

DECEMBER 2017

HOLLIN HILLS BULLETIN



DECEMBER 24

* CAROL SINGING IN THE PARK * SEE PAGE 2

CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING DECEMBER 6 – PLAN TO ATTEND

The CAHH Fall General Meeting will be held on Wednesday December 6, 7pm, at Sherwood Hall Library. **Please note that the date announced in the last Bulletin (December 7), has been changed.** In addition to conducting regular Association business, we will elect five members to the CAHH Board. The candidates include three members up for re-election: Chris McNamara, Vice-President; Susmita Dastidar, Social Chair; and Bob Kinzer, Parks Liaison. Two are first-time candidates: Marinka Tellier, Membership Chair and Scott Weidenfeller, Treasurer.

If you cannot attend this important meeting, please fill out and send in the absentee ballot/proxy on page 8.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

CHRIS McNAMARA is a long-time Hollin Hills resident and active volunteer. He and his son, Max, an eighth grader at Carl Sandburg Middle School, live at 7704 Elba Road. Since moving to the neighborhood in 2001, he has served as a park warden and for two terms as the CAHH Vice President, in 2008-2009 and 2016-2017. Chris spearheaded development of the new Hollin Hills website (www.hollin-hills.org) launched last December.

SUSMITA DASTIDAR In my two years as Social Chair, I have watched with pleasure as my Hollin Hills neighbors and friends have enjoyed July 4th, Oktoberfest, and our winter gatherings (the potluck and carol singing) that have been my responsibility. I hope to continue to organize these with your help for the next two years. In the meanwhile, our neighborhood school, Hollin Meadows, has kept me busy, and I am also your representative on the MVCCA Education Committee. I married Eric Stromayer (HH since age six) almost twenty years ago, and my first contact with Hollin Hills was meeting the neighbors who came to Kolkata to attend our wedding. I miss my eldest daughter, who could be relied on to organize the children's activities at our events but is now away at college. Eric and the twins look forward to their ongoing support of our activities, as I look forward to the opportunity to continue as your social chair.

BOB KINZER moved in 1969 with his wife, Lee Ann, to their current home at 2100 Pickwick Lane, where they raised two daughters, Kirsten and Robin, two dogs, and four cats. Bob worked at the Naval Research Lab for thirty-some years until he retired some years ago. He has kept busy since retirement by doing a few more practical things. He has served on the Design Review Committee both as a member and chair, as a member of the CAHH board for the past

three years as the Parks Committee liaison, and as an HH parks volunteer for many years.

SCOTT WEIDENFELLER has been a Hollin Hiller since 2004, when he moved here with his wife, Katy. He is a lifelong suburban Washingtonian, and he managed to cross the river to Virginia from Maryland via Houston, Texas. He is the proud father of Charlie (10) and Maggie (7). He served on the Special Design Review Committee from 2006-07, and he looks forward to another opportunity to serve the community he loves.

MARINKA TELLIER. I has lived in Hollin Hiller for over 15 years, and was originally from the not so Hollin flat lands of the Netherlands. My day job involves keeping medicine safe, and my other energies go toward a variety of other activities including biing and music. It has been a great pleasure to live in here and raise my three children in our house among the trees. I am excited to contribute to the Hollin Hills community and do my part to maintain what has felt like a welcoming home for so many years.

Clockwise, from top left: Chris McNamara, Susmita Dastidar, Bob Kinzer, Scott Weidenfeller, and Marinka Tellier.



CIVIC ASSOCIATION OF HOLLIN HILLS (CAHH)

CAHH OFFICERS

President Gus Matson	768-3797
Vice-President Chris McNamara	660-9536
Treasurer (Open)	
Secretary Frederike Ahrens	571-481-4628
Membership Linda Benson	312-907-1797

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Pool Laura Kistler	768-4161
MVCCA Kathy Seikel	768-2350
Social Susmita Dastidar	660-5938
Parks Bob Kinzer	768-4048

CAHH COMMITTEES

ARCHIVIST Judy Riggin	765-3025
Historian Scott Wilson	765-4471

(Also see Hollin Hills Archives below)

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)

Chair Frank Collins	660-6525
Members John Burns	660-9763
John Nolan	231-2229
Ginny Wallace	765-7116
Ken Wilson	768-5838
CAHH-DRC Liaison Chris McNamara	660-9536

HOLLIN HILLS POOL COMMITTEE

Chair Barbara Bogue	571-257-9313
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PARKS COMMITTEE

Chair Elisabeth Lardner	765-3023
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Published monthly since 1951 by the CAHH. Material in this publication does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the CAHH Board or the editor.

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. 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.
- To replace a missing paper Bulletin, contact Ellen Rydell at 703-768-3442.

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.
- For questions about collections, hours, usage, duplications, or directions go to http://sca.gmu.edu/using_sc&a.html.
- Other contacts: phone 703-993-2220, fax inquiries 703-993-8911, email speccoll@gmu.edu.

www.hollin-hills.org

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

Quick Takes



JOIN SANTA AND YOUR NEIGHBORS AT OUR ANNUAL CAROL SING

The annual Hollin Hills Carol Sing in McCalley Park (at the corner of Paul Spring and Rippon Roads) will be held on Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, starting at 5:30. Santa has promised to make a visit, and his elves are busy making cookies and brewing hot cider, as well. Bundle up, bring the whole family, and remember a flashlight, too, so you can read the song sheets in case memory fails after the first “fa-la-la.”

A big thanks to the Totaro family who have once again volunteered to organize this event. They could use some help setting up on Sunday afternoon. It will probably take no more than 30-45 minutes. Or, you could bring some extra cookies from your holiday baking projects for the refreshment table. Anyone willing to lend a hand should contact Paige Totaro, paigeconnertotaro@gmail.com.

OH, PIONEERS! (continued)

Thanks to some observant Bulletin readers, two more names have been added to last month’s list of long-time residents and second-generation Hollin Hillers who have returned to the community. John Toner is living in the house at 1909 Martha’s Road that his parents lived in as original owners. Another person in the second-generation category is Ellen Delman Rydell. Ellen and her parents, Ed and Edie Delman, moved to Hollin Hills in the ‘50s and lived at 2001 Martha’s Road. Ellen and her husband, Bill Rydell, now live on Range Road. Ellen has taken over from Eleanor Finna producing welcome kits for newcomers.

THE GARDEN CLUB IS ALIVE AND WELL

A small but enthusiastic group met at Kari Larson’s house on November 15 to talk about reviving the dormant Hollin Hills Garden Club, and the answer was a resounding “YES!”

The club will start with a fun holiday event in December, open to all members of the community. Kari Larson agreed to host again at her home at 7316 Rebecca Drive. Join us there on December 7, at 7pm, to make a festive and decorative bowl of paperwhites, perfect for gift-giving, and to learn about forcing those and other bulbs for winter flowering indoors. Bring a glazed ceramic bowl with closed bottom, 3-4” deep and 4-6” wide. Please also bring a \$5 donation to cover the cost of the bulbs and gravel, which we will provide. Space is limited, so please email Heidi.Hess@gmail.com to reserve your spot today.

If you would like to receive notices of Garden Club activities and other related area events, please send an email to hhgardenclub-subscribe@yahoo.com.

—Paige Conner Totaro

NEWS OF OUR SCHOOLS

• **Holiday Toy Drive.** The Care and Share Committee at Hollin Meadows Elementary School is sponsoring a Holiday Gift Drive for families in need at our school. Please consider donating unwrapped toys, books, Legos, puzzles, multicultural dolls, board games, or gift cards for families. The gift drive runs until December 8, and you can drop off your unwrapped gifts at the school office until that date. To arrange for a pickup on December 3, contact Melissa Edmiston (Melissa.s.edmiston@gmail.com). You can also contact Melissa to arrange an alternate pickup or with any questions.

• **Shopping on Amazon can help HMES.** Use a special link while shopping on Amazon this holiday season, and Amazon will donate a small portion of the money you spend to the Hollin Meadows PTA. Just go to: (continued on page 3)

Quick Takes *from page 2*

Hollin Meadows students invited their families to share the school's traditional Thanksgiving Lunch. Among the Hollin Hillers attending were (l-r) Pipper White and Amina Wilbur, Gavin and Heather Young, and Sophie Crooks-Nowicki and William Crooks.

<http://smile.amazon.com>, then select "Hollin Meadows PTA" as your charity when prompted. It's the same Amazon experience as always, and a donation will be made automatically whenever you use the smile.amazon.com link for your shopping!

—Jane Runnels and Melissa Edminston

SCAM SEASON NEVER ENDS

"Scams Against the Elderly" was the topic presented by Ryan Young from the Mason District police station, at the November meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee of the Mt. Vernon District Police (CAC). He noted that 20% of the homeowners in Fairfax are 65 and older. Within that age group, the people most vulnerable to

what happened from family members.

Among the most common household scams are those that involve roof, chimney, and attic repairs, along with driveway sealing and repair.

If you notice a number of unfamiliar trucks at an elderly neighbor's home, especially those from out of the area, then "see something, say something." If you have reason to suspect a scam, you can call the Fairfax non-emergency number, 703-691-2131. The Fairfax County Adult Services number is 703-324-7450.

CAC meetings are held at the Parker's Lane facility, at 7pm, on the second Tuesday of each month. The public is invited to attend, meet our police, and learn of their activities.

—Laura Wirkkala

THE FRIENDS PARTY – A SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL SUCCESS

On November 11, Friends of Hollin Hills, (FHH) the new neighborhood 501(c)(3) organization, hosted its first independent fundraiser, a cocktail party and silent auction at the home of Jaelith Hall-Rivera and David Rivera. We cannot thank them enough for their incredible generosity in opening up their beautiful home for the party.

Over one hundred neighbors enjoyed mid-century cocktails such as Manhattans and Fish House Punch, a wide selection of wine, and delicious hors d'oeuvres. Caroline Space, whose photographs were featured in the 2016 Home & Garden Tour brochure, spoke to the group and presented a brief video highlighting the sights and sounds of Hollin Hills. Throughout the evening there were six items available for silent auction, including two of Caroline's beautiful photographs and an original drawing by our talented neighbor, Dennis Carmichael. A weekend at Maryland's Eastern Shore, generously donated by Lee and Peter Braun, was a big draw.

From all reports, everyone had a fabulous time! New neighbors, long-term neighbors, even non-neighbors, had the opportunity to meet and mingle with the Friends of Hollin Hills board members and to learn more about the organization and its support of the Hollin Hills Historic District. Goals discussed included ensuring sufficient resources to meet any future extraordinary expenses for both the parks and architectural preservation, including a legal defense fund in case the need arises again; educating both our residents and the broader mid-century modern community about our unique neighborhood; and fostering a sense of community, of which social and educational events like this first fundraiser are a key component.

\$2,800 is all that remains for FHH to meet its goal of raising \$20,000 by December 31. Please consider donating—\$10, \$50, \$100 or more—to help us reach this inaugural goal. Together, we can make a difference and enhance, preserve, and share in the magic of our mid-century neighborhood, tucked in the woods.

On top of reinforcing and introducing new bonds between neighbors, the event was incredibly successful as a fundraiser. Expense-free thanks to all who covered the cost of food and drinks, and those who donated silent auction items. All the contributions went directly into the pot to fund future projects in support of the Hollin Hills Historic District.

Thanks, also, to all of you who supported our earlier effort at the neighborhood Oktoberfest. We have a few pint glasses remaining if you need a gift or two.

Moving forward, and dependent on receiving the appropriate approvals and permissions from the CAHH, the DRC, and the Parks Committee, the Friends hope to fund two initial projects: an update to the two entry signs to include 'Hollin Hills Historic District' and a new bench in McCalley Park. If you have other ideas for other preservation or enhancement projects for the neighborhood, or have any questions, please contact us at friendsofhollinhills@gmail.com.

—Christine Hooks, FHH Chair

Planning & Zoning



Heavy concentration of new development proposed near Huntington Metro

The Planning and Zoning Committee (P&Z) of the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations (MVCCA) met Monday, November 6, at the Government Center. Presentations and discussion focused on several potential developments near the Huntington Avenue Metro station.

Over the years, there have been many proposals to increase the density of the established Huntington Club just west of the station. The present apartment structures are on a steep slope between Huntington Avenue and Kings Highway. The most recent proposal shows several 15 or 16 story apartment buildings almost adjacent to the Metro station and lower rise apartment buildings with underground parking to the west. All of the existing buildings would be replaced. The time line for construction would be about ten years.

The Huntington Club presentation was followed by a proposal

for a new housing development on the north side of Huntington Avenue adjacent to Telegraph Road. The was followed by a more complex proposal to develop four land units south and east of Telegraph Road and North Kings Highway.

With these proposals added to another recent proposal to vastly expand the Riverside Parks apartments on Huntington Avenue near Richmond Highway, the area would become very congested. An argument can also be made that these proposed Huntington Avenue developments could delay plans to link Metrorail to stations proposed for Richmond Highway.

The Committee also heard a presentation about how Fairfax County might deal with the vast amount of office space that remains empty within its boundaries.

—Burt Kronstedt

Design Review



The Civic Association of Hollin Hills DRC meets monthly to offer homeowners guidance about potential exterior property renovations and whether those desired renovations are in harmony and conformity with the association's Design Review Guidelines. All DRC-approved projects are subject to and must comply with Fairfax County building regulations, policies and codes. Homeowners should complete appropriate County permit processes prior to the start of any renovations.

The Design Review Committee (DRC) did not meet in November because no homeowner projects were submitted.

The next DRC meeting will be on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, 7pm., at the Sherwood Regional Library, Sherwood Meeting Room, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane.

—Chris McNamara

Book Review



The Hollin Hills Book Group discussed *Flight of the Sparrow*, a novel of early America by Amy Belding Brown. The time frame is 1676, the setting the Massachusetts Bay Colony's far western frontier which encroached on Indian hunting grounds. Major characters are based on real people and named for them.

Mary Rowlandson, a preacher's wife, and her three children were captured on a winter day in a brutal attack on her village. Houses were burned and men, women, and children were gunned down. Mary's three-year-old was badly wounded, and Mary received a minor wound. After several days of walking through the woods they arrived at an Indian village where she would belong to the woman head of the village for the next three months.

Once Mary learned what was expected of her and she had carried out her duties she was free to wander about the village and the woods where they gathered food. She was surprised at how much freedom she had and how kindly she was treated.

Another character based on a historical person is James Printer, a Nipmuc Indian who, as a child, had lived with John Eliot and helped him translate the Bible into the Algonquin language. James had a formal English education and was comfortable (or maybe uncomfortable) in both the Puritan and Nipmuc cultures. He was living in the village to which Mary was taken and quietly helped her to adjust to her new culture.

One of our interesting discussions centered around the concept of freedom. In her Puritan village Mary was under the strict constraints of her husband and the "mutual watch," the relentless scrutiny of every person in the village by every other person in the

village. The Puritan god was a judgmental god. In the Indian village she wore less constraining clothes, a deer skin dress, and once she had completed her chores her time was her own and she could go where she wished.

—Anne Parke

CLASSIFIEDS

HOUSE FOR SALE: After six years in Hollin Hills, we are leaving (moving to Charlottesville) and would like your help in selling our wonderful home at 1910 Martha's Road (on the circle). If you know someone (or yourself) who might be interested in a completely renovated and updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath home on a beautiful landscaped lot for \$ 742,500, please send them to 1910marthasroad.com, or have them give us a call at 703-450-9542. —Jonathan Keyserling

AVAILABLE, in very good condition: Antique organ, built circa 1875, by New England Organ Company, Boston, Mass. With organ stool. Highly rated. Lengthy description available. —Mary-Carroll Potter.

NEED A BABY SITTER? Well, then call Sofia Pereira! I am great with children and will give 100% of my attention to yours. I am trustworthy, responsible, and loving. Available to do simple housework, cleaning, dog walking, and I can cook some things. I am 12-years-old and CPR certified. I love to read and do art and would love to babysit your child/children. \$8 per hour. Give me a call (703-401-9736 or email (my mom) tellim@hotmail.com.

mid-century modern

ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

frank lloyd wright:
the usonian house
usonia, new york
broadacre city

USONIA, NEW YORK (1948-1963) AND THE USONIAN HOUSE

In 1949, the first families moved into their new homes in Usonia, in Westchester County, N.Y., near Pleasantville, north-east of New York City. This Mid-Century Modern community was unique in several ways. It was a cooperative—all buildings and land were owned by a cooperative corporation funded and staffed by the residents, who leased their homes from it. The cooperative assumed the duties otherwise handled by a developer. The community's design was based on the concepts of Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright subdivided the land into one-acre lots, laid out a winding road system to match the topography and preserve the abundant trees on site, designed three of the 47 houses, and reviewed the designs of thirty others.

The inspiration for this development occurred when David and Priscilla Henken, living in Manhattan, attended a 1940 exhibition of Frank Lloyd Wright's work at the Museum of Modern Art, featuring Broadacre City, his scale model of the ideal American community, and his design for the ideal Middle Class home, the Usonian House.

Unlike his fellow American architects, but like the Europeans, Wright had a vision of using architecture to perfect society. His goal was to create a democratic American architecture that was affordable and nourished self-sufficiency. He envisioned America as a suburban nation, with families living in Usonian Houses on one-acre lots, interconnected by electronic communication, and driving on elevated highways. He viewed cities as overcrowded, unhealthy, and no longer necessary. Instead, he wanted to cover the countryside with a series of linear communities without downtowns, each occupying four square miles and housing 10,000 people.

The Henken's were so impressed that they moved to Wright's Taliesin compound near Spring Green, Wisconsin, to study architecture for a year. Upon their return, they mobilized friends and relatives to establish the cooperative, which screened and recruited prospective residents, contracted with Wright, and bought a 97-acre tract at a tax auction for \$23,000.

The houses designed for Usonia were based on Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian House. These homes were located toward the front of their lot, with clerestory windows facing the street for privacy, and window walls overlooking a private back yard. They had flat or low-pitched roofs featuring deep overhangs, and they were built of natural materials: stone, brick, and naturally finished wood. Their interiors featured an open floor plan that merged the living room, dining room, and a small kitchen area that Wright renamed the 'workspace', and had small bedrooms located down a narrow connecting hallway.

Wright eliminated basements and attics, and used a concrete slab for the foundation and floor. Radiant

heating coils were incorporated beneath the slab. He also started using modular elements, including walls composed of an outside and inside layer of wood with a layer of plywood in between for insulation, eliminating the need for studs. In the 1950s, to cut costs, he devised the Usonian Automatic, featuring concrete block walls that could be made on site by the future owner.

Wright's first Usonian House was built in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1937 for Herbert and Katherine Jacobs. It had two bedrooms, 1500 sq.ft. of space, and cost \$5500.

The shape of Wright's Usonians changed over time. Initially, to minimize cost, they were rectangular or L-shaped. After the War, he experimented with round and polygonal shapes. The basic design concept was incised into each house's concrete slab as a repetitive geometric pattern, which controlled the arrangement of all architectural elements.

While the founders of Usonia assumed that Wright would design his most affordable, rectangular or L-shaped houses for the community, he designed a variety of shapes. The Sol Friedman house has a series of round volumes, including a round roof for its carport. The Roland Reisley house features dramatic angles and cantilevers.

For the remaining houses, the cooperative board adopted design guidelines emphasizing the Usonian/organic Wright approach as opposed to the "stark, barren cubes" of the International Style. Wright said of his style, "In organic architecture the ground itself predetermines all features; the climate modifies them; available means limit them; function shapes them." The board also established a list of 17 pre-approved architects, of which nine had trained at Taliesin.

By 1955, Usonia had to reorganize. Difficulty in obtaining financing, dramatic post-war inflation, and tensions that would invariably arise when so much had to be done by volunteer labor to cut costs, all took their toll. The cooperative transferred ownership of the homes to each family holding a 99-year lease, including a



Jacobs House (1937) Madison, WI, the first Usonian house.



Two of Wright's houses in Usonia: the Friedman House (1948) and Reisley House (1951).

mid-century modern ARCHITECTURE IN AMERICA

restrictive covenant to protect the integrity of the design, and sold the undeveloped lots to new buyers, while continuing to review prospective designs, and manage the streets, water system, and the 40 acres of open space.

Architecturally, the 44 non-Wright designed home are generally compatible with his organic design concepts, as the Harris and Anderson houses (*at right*) illustrate. Seven houses were not designed by Wright 'disciples', including three (gasp!) in the dreaded International Style. Two of these, to make matters worse, were Tech-Built homes, designed by The Architects' Collaborative, the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based firm founded by Wright's bete noire, Walter Gropius. But these were not "stark, barren cubes," and the houses fit in.

Usonia has been enormously successful. During its first 40 years, only 12 homes were resold, half bought by descendants of the original owners. The cooperative board dammed a stream to create a swimming hole with a beach in 1950, added tennis courts in 1958, and built a swimming pool in 1981. Westchester County assumed responsibility for the water system and roads. At their 50th reunion, 250 people attended to celebrate the life of the community. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.

BROADACRE CITY

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), introduced his Broadacre City concept as part of his climb back to respectability after seeing his early success as an architect destroyed by his own self-destructive behavior and the ravages of the Great Depression.

His talent and creativity were obvious from his first independent commission in 1893, the William Winslow House in River Forest, Illinois. His early fame arose from his design of the Prairie Style House, inspired by the Arts & Crafts movement and the broad, flat prairie stretching west from Chicago. Working from his base in suburban Oak Park, 90 of his 135 commissions were built in the first decade of the 20th century.

His fame spread to Europe through the publication of the Wasmuth Portfolio, a compilation of his Prairie Style designs that inspired a generation of European architects to embrace the Modern movement, although they did not adopt Wright's design philosophy, much to his irritation. By 1910, according to architectural historian Thomas Hines, Wright had established a international reputation as a "leading practitioner and prophet of modernism."

Then his career plummeted, although he did a few significant buildings—the Imperial Hotel in Japan and his textile block houses in Los Angeles—far different from



what he had done before, as the Ennis House (*below, far left*) demonstrates. In 1932, when the Metropolitan Museum of Art held its first exhibit of modern architecture (which it named the International Style), it relegated Wright to the periphery of the exhibit, treating him as a significant figure from the past. Co-director of the exhibit Philip Johnson referred to him as "the greatest architect of the 19th century."

Between 1928 and 1935, two homes that he designed were built. To survive, he created the Taliesin Fellowship at his Wisconsin retreat in 1932, recruiting students to live, work, and study under his guidance. They paid tuition, harvested crops, put on musical programs for themselves and their neighbors, and observed the Great Man doing designs. In 1937, he expanded this program by building Taliesin West in the Arizona desert, shuttling back and forth seasonally. The school continues to this day.

With few commissions, Wright had his students build a scale model of Broadacre City.

Wright began getting commissions that restored his fame. The first was Fallingwater in southwestern Pennsylvania, commissioned by Pittsburgh department store owner Edgar Kaufmann, whose son had studied at Taliesin. Broadacre City was unveiled at Rockefeller Center in 1935. In 1938, Architecture Forum and Time both named Wright "the nation's greatest architect." And, in 1940, MOMA made amends for its 1932 snub with a show dedicated exclusively to his work.

CONCLUSION

America after World War II did indeed become a suburban nation, but fortunately our cities did not die. Frank Lloyd Wright's career continued to flourish. By the time of his death, he had developed more than 1,000 designs, about half of which were built. Many houses from all periods are accessible for tours, including one of his most modest Usonian right here in Alexandria, the Pope-Leighey House, on the grounds of Woodlawn Plantation.

To the end, Wright defended his style as being distinct from, and better than, the International Style. Modern architecture, he charged, was responsible for the "divorce of man from the elements of nature... that constitute the body of his universe."

—Michael S. McGill



Wright-compatible designs in Usonia included Harris House (1949), by Kaneji Domoto and Anderson House (1951), by David Henken

Far left, from top: Two early Wright designs: the Winslow House, River Forest, Illinois (1893) and the Ennis House, Los Angeles (1893).

Left; Fallingwater, (1935), Mill Run, Pennsylvania

News from Our Parks

A pile of fun for novice pick swingers

Robert Fina led a hardy crew, teaching them all the fine techniques of trail mud puddle destruction. A quick blast of communal effort resulted, an hour later, in four completed water diversion improvements in the mid-section of the Brickelmaier Park trail, mid-way down the hillside. All crew members were outfitted in appropriate safety gear, from blue hardhats (implying novice pick swinger) to safety glasses. We had a pile of fun!

The pick swingers included Lissa and George Elliott, Peter and Marianne Martz, Rebecca Bostick, Barry Pearson, Scott Wilson, Jim Klein, John Wickham, Mary Ellen Gillman, Mike Thomasson, and Eleanor Fina. Robert is a trail crew leader for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, which maintains over 1000 miles of trails in the mid-Atlantic area. If you are interested in trail work and would like to volunteer, please contact Robert at Robert@Fina-co.com, or check the PATC website, <http://www.patc.net>.

Fall Season Ends at Sutton Potter Park

The last 2017 work parties in Sutton Potter Park will take place on Saturday, December 2, 10am-noon. The continued vine removal will help the trees; the careful snipping and pruning of plant materials can add to your holiday greens supply; and the healthful activity in the brisk winter air—all will make for a win/win situation for you and your parks. Come join the group!

—*Elisabeth Lardner, Parks Chair,*
703-765-3023, eblardner@aol.com



From top: Crew hard at work; Eleanor and Robert Fina, formidable mother-son team.

Looking Back

TRANSPORTATION STORIES, PART II: HYBLA VALLEY AIRPORT

If you have ever driven down “Snake Hill,” that section of U.S. Route One/Richmond Highway just south of Popkins Lane (named for the fact that early on the unpaved road snaked its way up that steep hill), you arrive quickly in Hybla Valley.

Today Hybla Valley contains large and smaller malls and several housing developments. But in the 1920s it was still flat farmland, once tied to George Mason’s and George Washington’s land (and a weekend Army camp site). As interest in airplanes and flight burgeoned across the country, private airfields sprang up. All you needed was a plane and enough flat land for takeoffs and landings. Hybla Valley likely appeared a workable airfield site, in spite of its low-lying acreage and tendency to fog.

The first, hazy suggestions of an airfield here date to “shortly after World War I,” when 50 acres of a local farmer’s land were operated as a private trainer airfield by a local family named Rodeson, but no other details emerge.

Records are clearer later, when Elvin Robertson established a 200-acre airfield in 1924 that he called Alexandria Airport. It began with one sod runway and a hangar. He ran it privately until 1928 offering plane rides, when he incorporated it into the Mount Vernon Airways Corporation (MVAC). At its peak 40-50 single engine planes were based there. Robertson opened the Mount Vernon School of Aeronautics for classroom and aerial flight instruction, and that and hangaring and fueling were the main general aviation offerings.

Having applied for and been granted in 1929 the first Virginia permit to operate what was then called Hybla Valley Airport, Elvin Robertson continued improving his property, the acreage growing to 1,200 acres, with three runways in an “A” configuration of 1,600, 1,500 and 2,100 feet, with supporting buildings, and then four runways by 1934.

The Hybla Valley airport story gets more interesting in 1928, when a rival airport was promoted in the Valley. A gent named Henry Woodhouse bought 2,000 acres west of the MVAC site, including what is now Huntley Meadows Park. Austrian by birth, he emigrated to the U.S around 1900 and subsequently spent four years in a New York State prison for murder. But he apparently bounced back as an entrepreneur and promoter extraordinaire. He was president of the Aerial League of America (ALA), succeeding Admiral Richard Peary in that title, and got Michigan congressman Roy Woodruff to invest in and front his local airport efforts in Congress (it is not clear if the ALA was ever a bona fide organization; records are murky). Woodhouse promoted a “George Washington Air Junction” as a major airport with the proposed longest runways in the nation—7,500 feet east/west and 4,500 feet north/south. Construction began on this second air field, and its “grand opening event” was held March 2, 1929, but there is no evidence over the next few years that it was ever operational, and Woodhouse seems to have then faded from sight.

Further excitement arrived in Hybla Valley in 1936, eight years after the first passenger trans-Atlantic dirigible flight. Officials of the German Zeppelin Company toured the mid-Atlantic region looking for a base for dirigible-based passenger and mail service. Sites in Richmond, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. were considered. Apparently Hybla Valley Airport was selected as an ideal site, and the zeppelin corporation established a meteorological station there to take weather data, and proposed putting \$250,000 into the field’s development. But the dirigible Hindenburg’s crash at Lakehurst, New Jersey, in May of 1937, along with other dirigible mishaps and the deteriorating world political situation ended this venture.

Hybla Valley Airport was a finalist in consideration to become Washington, D.C.’s regional airport, along *(continued on page 5)*

Looking back *from page 7*

with five others regional airfields. An interesting part of its argument to the Federal Government concerned its greater proximity to D.C. than Le Bourget Field to Paris, Croyden Airfield to London, or Curtiss or Roosevelt fields to New York City. Hybla Valley's 1,200 acres compared favorably to the Gravelly Point site pushed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, which consisted of 700 acres, although 500 of them were then covered by the Potomac River. Congressional procrastination led FDR to push for Executive action, and Washington National Airport stands at the Gravelly Point site today, mostly high and dry.

Hybla Valley Airport continued as a general aviation airport, still owned by Elvin Robertson until 1939, when he sold it to the Navy for a flight training center. Closed for military purposes during World War II, the field resumed commercial and private pilot training until 1955, when it closed its operations, and a shopping center

and residential developments grew in its wake.

The only vestiges of an airplane history in Hybla Valley today are the "Wall of Aviation" (*at right*) outside Costco at Route 1 and Ladson Lane; the state historical marker about the airport in the Five Guys parking lot in Hybla Valley Mall; and the street names in the Hybla Valley Estates development: Grumman Place, Convair Drive, Beechcraft Drive, Stinson Road, Piper Lane, Northrup Road, Fairchild Drive, Lockheed Boulevard, and Lindberg Drive—all names of airplane designers, manufacturers, or aviators.



—Scott Wilson, Hollin Hills Historian

ABSENTEE BALLOT / PROXY

Civic Association of Hollin Hills ■ General Membership Meeting ■ Wednesday, December 6, 2017

CAHH members who cannot attend may mark this ballot (one per member household), sign, and print name, address, and date. Ballots must be received prior to the meeting. Send ballot to: **Frederike Ahrens, 2106 Martha's Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307.**

Should you decide to attend, having submitted this ballot, you are obliged to retrieve it prior to voting at the meeting. This ballot counts as a presence in reckoning a meeting quorum.

Your Signature

Print Name

Print Address

Date

- Vice President: Chris McNamara
- Treasurer: Scott Weidenfeller
- Director-at-Large, Social: Susmita Dastidar
- Director-at-Large, Parks Liaison: Bob Kinzer
- Director-at-Large, Membership: Marinka Tellier

Approve the 2018 budget? yes no

- Check here if you wish to give your proxy to another CAHH member. Indicate that member's name below. I give my proxy to:

Proxy holder's name (print)

Proxy holder's address (print)