people who live in the community and love their green space.

The issue is now when, or even if, a project will be done in the Forest Hill stretch of Reedy Creek or at another location on the stream where a project would be less invasive and more effective in limiting pollution.

Recent FHNA Membership Mailing a Success

The FHNA recently initiated a membership mailing campaign. Since the end of August, the mailing inspired 35 new households to join the membership roll, as well as nudging dozens more neighbors to renew their membership. This effort brought in more than \$1,000 for the association's neighborhood projects. It is great to have this many new and renewing neighbors this year. Thanks to board member Bo Williams for spearheading, producing, and mailing the letters!

Join Santa at the Stone House

Victorian Christmas at the Stone House in Forest Hill Park with Santa is coming on Saturday, December 10 from 1-4 p.m. The event will include holiday stories at 1:30 p.m. presented by the Backpack Storyteller, visits with Santa from 2-4 p.m., holiday crafts, refreshments, and house tours throughout the event. The event is free and you may take your own pictures with Santa. Donations to Friends of Forest Hill Park are welcome.



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Bluebirds Continue to Thrive in the Park

By Laura Dysart

We have had yet another very successful bluebird season in Forest Hill Park. The park trail currently has 10 bird boxes that are designed to attract bluebirds and other native cavity nesters. We have been fortunate for the last three years to have bluebirds return again and again to several specific boxes in the park, and even have two or more "clutches" of babies in those same boxes!

So far this year, six wrens, and six chickadees fledged from boxes in the park. These are native birds, so they are encouraged. But the big news is that 27 baby bluebirds fledged from three different nests in two clutches each! It is possible for a bluebird to have a third clutch, but as of August 1, these are our records. It is so exciting to see the progress the bluebirds are making.

I would like to thank Vivienne Bruzesse my co-trail monitor and Christina Woodson, our Virginia Bluebird Society Supervisor, for their help again this season! A huge thanks goes out to Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior members for helping me monitor the trails. Bluebird trail monitoring involves weekly inspection of the 10 boxes including enacting preventative procedures to prevent wasps and ants, removing invasive species nests from our boxes, and counting eggs and fledglings through the season of April-August to report to the Virginia Bluebird Society.

One of the goals of this group is to bring back a strong population of bluebirds that has been affected by urbanization and invasive bird species. If you'd like to be involved next year, please contact Laura Dysart at lauradysart@verizon.net. If you'd like more information on the Virginia Bluebird Society, please go to virginiabluebirds.org.

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Good Shepherd Episcopal School Celebrates 45 Years

By Mandy Flowers

One of our neighborhood schools is celebrating 45 years as part of our community. Good Shepherd Episcopal School, located at the corner of Forest Hill Avenue and West 43rd Street, opened its doors in 1971. Since then it has educated children from the neighborhood and beyond with the goal of building "character and respect for all God's creation."

GSES's impact can be seen at various events and through service initiatives. Students, parents, and faculty pitch in to help with the 43rd Street Festival of the Arts, Sunday in the Park, the park's Little Library, the Bluebird Trail in Forest Hill Park, and cleaning up the trails in the river system. All kids from the local area are invited to GSES-hosted performances by Theater IV, festivals, and book fairs.

Staff and students love being a part of the neighborhood and patronizing local businesses. The children enjoy walking the 1.5 blocks to Forest Hill Park for physical education, science lessons, and field days. The field at 22nd Street and Semmes Avenue hosts our soccer teams' practices. The youngest students revel in their trips to visit the fire station, and every grade likes to walk to Crossroads for ice cream. Baskin Robins currently partners with the school's Parent Teacher Organization for Spirit Nights. Positive Vibe Café hosted our last Teacher Appreciation Night to great acclaim.

Many people who live and work in the neighborhood remember GSES with fondness, whether they sent their kids years ago or are alumni themselves. The school is fortunate to have alumni visit frequently at festivals, cook-offs, or on weekends just to use the basketball hoops. Whether they've gone on to high school at Trinity, Collegiate, James River, or Saint Gertrude's, our alumni still get a kick out of coming home to GSES. Features such as small classes, diversity, a farm-to-table lunch program, technology classes, and included instructional support are allowing GSES to give students the 21st-century skills they will need to succeed. The school is now enrolling half-, full-, and extended-day preschool through eighth grade for the 2016-17 school year. You can keep up with school news and events by checking out gses.org online.

Mandy Flowers is Director of Admissions and Marketing at GSES.

Write for the Flyer!

Imagine the prestige and glory of becoming a published author! It can happen to you simply by writing for the Forest Hill Flyer. Think of it—fame without the hassle of fortune.

Do you have a hobby? Tell us about it! A passion? Let us all know! A tidbit of history about the neighborhood? We would love to hear!

Our neighborhood is blessed with talented, creative, and interesting folks. Let us hear from you! If you have an idea for an article you would like to write, please contact foresthillflyer@gmail.com.



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Halloween Howl Barked with Excitement

By Laura Dysart

Halloween Howl at the Stone House was fun for all canines and their people! The event benefitted both Ring Dog Rescue and Friends of Forest Hill Park. Ring Dog Rescue was present with one of their sweet rescue dogs, and CritterTown BathHouse hosted a pooch pad with treats and water.

There were 20 registered canines for the events and parade, and lots of spectators ready to cheer on the puppies and their humans. Friends of Forest Hill Park Junior, a group of middle and high school students who volunteer for the park, planned and ran the events that included Owner Egg-Spoon Race, Farthest Fetch, and Best Pet Trick. The event culminated with a Dog/Owner Parade with winners for the Scariest Costume, the Cutest Pooch, the Dog Who Struts His or Her Stuff the Best, the Best Dog/Owner Duo, and the Best Costume Overall.

Seven fabulous prizes, valued at close to \$200, were provided to by Critter Town BathHouse in Stratford Hills Shopping Center. Holiday Pet Barn provided a prize basket worth \$125. Please support these local businesses as well as Lowes on Sheila Lane who gave us free straw for our event. If you couldn't make it, please come out next year!

The prizes went to the following canines/humans:
Dog/Owner Egg Spoon Race: Mosby (political monkey)
Farthest Fetch: Pepper (Triceratops)
Best Pet Trick: Senji (Batman)
Cutest Pooch: Bella (Bat)
Scariest Dog Costume: Abby (Viking)
Dog Who Struts Her Stuff the Best: Lucy (Taco)
Best Dog Owner Duo: Mekka and his family (the family from the movie "Up")
Best Costume Overall: Jack (lumberjack)

If you have a middle or high school student interested in becoming part of the Friends of Forest Hill Junior group, please email Laura Dysart at lauradysart@verizon.net. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Friends of Forest Hill Park, you can submit a check in the amount of \$15 for individual membership or \$20 for household membership made out to FFHP. Please mail to Friends of Forest Hill Park Treasurer, P.O. Box 13161, Richmond, VA 23225. FFHP is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and membership is tax deductible.



When Your House Sells *Too* Fast

By Alexis Thompson

Multiple offers? A fast sale? This is the problem that everyone says you're lucky to have...until you find yourself homeless and packing your family into a temporary rental, boarding the dog, and renting massive storage units for who knows how long. Here in Forest Hill, the median number of days on market this year was six. So, before there's a sign in your yard, here are a few key points to remember when getting ready to sell in an aggressive market.

1. Just because neighborhood trends are strong doesn't mean you can sit back and sell your house with crazy paint colors or Fido's wet dog smell in the carpet. So clean up, organize, and put your best foot forward.


2. About three months before you plan to sell, start house hunting. This will give you the opportunity to explore neighborhoods, walk through different floor plans, and understand exactly what you want in your next home. Then if you must pull the trigger quickly on an offer, you'll have the confidence that you're making a great decision.

3. When your listing goes live, have your agent put a specific date in the MLS to notify buyers when offers will be reviewed. It will give buyers a chance to get their showing appointments lined up and you won't have to guess if a low-ball offer on day one is going to be the best offer.

4. During negotiations, see if your agent can get you a rent-back agreement included in the contract. This allows you to stay in the home after the new owners close on it and rent the home back from them allowing you time to find and buy your next house.

With the right amount of house shopping preparation, strategic listing details, and negotiation, you can take the stress out of a swift sale in 2017!

*Alexis Thompson is a resident and Realtor here in Forest Hill. Recently featured on HGTV's "House Hunters," she helped neighborhood residents Jesse and Kate Spangler choose "House #2" here in the best RVA neighborhood! You can find her at One South Realty Group or **RichmondVaProperty.com**.*


RICHMOND  VIRGINIA

ALEXIS THOMPSON

REAL ESTATE

WHO I AM:	WHAT I DO:
Forest Hill Resident	Budget Impossible
Renovation Addict	Sell the First House
Dog Saver - Kid Raiser	Find the Dream House

ONE SOUTH REALTY GROUP
2314 W. MAIN ST | RICHMOND VA



AlexisThompson.Realtor@gmail.com
804.627.3803

RichmondVaProperty.com

One Leaf Collection for 2016

The City of Richmond began its annual vacuum leaf collection program in November. There will be one cycle again this year. To better streamline the program's operation, each vacuum collection zone has been divided into several sub-zones with their own collection dates. The smaller, more defined areas will make it easier for crews to incrementally complete the larger zones.

Forest Hill is in Zone 2. Our scheduled dates will be December 13-16.

Residents are reminded when signs for vacuum collection are posted in their neighborhood to rake their leaves to the property line adjacent to the street, **but not into the street or culvert**. Dirt, rocks, and debris (including limbs and brush) must be removed from the leaf piles or the city will not be able to vacuum your leaves.

Throughout December and January, DPW will host Neighborhood Leaf Clean-up events from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in neighborhoods that traditionally have a high volume of leaves.

All types of bags will be collected, not just biodegradable. Forest Hill's event date is December 10.

During the Vacuum Leaf Collection Program, residents can dispose of up to 20 bags of leaves when their sub-zone receives vacuum service and during the Neighborhood Leaf Clean-up events. The leaves must be bagged and ready for removal when city trucks arrive.

City residents may also dispose of leaves by taking them to these locations:

- East Richmond Road Convenience Center, 3800 East Richmond Road, Richmond, VA 23223
- Maury Street Landfill, 2900 Maury Street, Richmond, VA 23224

Vacuum leaf collection may be cancelled and rescheduled during inclement weather. For updates on the vacuum schedule, call the Leaf Hotline at 804-646-LEAF or visit **RichmondGov.com**.

Backyard Composting

Though not an actual city service, the city does advocate backyard composting as the most efficient and environmentally sound disposal option. Contact the Clean City Commission for details at richmondgov.com/content/CommissionCleanCity/index.aspx. You will find publications at the link that explain the benefits of composting and different ways to accomplish it.

Fun Fact: Did you know that almost 80 percent of the leaves collected by the city come from right here in our own yards? It's a proven fact that the 4th District contains more leaves than any other part of the city.

Recycling Perks

Did you know that residents of the City of Richmond can save up to \$25 a month just for recycling? If you recycle using the large cart with a blue lid, you are eligible for the free Recycling Perks program. Recycling Perks rewards households in the community that recycle curbside. Your household earns points in an online account each time your cart is placed at the curb or in your alley pick-up spot on recycling day. The points can be redeemed for exclusive specials and deals to more than 250 local businesses. You can start saving today by registering at for the free program at recyclingperks.com/purl/SFREEMAN.

Westover Hills Preschool Open Enrollment in January

By Michele Zipperer

A new school year is under way and Westover Hills Preschool and is going strong. We are currently full in all our classes and age groups and are staffed with seven wonderful teachers.



As a half-day preschool program that serves our community and beyond, we are delighted to welcome so many of our neighbors with children ages two and a half to five years old. In fact, many of our preschool families live so close by that they are able to walk to school each morning!

Though our enrollment is full for this year, it won't be long until we are enrolling students for the 2017-18 school term. After we accept registrations from current families who wish to return, remaining spaces will be made available to the community at large through open enrollment. Beginning on Tuesday, January 17, interested parents are invited to apply and register for our preschool program online at our website westoverhillspreschool.org. To arrange a visit and tour of WHP in the meantime, please contact Director Michele Zipperer at mazipp@verizon.net or 804-232-7400.

At the Westover Hills Library

Mark Your Calendar for these Winter Events!

"Polar Express" Party.

Wednesday, December 7, 6-8 p.m.

Join us for a special viewing of "The Polar Express." Snacks and surprise included! Wear your warm pajamas, if you like. Children should be accompanied by an adult.

Hour of Code!

Tuesday, December 6, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Learn computer coding basics by playing with the Ozobots! The Hour of Code is a global movement reaching tens of millions of students in more than 180 countries. Richmond Public Library will be participating in the event. Children younger than 12 must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required. Call 804-646-8833 to hold your place.

Winterfest!

Saturday, January 21, 2-4 p.m.

Cold weather can't put a freeze on the fun at our annual Winterfest celebration! Kids of all ages will enjoy our snow-related crafts, snacks, and games! No mittens required!

Maggie Walker Trunk Activity.

Saturday, February 4, 2:30-4 p.m.

Come learn about Richmond native Maggie L. Walker (1864-1934), whose accomplishments included the founding of the St. Luke Penny Savings Bank, the St. Luke Emporium, the St. Luke Herald newspaper, and holding positions of influence in the order of St. Luke. Activities include a biographical DVD, music, replica clothing, books, and activity sheets. Appropriate for elementary school-aged children. Call 804-646-8833 to register.

LEGO Club

What could you build if you just had the right Legos? Come build with ours and see! We provide the Legos; you provide the imagination! For grades kindergarten through sixth with a parent. Lego Club meets Tuesdays, December 20, January 17, and February 21 from 4-5:30 p.m.

Richmond Story League

Part workshop, part listening, and part learning from other tellers. Everyone is welcome. No previous storytelling experience is needed! For more information, call Deborah Alsko at 804-232-3542. Saturdays, January 7 and February 7 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

In Stitches!

Enjoy conversation and sharing project ideas while completing your knit, crochet, cross-stitch, smocking, or other hand craft works. Open to older teens and adults. Thursdays in January, 2-4 p.m.

English as a Second Language (ESOL)

For speakers of other languages who wish to learn English in an American cultural context. Contact the Department of Adult and Continuing Education office at 804-780-8311 for information on registration and class fees. Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. No classes during the weeks of December 19 and 26. No Monday classes on January 2 or 26, or February 20.

Westover Hills Library Advisory Group

Interested in libraries, reading, and your community? We welcome your input! Join us to help make a difference at Westover Hills Library. Join us on Tuesday, December 13, January 10, and February 14 from 7-8 p.m.

Book Babies

Interactive story, music, and play time for babies up to 18 months and their parents/caregivers. Thursdays at 10 a.m.

Toddler Story Time

Early literacy story time features books, music, and rhymes for 18-36-month-olds and their parents/caregivers. Tuesdays at 11 a.m.

Family

Early literacy story time with music, books and rhymes for children ages three to eight years old accompanied by an adult. Thursdays at 11 a.m.

There will be no Storytimes during the weeks of December 19 and 26.

All Richmond Public Libraries will be closed December 24 and 26, January 2 and 16, and February 20.



Music in the Park Wins Award

On September 16, 2016, Kathy Graziano, representative from the 4th District of the Richmond City Council, presented Dorna Braswell, Todd Ranson, and the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association with an award for the success of 10 years of Music in the Park. Music in the Park brings local musical groups to Forest Hill Park each month during the summer.

In the photo are (L to R) Dorna Braswell, Todd Ranson, Whit Clements, and Kathy Graziano.

Save the date!

SATURDAY: 9AM

MARCH 18

Sign up early and get a cool shirt!

Run for the Hills!

For more information visit
www.foresthillneighborhood.com

Order Your Plaque Today!

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.

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(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 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 15, 2016. Get your order in today!**

We Want to Know About Your Neighbors!

Most issues of the Flyer feature a story about a person in the neighborhood who does something fabulous. We love people with hobbies, passions, and plans. Who will be featured next? If you know of someone you think would be a perfect candidate for the Know Your Neighbor feature in the Flyer, please tell us! foresthillflyer@gmail.com.



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"You clean your pet and we'll clean the mess"

The Big One

Varina resident Daryl Taylor was looking for a place to fish in the area. He stumbled across a website, richmondoutside.com/activity/fishing/, which listed Forest Hill Park as one of the top fishing spots in Richmond. He packed up his gear and headed to the park. Using a trick worm, he caught an 18" small mouth bass in the lake! That is one big fish!

Thanks to Ann Thomas for the photo and write up.



VICTORIAN OPEN HOUSE

December 10, 2016

1 to 4 pm

Stone House in Forest Hill Park



We are very happy to announce our annual
"Victorian Era Christmas Open House"
House Tours, 🌿 Holiday Snacks
Crafts for the Kids AND even a visit from
Ol' Saint Nick himself!!
Come and enjoy some local neighborhood holiday fun.



Sponsored by Friends of Forest Hill Park

Forest Hill Flashback

In the Summer 1997 issue of the Forest Hill Flyer, neighbor Valerie Ashley, who is still active in our community, contributed an article about the neighborhood's history.

"In the Richmond Census Tract of 1850, a young Canadian-born lawyer, Holden Rhodes, was recorded as owning 460 acres of improved and 490 acres of unimproved land in the area we now call Forest Hill. At the time, his property was valued at \$20,000.

"Between 1836 and 1843, Rhodes built a home he called Boscobel, Italian for 'beautiful forest.' It's now known as the Old Stone House in Forest Hill Park. According to city records, Rhodes shared his home with his wife Susan, a nephew Charles, and three other young men. Twenty-one farmhands worked on the Rhodes estate, raising wheat, Indian corn, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, and hay. They also tended the livestock, which included horses, mules, cows, oxen and swine."

Other concerns detailed in the Flyer nearly 20 years ago, were traffic, the Westover Hills shopping area, lake dredging, and crime. Some things change while others remain the same.

What's the Difference?

Assessments, Appraisals, or Comparative Market Analysis

By Jim Donohue

This will help you understand the differences of assessment, appraisal, or comparative market analysis (CMA). They are all done to establish the value of your house. They are done, however, by different professionals for different reasons. The terms assessment and appraisal are often used interchangeably but this is not correct. The assessment is done to determine the value of your property in order to calculate your annual real estate taxes. Appraisals are done so lenders can decide how much money to lend for your mortgage. A CMA is done when you put your house on the market to determine the price.

The assessment is done by assessors who are employees of the local government, in our case, the City of Richmond. The value is used to determine the annual property taxes for your home. There is a tax rate set by the local government. The tax rate is how much per \$100 value your tax is. For example, if the tax rate is \$1 per \$100 of assessed value and your home is assessed at \$100,000, the real estate tax would be \$1000. The state mandates that real estate be assessed at 100 percent of fair market value. Your house is compared to sales in your neighborhood. Assessments, however, are based on historical data which does not keep up with current market conditions.

During the recession, the assessments were higher than fair market value. After a couple of years, the local governments lowered the assessments and your tax was reduced. The real estate values are going up again, so you'll see an increase in your property taxes.

Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) is done by realtors to come up with a sales price when you put your house on the market. Realtors look at the recent closed sales, under contract listings, and active listings. The agent is looking for properties that are comparable to your property. Your house is compared to those houses. The agent is comparing style, size, bedrooms, baths, upgrades, and location. The realtor takes all these factors into consideration. A realtor familiar with your neighborhood will be able to advise you of a reasonable sales price.

Appraisals are done by independent appraisers in the private sector. This is done when you buy a house or refinance your house. This value will determine how much a bank or mortgage broker will lend you. Appraisers have standards that they must uniformly use to determine values. Their analysis is very detailed and the subject property is compared in detail with other comparable properties. Hopefully, if you're a buyer, the appraisal will come in or exceed the sales price. If the appraisal is under the sales price, the seller can lower the price, or the buyer can come up with money of their own or terminate the contract. Appraisals are considered the gold standard when it comes to determining the value of real estate.

Jim Donohue is a licensed Realtor and has been selling homes in Forest Hill since 1995. Call him at 804-218-4685, if you have any questions about this information.

Tips for Using Leaves on Your Property

According to the National Wildlife Foundation, Americans send approximately 33 million tons of leaves and yard waste to the landfill every year. That's more than 13 percent of the nation's solid waste. So instead of bagging them for pick up on trash day or raking them to the curb (not the street), this year for vacuum pick up, why not learn to love your leaves. Here are some suggestions.

- Invest in a mulching mower. If you don't have a lot of trees in your yard, you can shred your leaves before they pile up just by cutting your grass. Leave the shredded leaves to feed your lawn or use as mulch in your vegetable garden or flower beds. Shredded leaves form a natural mulch that helps suppress weeds and adds nutrients to the soil.
- If you rake, use your leaves as dry "brown material" in your compost pile or start a leaf corral. No special equipment is

needed for a compost pile, if you're only using leaves and yard waste. Just pile the leaves in a corner of your yard and give them a turn with a pitch fork now and then.

- Help your yard's wildlife. Leaf compost piles will provide you with nutrient-rich soil amendment material for use next spring and you'll be helping wildlife by providing a habitat in which toads, turtles, and moth and butterfly caterpillars can spend the winter. You'll benefit when you equalize the balance of nature in your yard, because one toad can eat a lot of insects over the summer!
- Leaf blowers are a touchy subject. It is true, however, that gas-powered leaf blowers contribute to air—and noise—pollution. Give yourself some exercise on a sunny day in late fall and rake if you're physically up to it, or better yet, hire a teenage neighbor to do it for you.

Forest Hill Neighborhood Holiday Social

Tuesday,
December 13th
5-8pm

43rd Street
GALLERY

1412 W. 43rd Street • 804-233-1758
www.43rdstgallery.com



belly flops encouraged...



Enjoy Your James
www.TheJamesRiver.org

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this national treasure.

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- **Volunteer** — Your help is always appreciated.

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smartphone to join JRA.



FHNA Calendar of Events

Saturday, December 10

Victorian Christmas, 1-4 p.m. at the Stone House

Tuesday, December 13

Forest Hill Neighborhood Holiday Social, 5-8 p.m. at 43rd Street Gallery

Tuesday, January 17

FHNA Membership Meeting, 7 p.m., Forest Hill Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, February 21

FHNA Membership Meeting, 7 p.m., Forest Hill Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, February 1

Deadline for info and ads for the Spring Forest Hill Flyer

Saturday, March 18

Run for the Hills 5K, 9 a.m. at Forest Hill Park

Tuesday, March 21

FHNA Membership Meeting, 7 p.m., Forest Hill Presbyterian Church

Visit our website: foresthillneighborhood.com

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		Date:
Membership Form		
Name(s): _____		
Address: _____		
City/State/Zip: _____		
Phone: _____		E-mail: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Household Membership \$15	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Annual Membership \$30
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes , I want to join the Neighborhood Watch and receive e-mail updates about crime and safety in our neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes , please send me email updates on current neighborhood events. <input type="checkbox"/> No emails please.	<input type="checkbox"/> 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: FHNA Treasurer P.O. Box 13201 • 1021 Hioaks Rd. Richmond, VA 23225-9998
For more information visit: www.foresthillneighborhood.com		

FREE
Forest Hill
Pint Glass and Decal
when you join!

