

FEBRUARY 2017

# HOLLIN HILLS BULLETIN



## CHASE AWAY THE WINTER BLUES AT OUR ANNUAL POTLUCK PARTY

For the past twenty-one years, our annual Hollin Hills Potluck Party has been scheduled midway through the winter season to serve as an antidote to the winter blues, and there's never been a year when we've all needed it more than we do this year!

You are invited to come out and join your friends and neighbors on Sunday, February 11, from 5 to 7pm, for the twenty-second edition of this popular Hollin Hills event.

We'll be gathering once again at the historic Hollin Hall of the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church for good fellowship, good conversation, and, of course, good food and drink. The Potluck is always a great opportunity to catch up with old friends and

neighbors, meet newcomers, and just relax and enjoy ourselves.

Kids are welcome to attend with their parents, but please note that there will not be any planned children's activities.

Wine and soft drinks will be provided by the Civic Association, and, as the potluck part of the party, each household is asked to bring an appetizer to share. This always results in a wonderful and varied assortment of delicious finger foods.

If you can give a hand with setup, cleanup, or other aspects of preparing for this event, or if you have any questions or suggestions, please get in touch with Susmita Dastidar, the CAHH social chair, at 703-660-5988 or [dustbin114@gmail.com](mailto:dustbin114@gmail.com).

See you at the Potluck!



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CAHH PRESIDENT

### Progress on the new version of HollinHills.net

Sometime in the next few of weeks, we will be activating the new Hollin Hills web site. We felt the need to update the site in order to make it 'responsive,' a process which shuffles the text and pictures to look well-fitted on virtually any device: cell phone, computer, tablet, etc. Some new features of this updated version are:

- We are putting the Hollin Hills Directory online and making it available to all CAHH members. You can set it as an app on your phone and have it immediately available.
- We also are making the recommended vendor list more easily available online.
- Also, we are in the process of adding a lot more information about the architecture of our neighborhood. We will include a lot of pictures and explanations of various design elements that work well with this architecture and show why some design elements don't work as well. The idea behind this is to help folks who may be planning a remodeling project or an addition to consider design concepts during the planning stage.

These changes to the website will be rolled out in stages, beginning in early April.

### Investigative Committees hard at work

In other news, you may know there are three Hollin Hills committees looking at what might be done to protect the architecture of Hollin Hills in the wake of our recent unfavorable court decision. It is still a little early to provide a progress report, but I know Barbara Bogue, who is coordinating this endeavor, is riding herd on the efforts of these very energetic volunteers. I appreciate the effort of all involved and will keep you updated as the results become clear.

### Big Talk

And finally, I saw a You Tube video by a young student from Stanford about connecting with people by using what she called 'big talk' rather than 'small talk.' That is, asking people meaningful questions that require thought both to ask and to answer, all in an effort to understand one another a little better. It reminded me of the importance of being interested in each other here in Hollin Hills. We have an amazing collection of people in this neighborhood. If we try, we can have a lot of 'big talk' with each other. And remember to wave at everybody you see in Hollin Hills. It's good exercise.

—Gus Matson, CAHH President

## CIVIC ASSOCIATION OF HOLLIN HILLS (CAHH)

### CAHH OFFICERS

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 Parks Bob Kinzer 768-4048

### CAHH COMMITTEES

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 Historian Scott Wilson 765-4471

(Also see Hollin Hills Archives below)

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 Ginny Wallace 765-7116  
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Chair Barbara Bogue 571-257-9313

### PARKS COMMITTEE

Chair Elisabeth Lardner 765-3023

## HOLLIN HILLS BULLETIN

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Editor Barbara Shear 660-6543  
 Editorial Assistance Andrew Keegan 660-1004

Deadline is the 15th of the preceding month.

Articles generally should not exceed 500 words.

Send your submission in the body of an email or

as an attachment to [barbshear@verizon.net](mailto:barbshear@verizon.net).

If you cannot produce computerized copy,

please find someone to submit it for you.

No material will be accepted over the telephone.

### Distribution problems:

• If you have not received your digital Bulletin, or to correct/change mail or email address, contact Linda Benson at 312-907-1797 or [linda.benson@me.com](mailto:linda.benson@me.com).

• To replace a missing paper Bulletin, contact Eleanor Fina at 703-768-3174 or [etfina@gmail.com](mailto:etfina@gmail.com).

## HOLLIN HILLS ARCHIVES

The Hollin Hills Archives are part of the Special Collections and Archives of George Mason University. To contact the SC&A staff with research questions, use the following:

- For general description of HH Archives contents, go to [http://sca.gmu.edu/finding\\_aids/hollinhills.html](http://sca.gmu.edu/finding_aids/hollinhills.html).
- For questions about collections, hours, usage, duplications, or directions go to [http://sca.gmu.edu/using\\_sc&a.html](http://sca.gmu.edu/using_sc&a.html).
- Other contacts: phone 703-993-2220, fax inquiries 703-993-8911, email [speccoll@gmu.edu](mailto:speccoll@gmu.edu).

## WWW.HOLLINHILLS.NET

Calendar of community events and information about our parks, the Design Review Committee, the National Historic Registry, and more.

## Quick Takes

### NEW NEIGHBORS

We are happy to welcome Mame Hunt and Stephen Richard along with their two cats (“one beautiful and one ornery”) to their new home at 7108 Rebecca Drive. They’ve known about Hollin Hills for some time, by way of searching for a home on the internet, and are delighted to live in such a great community. Both have worked in the theater business for many years, and both are now partially retired. —*Kim Gregson*



*Back yard nature show: Four of nine robins who, along with a morning dove and a waxwing, enjoyed the not yet frozen water of the Bosticks pond until a hawk broke up the party. The hawk fled, too, when a bald eagle circled the scene.*

### MVAH TALK ON SOLVING ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Ori Nir, communications director for Americans for Peace Now, will be the featured speaker at the next Mount Vernon At Home program. He will speak about the vital two-state solution for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and will discuss the stark contrast between this solution and the position of David Friedman, the nominee for ambassador to Israel, an advocate of the “apartheid” solution.

The program, which is open to the public, will be presented on Sunday, February 19, 3-5pm, in the Mansion, to the left of the main building of the Mount Vernon Unitarian Church.

—*Mary-Carroll Potter*

### WHAT’S HAPPENING AT HOLLIN MEADOWS?

- Friday, January 27, 6:30-8pm, is Family Bingo Night. Everyone is welcome to join the fun. Dinner and snacks will be available for sale, along with Bingo cards. Families who bring donations for Care & Share (new hats/gloves, single-serve lunch items for the weekend backpack program) will get a free Bingo card.
- Thanks to our neighbors who contributed to the Care & Share holiday toy drive; this was our biggest year ever. Gifts were provided to more than 50 families.
- School renovation has begun; check its progress at [www.fcps.edu/HollinMeadowsES/](http://www.fcps.edu/HollinMeadowsES/).

## REMEMBERING NOEL HEMMENDINGER

December 25, 1913 – January 3, 2017

An appreciation by Arnold and Margaret Edelman

Our friend Noel Hemmendinger died at his home on Martha’s Road on January 3, at the age of 103. An obituary was published in the Washington Post on January 6. This note draws on that account.

Noel was born and raised in New Jersey where he attended public schools and Princeton University, graduating in 1934. He completed law school at Harvard in 1937, clerked for the second District Appeals Court in New York, and then worked at the US Department of Justice in Washington. During World War II, he served in the judge advocate’s unit as a captain with the 5th Army in Sicily and Italy. After the German surrender in 1945, he worked with the Occupation forces, where he served as liaison with the French Army. (He became fluent in French during a pre-war summer trip to France). He was awarded the Bronze Star in 1945.

In 1946, Noel joined the US State Department where he worked mainly on the German desk until 1956. In 1957, he founded a law firm with his friend Nelson Stitt dedicated to foreign trade issues. He worked in that firm and its successors until he retired in 1989. His main client countries were Japan and Brazil.

Noel and Marjorie were married in 1948. In 1954, they moved (*continued on page 3*)

## Noel Hemmendinger *from page 2*

to Hollin Hills. Their three children, Eric, Lucy, and John, attended Burgundy Farm Country Day School where Noel served as a member of the Board. Marge and Noel were active members of the Hollin Hills Tennis Club and swimming pool, where we first became acquainted after settling on Glasgow Road in 1957. (We had just returned from Denmark and France where we lived for seven years.)

After we moved to Recard Lane in 1963—a long block from Noel and Marge—our association became closer. We played tennis frequently and bridge first occasionally, later frequently. We planned our summer vacations at Bethany at the same time. Later, we took a number of winter vacation trips to the Caribbean together. After we discovered that both couples had gotten married at the end of August, we adopted a tradition of celebrating our wedding anniversaries together. Noel was an enthusiastic fisherman, and, for many years, he and Arnold went with their sons on trips to the Chesapeake Bay to catch bluefish and rockfish.

Noel described himself as a New Deal Democrat. In the early 1960s, he helped to end racial seating segregation in Alexandria movie theaters.

Noel was invariably kind and considerate, and he had exceptional empathy. His ability to understand the concerns of others helped him as a lawyer. Our Hollin Hills Tennis Club benefited from this talent when Arnold was serving as club president in the early 1960s. At that time, the president of the Hollin Hills Civic Association appeared to be seeking greater control over the day-to-day operations of the Tennis Club. Arnold asked Noel for advice. Noel recognized that the underlying problem was a poorly worded lease arrangement which left unclear which organization had the ultimate control. Once that question was resolved by rewording the lease, the Civic Association president was happy to let day-to-day operations remain the responsibility of the Tennis Club.

When he was 95, Noel had a serious auto accident, and his family persuaded him to stop driving. However, he didn't want to give up his weekly bridge game at the Cosmos Club, so Arnold was invited to join that game and drove Noel in every Tuesday. They played regularly until the week before this past Christmas. Although Noel had a hard time remembering what was trump, when his friends reminded him about the trump suit, he continued to play well to the end.

## Planning & Zoning

### NORTH HILL DEVELOPMENT APPROVED



On January 9, the Planning and Zoning Committee and the Transportation Committee of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations (MVCCA) approved the construction of 454 low-rent housing units on North Hill, which is located east of Richmond Highway, about a mile from Hollin Hills. This project will include 279 units oriented toward Richmond Highway and 175 market-rate townhouse units oriented toward the existing Dart Drive. The Planning and Zoning Committee vote was 9-1 in favor; the Transportation Committee vote was 4-1 against.

North Hill has been owned by Fairfax County since 1981. It consists of 48.6 acres. Fourteen acres to the south were used to accommodate 115 mobile homes. The remaining 34.6 acres are on an increasingly steep slope which contains marine clay. The steepest portion of the slope will remain undeveloped.

Supervisor Gerry Hyland, during his 17 years in office, had numerous proposals on how low-rent housing could be developed at North Hill. All had a lower number of housing units than the current plan; one had only widely spaced trailers. Opponents felt that 454 housing units placed on the buildable portion of the land were far too many, but the density question was raised only briefly. When asked if there were comparably dense developments elsewhere in the area, advocates had no answer. Some members of the MVCCA view North Hills as vacant land along Richmond Highway that should have been developed 35 years ago. The current question is how does density effect quality.

—Burt Kronstedt

## LETTER TO THE BULLETIN

Now that the first full cycle of County leaf vacuuming has been completed for our portion of Hollin Hills, with adequate forewarning of the schedule, I think it is appropriate to assess its value.

First, County vacuuming is now one of several alternatives available to residents in our part of the neighborhood. It is not an either/or proposition, but rather both/and. As has already been pointed out in the Bulletin, the easiest method for controlling autumn leaves is through use of a mulching lawn mower, but this is only effective if the density of the leaves on your lawn is not too great. We then have the option of raking and bagging for free County pick up, mulching to create our own compost pile, and/or raking our leaves into piles on the street for County vacuuming, which the County mulches and makes available for public use.

Second, there is no way that County vacuuming can be scheduled in advance to coordinate perfectly with the leaves on the ground, given the seasonal variations, the extent of tree cover for each home, and the amount of territory that each crew must cover. The timing is announced about a month in advance, so we can anticipate when we should get to work, but sometimes there are just too many leaves to wait and we must resort to the other alternatives.

Third, County vacuuming provides benefits that extend beyond each of our yards. Despite admonitions from our park volunteers, some residents persist in disposing of their leaves in adjacent neighborhood parks, either behind their homes or across the street. County vacuuming provides a convenient alternative to avoid misusing our parks. Also, some residents do not clean leaves out of the gutters at the edge of our streets. This poses problems with drainage, particularly when runoff spreads onto the main part of the street and freezes in winter. Our County vacuuming teams clean out our gutters as they proceed from pile to pile in front of our homes.

Finally, the County vacuuming crews do a good job. A crew consists of three people—a driver, an operator of the vacuum hose, and a helper armed with a rake.

I have employed all the alternatives described at the beginning of this letter for disposing of autumn leaves, and, when a mulching lawn mower can no longer do the job, I find County vacuuming to be the easiest and the best.

—Michael S. McGill



## Park Notes

### Sutton Potter Park has a new warden

We welcome Mary Ellen Gilman as the park warden for Sutton Potter Park. This park is located just west of Range Road and southwest of the Popkins Farm neighborhood and is best known for its more challenging winter sledding hill, just a jog away from the Popkin's Farm 'introductory' sledding bowl.

Larger than first perceived, Sutton Potter Park runs north to south the length of the hillside from the top of the sledding bowl at Popkins Farm to its lower end below the townhouses at Mount Vernon Square. There is a smaller, narrow strip of the park that juts to the west and includes an asphalt path that is used by Hollin Meadow students.

The larger portion of the park is home to a network of trails used by dog walkers and strollers. A small memorial garden with a bench sits just west of the entrance from Hollin Hills on Range Road. If you have yet to make the acquaintance with this neighborhood park, I urge you to take a tour. A walk in winter, up the steep hillside, rewards the hiker with a fantastic view of the ridge line far to the south of Hybla Valley—if you squint, you just might be in the Blue Ridge, but without the commute. Word to the wise, be careful walking back down the hill as the small river cobbles (round stones) on the hillside will roll with you if you are not careful.

### Linking wardens, past to present

A big thank you is owed to the Sutton Potter interim warden, Susan Kuhbach, who assumed

responsibility for serving as the eyes and ears of the park. The park is much cleaner: broken and hazard trees have been addressed; and the overhanging sticker shrub branches along the trails pruned, thanks to her diligence over the past year. Susan provided an excellent bridge from our long-term wardens, Traudy and Floyd O'Quinn and our new warden, Mary Ellen Gilman.

### Earn community service hours and help our parks

Sutton Potter Park and our other CAHH parks offer many opportunities for earning the community service hours that are required by our local schools. If you are, or know of, a student who is in search of such a project, please let me know. There is much to do and I will eagerly connect you with our park wardens.

Volunteers, answers, ideas—please send all to your parks chair, Elisabeth Lardner, 703-765-3023, eblardner@gmail.com.

—Elisabeth Lardner

Squint at the winter view from the summit of Sutton Potter Park—a bit like the Blue Ridge, but without the commute.

## Our Yards and Gardens

### DORMANT OVER-SEEDING

In February, most gardeners are poring over catalogues and dreaming about spring. Depending on what the groundhog sees, we're still six weeks from the first snowdrops and crocuses. Your lawn is sound asleep, even the roots—the last part to doze off and the first to reawaken. Nevertheless, this is a good time to address thin patches and bare spots in the lawn. In my case, I'm dealing with a foot-wide strip along the street that the snowplow scraped naked last winter and the winter before, peeling back the sod and dirt like, well, like a snowplow. (This will explain to my puzzled neighbors why I put out orange traffic cones before a snowfall.)

Dormant over-seeding is a lazy man's head start on spring germination. "Head start" because cool-season grasses (rye, bluegrass, fescue) won't germinate until the soil temperature is back above 55 degrees, and that won't happen until the daytime highs are consistently above 65 degrees. This year it was 70 on Christmas Day and in the 60s on several days in January, so February isn't too late. "Lazy man" because you don't have to do all the fastidious preparation that would have been necessary in spring or fall—just sprinkle the seed heavily over any bare spots (snowplow, dogs) or thin patches (postman's path, croquet pitch), and wait.

Snow, freezing rain and cold weather will do the rest. Your soil

Try this lazy way to start on spring germination. Snow, freezing, and cold weather will do the rest.

"heaves" as it freezes and thaws, filling with ice crystals at night, collapsing during the day, icing up again the next night. In the course of a winter, this action will move the seed down into the top quarter or half inch of soil, just like you would have done so carefully with your rake in September. You don't need to water the seed, either—snowmelt and rain will provide the water to plump up the seeds, so they're ready to germinate as soon as things warm up. When they do, the new grass will get a significant jump on the weeds, and you won't have to walk on wet turf to make it happen.

The best seed choice will have a mix of cool-season varieties. Rye will germinate first but might get nipped by a late frost; bluegrass is slower to germinate and thus more frost-proof; fine fescues are best suited to the partial shade that prevails in Hollin Hills. You might hold off on fertilizer the first year, or at least wait until May, and even then be careful not to use anything that contains pre-emergent herbicides—they'll undo all your good work, and you probably don't need those poisons anyhow. Wait until the grass is two inches tall before mowing it for the first time, and then gradually raise the cutting deck to three or four inches as spring warms into summer. Feed as usual, along with the rest of lawn, next fall. (continued on pg. 5)



## Dormant Over-seeding *from page 4*

Over-seeding rates are typically half the rate for establishing a new lawn on bare dirt. The rate will be different for bluegrass (which has very small seeds) than for rye and fescue (which have larger seeds). Follow the label instructions—good advice for almost any garden activity. Put down a little extra on spots that are really bare, like my snowplow scrape. I usually do my dormant over-seeding just before a major snowfall (three to six inches) anyhow. That will keep the wind and birds from carrying off my seed. Put down the seed, cover with a thin layer of compost or chopped hay (available at Village Hardware), and let the snow come. But don't forget the orange traffic cones.

Dormant over-seeding is also a good way to start renovating

the entire lawn. If your grass looks old and tired, or if it's based on an old-fashioned tall fescue like Kentucky 31, this is a chance to add the newer finer fescues and bluegrasses to the mix — they need less fertilizer and water, they're more disease-resistant, and they simply look thicker and healthier. You may want to over-seed again in September to carry on with the transition. You'll also be motivated to address other problems such as soil pH (limestone), compaction (core aeration, gypsum), and fertility (proper choice and timing of fertilizer). Gradual renovation is far cheaper and less traumatic than killing the entire lawn and starting over again, and after a few cycles, the results are just as spectacular. Surrender is not an option!

—Paul B. Phelps

## BOOK REPORT

### **Boys in the Boat, by Daniel James Brown**

A stirring account of the events and persons who triumphed at the 1936 Olympic Games under the eye of Hitler, *Boys in the Boat*, by Daniel James Brown, has appeal not only to rowing enthusiasts, but also to those interested in the poignant story of the participating youngsters and the historical world tensions of that period. Any Seattle area dweller also will recognize the places and happenings in that city.

The book begins with a sad family story of Joe Rance, a boy left motherless at a young age and abandoned by his father and step-mother at age 15. The lonesome boy fended for himself with odd jobs, begging, and eventually working with a neighbor to fell and sell storied redwoods from the man's property. His mother had been musical, and on the way to school, Joe played his guitar or banjo to amuse the other children on the bus. One of these boys became his lifelong support in his quest, along with his rowing crewmates, for Olympic Gold.

During his high school years, Joe was invited by his much older brother, Fred, to live with him and his family and attend a promising high school. From there, he launched himself into a place at the

University of Washington where he continued to develop the strong body that prepared him for the hard work of crew. He took menial jobs to pay his way and, one summer, worked at the Grand Coulee Dam site, insisting on dangerous jobs with jackhammers to garner extra pay. All of these jobs made him tough and strong.

There are wonderful stories of the famous coaches and a prominent builder of rowing shells, and of the competitions between the rowing coaches of U Washington and the University of California, Berkeley, and later, of East Coast competitions at Poughkeepsie. There are also detailed accounts of trips and of the formation of crew collegiality so necessary to a winning position.

Those interested in the history of the Depression, the rise of Hitler, and Nazism will find many references to the restrictive German laws and influence of Goebbels, Speer, Leni Riefenstahl, and Hitler himself in his original opposition to the Olympics.

Next month's book will be Richard Wright's *Native Son*. A discussion will be held on Wednesday, February 1, at the home of Elizabeth Egghart. Those interested are invited to attend.

—Bea Bobotek



## CLASSIFIEDS

**FOR RENT:** Beautiful well maintained home at 7317 Stafford Rd. Updated kitchen, floors, bathrooms and oversized laundry room. 3 bedrooms, 1 office, 2 baths, open floor plan. Original Charles Goodman home backs on park with lovely landscaping, private backyard. Great lighting. N.Lee 571-218-8260; Normandie.lee@gmail.com

**CORRECTION:** The phone numbers for McGill and McGinn are reversed in the current HH phone directory. Please make a note of these correct numbers: McGill, Michael & Mary - 703-718-2090 and McGinn, Mary - 703-768-5620

### **RECOMMENDED:**

**FIREWOOD:** Miller Firewood, 301-856-4436. After purchasing a half cord five years ago and having several trees in our yard felled, we finally needed more firewood and were pleased to call Miller Firewood again. Left a message, which was returned that evening. Delivery was scheduled quickly and then he showed up early with a FULL CORD (when was the last time you actually got one?) of

mixed hard woods, exactly as ordered. This is "old school" business at its best. Wood seems well seasoned and split into the right range of sizes to provide many evenings of warm fires.

—Jon. Kayserling

**CONTRACTOR:** Designer Home Improvements, 703-550-8441, is a very good small construction company with a hands-on owner, George Miles. He and his crew did a fine job of repairing the considerable tree damage done to our house. George is professional and practical in his approach, and his prices are reasonable and fair. We are very pleased with the results.—David & Barbara Shear

**ROOFERS:** DBS Roofing, 703-455-7663, did a great job of replacing our tar and gravel roof and at a lower price than that of competitors. Donald and Buster were a pleasure to work with, and their crew was experienced and efficient. We highly recommend them.—David & Barbara Shear

