



THE
Forest Hill
FLYER

Published by the Forest Hill Neighborhood Association

Fall 2023 Issue

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Seeing the Trees for the Forest

Appreciating our arboreal diversity is a walk in the park

**43RD ST.
ART FEST
SATURDAY
SEPT. 9th**

FHNA meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm
at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church and on Zoom. See you there!

www.foresthillneighborhood.com

Kudos from the President *by Greg Somerville*

Whether or not you recognize it as the Pareto Principle, you are familiar with the 80-20 rule: 80% of all outcomes result from 20% of the causes. But when it comes to volunteering in a neighborhood like Forest Hill, may I suggest a corollary? The 20% who volunteer experience 110% of the fun! I want to tip my hat to neighbors who have served us all in the past six months:

- **Laura Taylor** has recruited volunteer parking attendants for the Music in the Park summer concert series. She has served several shifts herself (and even changed her Mother’s Day plans to plug a gap).
- **Robley Jones**, FHNA’s Board Secretary, drafted a resolution asking the City of Richmond to prioritize dredging the Forest Hill Lake. The resolution was unanimously approved and submitted to the City Council. Council VP (and Forest Hill resident) Kristen Nye has pledged to secure the necessary funding and get this much-needed project on the calendar.
- **Riley Champine, Andrew Beckman, and Janet Smith** have partnered to publish this bi-annual newsletter, which just gets better with each issue. Meanwhile, **John Murden** and his volunteer team of couriers personally deliver copies to every doorstep.
- **Sarah Champine** not only stepped up to serve as Board Treasurer, but she also coordinated the community yard sale in June.
- **Christine Waldron** serves as our FHNA VP and

oversees communications, keeping neighbors informed about Forest Hill activities and events.

- **Dorna Braswell** is making sure we have a fresh batch of Forest Hill flags ready for sale this fall.

Several of us showed up on a Saturday morning in May to beautify the stretch of Forest Hill Avenue between Westover Hills Boulevard and Jahnke Road. One teen (pictured right) got out of bed hours before most of his peers in order to dig up weeds and apply fresh mulch around the crapemyrtles. I wish I could remember your name – many thanks for your hard work and great attitude!



For these and all the other unnamed volunteers who make Forest Hill such a fantastic neighborhood, we are freshly grateful. If you haven’t yet found a time or place to pitch in, email me at iseenoalps@gmail.com – I’ll be happy to share some ideas! 🌲

Annual Art Festival is back again *by Robin Cage*

It must be September.... Your neighborhood Festival returns! Join us on Saturday, September 9th, from 10am to 4pm. The streets will be closed and folks from all over RVA and beyond will arrive to enjoy the fine art, music, and food. We have 75 juried artisans setting up booths and welcoming your visits and purchases. A new T-shirt featuring the James River will be available at CARITAS booth. You can also get your raffle tickets there to win a wonderful array of artist handmade donations. When you need food from our local vendors, we have everything from coffee, veggie bowls, empanadas, to organic deli foods! And let’s not forget the music – three bands will be performing throughout the day.

While wandering the streets, we hope you will stop by the 43rd Street Studios where pottery made on site will be available for sale. Check out the new community studios and the classes offered by Joanna. As you peruse the newly renovated space, please visit One Little World fair trade retail store. Jodi, another Southside neighbor, works closely with artisans in Ecuador, Nepal, Kenya & Uganda to sell their unique and beautiful works. A great place to pick up gifts all year!

We can’t say enough how much we appreciate your embracing the show each year. We look forward to another great show, with cooler temperatures and no rain! Hope to see you there! 🌲

43RD STREET FESTIVAL OF THE ARTS



SATURDAY, SEPT. 9TH, 2023
A BENEFIT FOR  **CARITAS**

LIVE MUSIC	11:00 am	Susan Greenbaum
	1:00 pm	Tin Can Fish Band
	3:00 pm	Grateful Dads

FYI — Robin Cage Pottery still exists! I have the back left studio at 43rd Street Studios. Open by appointment and for special events **(804) 233-1758**

FFHP seeking volunteer to aid park *by Chris Catanzaro*

Friends of Forest Hill Park currently has a volunteer position open. We are also looking for someone who enjoys working with teens to serve as the Coordinator of our FFHP Junior group. In the past the Junior group has coordinated periodic litter removal events, and has helped with other FFHP events as well as maintenance of the bluebird boxes. Interested? Contact Chris Catanzaro at chriscatanzaro3@gmail.com 🌲

FRIENDS OF FOREST HILL PARK

David Ridderhof

Day of Service

SATURDAY, SEPT. 30TH, at 10 am

We will meet in the 3800 block of Forest Hill Ave. at the Forest Hill Historic District sign (east of Roanoke St.). We will be doing a number of maintenance activities, so please come join us for just an hour or two.



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It's Time to Save Our Lake *By Robley Jones*

Forest Hill Park Lake is once again in peril.

The lake has changed over the years. In my youth, there was an island in the middle, and ice skaters frequented the lake in the winter (something for climate-change doubters to contemplate).

When I moved back to the neighborhood in 2007, the lake had become a marsh filled in with silt and debris, and it was not a safe place to visit. Soon after that, thanks to the leadership of then FHNA President Grace LeRose, Parks and Recreation Director J. R. Pope, then Councilwoman Kathy Graziano and Mayor Dwight Jones, the lake was restored.

The May 22, 2010, celebration of the reopening of the “crown jewel” of the park, drew a crowd of 500. I served as commodore of the Forest Hill Yacht Club, and we sponsored kayak races, dog races, a remote-control boat race, and other competitions. It was a great day for our neighborhood.

Now, we see the lake slowly moving back to becoming a marsh. It is filling in. This will not only detract from the beauty of one of Richmond’s most beautiful

parks: it will have a negative impact on home values in our historic neighborhood. Routine maintenance of the lake is a sound investment for the city, and appropriate use of our tax dollars.

When the lake was renovated, two deep-pool forebays were installed in the bottom. This design requires general sediment removal (dredging/dipping) maintenance every 3-5 years. This maintenance procedure was last performed in the Fall of 2017, six years ago.

Thankfully, the FHNA has passed a resolution in support of dredging the lake, and Councilwoman Nye is showing positive leadership on this issue. However, one member of council cannot act alone. It is time for us to step up, make some noise, and demand that Forest Hill Park Lake not be allowed to regress to the marsh that it was in 2007. FHNA will be advocating for funding the dredging as Richmond develops the next budget.

Please stand ready to join us when we present this request to Richmond City Council. 🌳



BLAST FROM THE PAST: The 2010 Forest Hill Yacht Club Regatta



Neighbors celebrated the re-opening of Forest Hill Lake in May 2010 with a variety of nautical competitions. A dog swim race was won by a brown lab named Smoot Bibona. Robley Jones, who conceived the idea for a Regatta, was the winner of the solo kayak race.



The SOFA (South of Forest Hill Ave) Mamas represented Forest Hill in a kayak race between the neighborhoods. Using pots and pans as paddles, they ended up finishing second behind Woodland Heights. The Westover Hills boat somehow sank.

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See the Trees for the Forest

by Riley & Sarah Champine

Have you ever taken the time to appreciate how many types of trees make Forest Hill Park their home? One of our favorite neighborhood activities is to stroll through the park with the PictureThis app, which uses a smartphone's camera to identify plants. Check out these 29 species, all observable in a walk of just over a mile. 🌲



TREES FOUND ON THE MAP ★ indicates native species

1. **Crapemyrtle** (*Lagerstroemia indica*) ★
A pair stand behind the archway. Look for their reddish bark. Vibrant blooms abound in summer on this tree species from India.

2. **Green Ash** (*Lagerstroemia indica*) ★
This first large tree past the archway belongs to a species that is critically endangered.

3. **Redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*) ★
Two trees with gnarly old trunks are near the sidewalk. Look for heart-shaped leaves.

4. **White Oak** (*Quercus alba*) ★
The leaves of this oak have smooth round lobes. Note the memorial stone for George Washington placed beneath.

5. **Ginko** (*Ginkgo biloba*)
A pair of these "living fossil" trees occupy the traffic circle. They have fan-shaped leaves and turn bright yellow during the fall.

6. **Winged Elm** (*Ulmus alata*) ★
There are multiple near the tennis courts. Winged Elms are recognizable with their corky, wing-like projections which appear on opposite sides of twigs and branches.

7. **Southern Magnolia** (*Magnolia grandiflora*) ★
Look for large smooth and leathery evergreen leaves — shiny on top and rusty underneath.

8. **Pin Oak** (*Quercus palustris*) ★
One of the park's largest trees towers beside the playground. Note the very pointy leaves.

9. **Norway Maple** (*Acer platanoides*)
Look for this tree's black and gnarly trunk.

10. **Japanese Elm** (*Ulmus parvifolia*)
Five are planted in a row. This type of elm is more resistant to dutch elm disease.

11. **Sweet Gum** (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) ★
This species is infamous for its fruit — the spiky "gumballs" that litter the ground beneath. Look for star-shaped leaves above.

12. **Downy Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier laevis*) ★
Find the small tree at the trail junction. It may have red to purple-black berry-like fruit.

13. **Shagbark Hickory** (*Carya ovata*) ★
Hickories have golfball-sized green fruit within a hard outer husk which splits open and turns brown when ripe.

14. **Eastern Red Cedar** (*Juniperus virginiana*) ★
This evergreen has small scale-like needles and silvery blue-green 1/4" berry-like fruits.

15. **Black Locust** (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) ★
There are young black locusts growing along the retaining wall, identifiable by their thorny stems and oval leaves.
16. **Chestnut Oak** (*Quercus montana*) ★
Look up high for these tall trees that have leaves with jagged or "toothed" leaves.

17. **Musclewood** (*Carpinus caroliniana*) ★
Also called American Hornbeam, their trunks have smooth bark and a sinuous appearance that looks like a muscled arm.

18. **River Birch** (*Betula nigra*) ★
Typically rooted near water, the trunk exfoliates peeling papery layers.

19. **White Mulberry** (*Morus alba*) ★
A single mulberry tree will often have a variety of leaf shapes with zero to five lobes — look for leaves that resemble mittens.

20. **Sycamore** (*Platanus occidentalis*) ★
Several grand trees grow near the gazebo on the lake. They are distinctive with their exposed white inner bark and large leaves.

21. **Mimosa** (*Lagerstroemia indica*)
Also called a Persian Silk tree, this invasive species has fern-like compound leaves with 40-60 small leaflets.

22. **Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) ★
This very common tree grows tall and straight. Native Americans used their trunks for canoes. They have large tulip-shaped leaves.

23. **American Hophornbeam** (*Ostrya virginiana*) ★
This species has shaggy bark in vertical strips. Look for a tree growing on the wall.

24. **American Beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*) ★
Beeches have smooth gray bark that is often carved with names of past visitors. This is likely not appreciated by the tree!

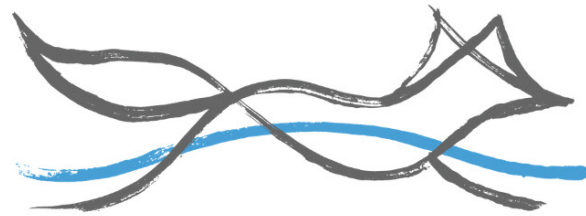
25. **Black Tupelo** (*Nyssa sylvatica*) ★
Several are beside the wooden bridge here. This tree has glossy leaves and has branches that typically extend at 90-degree angles.

26. **White Ash** (*Fraxinus americana*) ★
These trees have graceful compound leaves, which are comprised of 5-9 leaflets.

27. **Willow Oak** (*Quercus phellos*) ★
A sturdy tree aptly named for its slender spear-shaped leaves and lateral limbs that often arch downward.

28. **Southern Red Oak** (*Quercus falcata*) ★
Look for the large tree on the corner of 42nd and New Kent. Note thin bristle-tipped lobed leaves with pale bottoms.

29. **Loiblolly Pine** (*Pinus taeda*) ★
These tall evergreens have large plated bark with deep fissures. According to the U.S. Forest Service, this is the second most common tree species in the country.



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Long-awaited wine spot now open *by Riley D. Champine*

The vacant storefront on the strip north of Forest Hill Ave has finally transformed. Gramophone, an urban winery, is now open for sipping at the corner of Westover Hills Boulevard, next to Outpost.

Gramophone pours a variety of its own bottles sourced from vineyards in California, France and Argentina. They have wine-based cocktails such as white wine spritzers and Sangria and also harder-to-find mixes like Calimocho, which combines cola and red wine. A few of these drinks are served frozen like a slushie. The space lacks a full kitchen but has light snacks, olives and chips for instance. Pop-up eateries such as Royal Pig — a Cambodian food stall hosted at Manchester's Hatch Local — have been setting up in front to serve hot dishes. Guests can also bring in outside food.

The business is a collaboration of three owners, Chris Mayo, Justin Laughter, and Arthur Grant, who have been working on the concept since 2021. Their friendship dates back to high-school band classes in Chesterfield and they continue to play music together.



Gramophone is located at 4827 Forest Hill Ave and is on Instagram @gramophone_wine. Wines by the glass range from \$7 to \$12. Bottles are \$27 to \$33. Sodas are available for \$3.



Gramophone's ownership trio (from left to right) is made up of Chris Mayo, Justin Laughter, and Arthur Grant.

Grant, whose family owns the building, is a veteran of multiple Richmond restaurants with experience as a bartender and in wine sales. He believes that Gramophone can differentiate itself from the crowded Richmond beer scene with the ownership group's passion for wine and music.

How Gramophone got its name is a frequently asked question. Laughter, a part-owner and an attorney who works with musical acts, explained how after much deliberation, the name was selected for its unique sound and the way it represents the trio's musical origin story. That story will be a driving force for the venture.

"We wanted a space that celebrated our love of music and also to showcase music as well," says Grant. "We plan on having performers here". 🌿

Join our Gathering series! Each month we'll gather to listen, engage, and support individuals & organizations working to help RVA thrive. Sept 22 brings Kate Ayers from ReEstablish Richmond. Come join us! Scan below to learn more about our Gatherings & speakers!



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I'm also a grandfather.

A coffee drinker.

An outdoor enthusiast.

A realtor.

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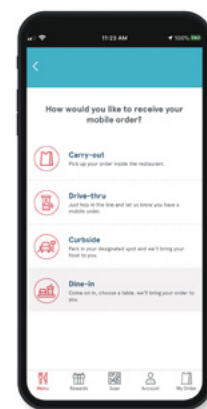
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5 reasons to remove non-native, invasive plants in Crooked Branch Ravine Park

Text and photos by Suzette Lyon

1. Oak and hickory trees are two of the keystone species in the Mid Atlantic and are common in our local wooded areas where native species still predominate. Keystone species are critical components without which the ecosystem will unravel. In areas where English ivy covers the ground, acorns and seed of our native species may fail to sprout and have difficulty growing. Mature trees will eventually be overcome by these vines. We need new trees to replace older trees as they age.

2. The beautiful cranefly orchid blooms in August. The flower is pollinated by a nocturnal moth. The moth needs the flower, the flower needs the moth. The plant can only grow in association with specific fungi which is found in places with decaying, woody debris on the ground which is provided by a healthy tree canopy, but won't happen when non-native plants predominate, so these striking plants will decline or die out altogether.

3. Box turtle populations are declining due to habitat loss. Crooked Branch Ravine is large enough to be a safe haven for box turtles. Since box turtles typically stay within a very small area their entire lives, they will probably not venture out to our streets. Some studies suggest that box turtles may avoid areas with non-native and so removing these plants should provide more space for them and increase the food available to them.

4. Beautiful creatures such as the damselfly need good quality water for reproduction. These insects lay their eggs in water, but the nymphs are not tolerant of polluted water. Habitat loss and polluted streams are causing a slow decline of this species over time. Good tree canopy with understory plants is the most effective way to reduce storm water runoff, the basic cause of water pollution.

5. The most important reason is saving these areas for future generations. This almost 3-year old-child has been visiting "the forest" since he could walk. He can identify several birds by their call, he stops to feel the moss and to look up at big trees. He has become very observant and often stops to investigate other things, such as an ant on a fallen tulip poplar flower.

Please consider joining Reedy Creek Coalition's efforts to preserve and restore Crooked Branch Ravine Park (located at the end of Northrop Street) so our children and their children can experience and appreciate these beautiful and important places. Find us at www.reedycreekcoalition.org



Cranefly orchid



Damselfly



Child and a tulip poplar flower



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SUNDAYS YEAR ROUND

10am - 1pm

IN FOREST HILL PARK AT NEW KENT AVE & 42ND ST

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Sue Zechini: Pop-up Pioneer

by Andrew Beckman

Welcome to the inaugural entry in our series profiling the artists of Forest Hill. The first to grace our pages is Sue Zechini. Alongside her muses Peoni (an incredibly sweet pup) and Radar Love (a furry whirlwind of a cat) she's been part of the Forest Hill art community practically as long as there's been one.



You may have purchased some of her art. You also may have unknowingly contributed to some of her art -after all she is a mixed media artist who frequently incorporates found objects into her works. Or, chances are, if you've lived in the Forest Hill neighborhood for a decent length of time, you've attended one of her galleries.

As unique as the works she creates is the work that Sue has been doing for the vibrant art scene of Forest Hill. In fact she's a big part of why it is so vibrant, as she has been planning and hosting pop-up art galleries long before the term "pop-up" was a thing. In the 1980's, she started on the smaller side, setting up temporary art galleries on the walls of her home. These showcases of creativity and talent quickly became a cherished tradition and they've evolved over the years from small indoor spaces to larger outdoor shows.

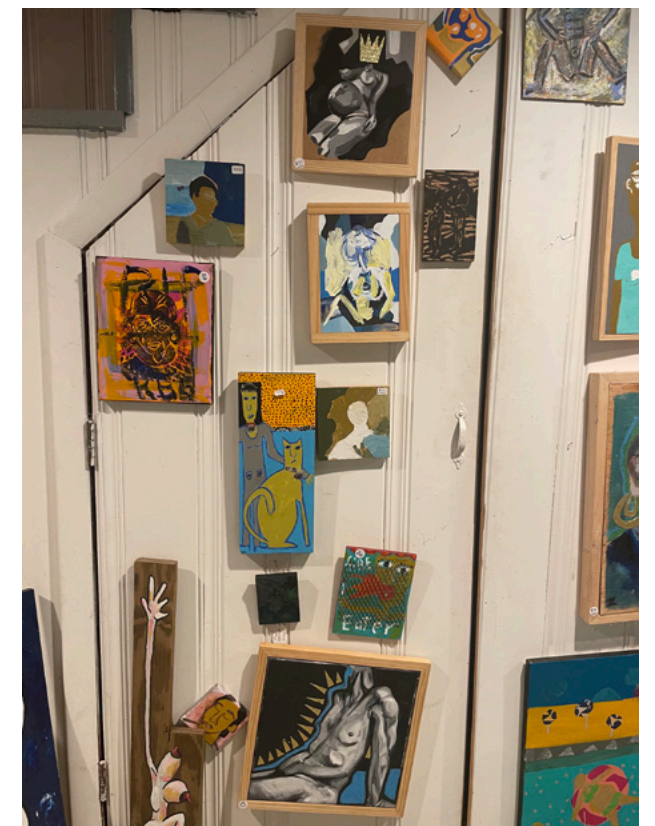
Not an established artist? Not a problem. Sue's galleries are meant to be inclusive of anyone who makes art. Whether you're a prolific artist who produces pieces for a living or only have a few canvases to your name, whether you've been doing it your whole life or if you've only just begun, there's a space for you at one of Sue's shows. All she asks is a small charitable donation if you make a sale and a deep love of creating works of art.

Though she's not sure exactly when or where the gallery will be, we wouldn't be surprised if something pops up in Forest Hill around the holidays. 🌲

This is the first in a continuing series profiling the artists of Forest Hill. If you want to be featured or want to nominate an artist you'd like to see in this space, please send us an email at fhnaflyer@gmail.com



Sue Zechini and Peoni (Not pictured: her cat named Radar Love)



A few of Sue's creations form a gallery wall

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Update from City Council V.P. Kristen Nye

Kristen M. Nye represents the Richmond Southwest 4th Voter District. She can be reached on her cell phone at (804) 503-1313 or by email at kristen.nye@rva.gov and/or timmy.siverd@rva.gov (Liaison Timmy Siverd)

Greetings, Forest Hill friends and neighbors! Whether you're looking forward to sending young ones off to school, feeling bittersweet about sending older ones off to college, or just trying to survive the summer heat/humidity, I hope you've been able to create some positive memories here in the 4th District this summer! We remain quite busy in the 4th District office and I'm happy to have a number of updates to share with you all:

Forest Hill Lake Dredging: I'm thrilled to share that my colleagues in the DPU have confirmed there will be forebay maintenance this fall with a full dredging intended in Fiscal Year 2025 (beginning July 1, 2024). The bidding process has already begun for the forebay maintenance and we will address the full dredging during the budget process in early 2024. The full dredging is a significant expense – approximately \$350,000 in 2017 and presumably much higher in 2024 – so I will certainly share ways you all can assist my advocacy for this funding.

Reedy Creek Cleanup: I'm hosting a Reedy Creek Cleanup with the Department of Parks and Recreation

on the morning of Saturday, September 16th. More details to come, including a start time and specific projects we will undertake, but I wanted to get the date on calendars as early as possible!



Kristen Nye

Safety Considerations: Our office is receiving many concerns about safety, particularly related to vehicle theft/vandalism. Resident safety remains a high priority for me and I'm in constant conversations with my public safety colleagues, but I want to highlight the importance of personal safety practices. Please be sure you're locking your cars every time and consider using a steering wheel lock (particularly if you have a Hyundai or Kia!). Please also be sure you are reporting suspicious activity and especially theft/vandalism incidents to RPD. We are seeing a severe underreporting of incidents to RPD compared to social media and it is really important that we are sharing as much information with RPD.

It continues to be my highest honor to serve as your representative on City Council and my office remains open and accessible to you all. If there is anything we can do to assist you, please don't hesitate to contact us. 🌱



Thank you Forest Hill!

We appreciate all the support you've given us over the years. To show our gratitude, when you sign up for weekly mowing or refer a neighbor, **your first (or next) cut is on us.**



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Stop by our Forest Hill tent at the 43rd Street Art Festival for flags and other great neighborhood swag!

Flags have limited inventory available now, but more will be arriving in November!

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association 2023

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Join the FHNA and become part of a friendly and active group that works for the good of the neighborhood.

Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7pm

Forest Hill Neighborhood Association Membership Form

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

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

☐ **Yes**, I want to join the Neighborhood Watch and receive email 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!

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