

April 2010



THE ACORN



FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Spring has finally sprung! As the warmer weather moves in, the Board continues with a light agenda.

From time to time the Board bids out service contracts to ensure that the Homeowners Association is getting competitive prices for work done. The Board has reviewed bids for a new landscaping contract and awarded the contract to Nolasco Landscaping. Javier Nolasco and his crew are well known to some in our community as he currently does work for many Fair Oaks Estates residents. It's always reassuring to know that we are going to be working with a quality contractor who comes with local references. We look forward to seeing his staff around throughout the year. Many thanks to Shenandoah Landscaping, which has done a commendable job for the past three years.

Treasurer News. **Sheila Hautbois** has been the Board's Treasurer for the past five years. It has been a great comfort for the Board with **Sheila** keeping track of the books. We are sorry to say that she is stepping down. So—if you have some experience in bookkeeping and would like to be considered for this position, please contact Jan Fenton at Sequoia Management or one of the Board members. You will receive the same generous salary and benefits package that **Sheila** has received for the past five years—the undying gratitude of the Board.

Traffic Calming News (see page 5 for further details). The Task Force met with Supervisor Frey's

office on March 25th to discuss traffic calming devices available and what we might like to see as options in our neighborhood. The staff will now conduct a study of where these devices might fit in and provide a recommendation for consideration. A community meeting will follow to review and vote on the final recommendation of the Task Force and Supervisor Frey's staff.

Finally, some musings on this reported White Squirrel. I have been looking for this furry beast for two years without a sighting. I am beginning to think there is some weird pollen floating around the Ox Hill Road-West Ox Road entrance and can't help but wonder what other things these reporters are seeing. White elephants? Pink giraffes? Just wondering. I will keep a sharp eye out for the White Squirrel or anything else out-of-the-ordinary as I drive through that area.

Architectural Review Board. The Architectural Review Board will meet at 7:30 p.m. on April 13th at 12549 Lt. Nichols Road to review all completed applications received at least **seven days** before the meeting. An agenda for the meeting will be posted on the FOEHA Web site (www.foeha.org) prior to the meeting.

Important Note. Please be sure to submit your applications 30 days in advance. It is important that you follow the instructions closely on the application, such as providing a site plan (plat) of

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your property showing the locations of new decks, removal of trees, and so forth. Incomplete applications will slow the approval process.

ARB March 16th meeting results: Four applications were submitted—a two-story addition; changing the color of a front door; installing new windows; and installing a propane tank. All applications were approved.

Contact information. Sequoia Management is your primary contact for submission of ARB applications, requests for re-sale packets, and reports of ARB violations. Contact Jan Fenton, Fair Oaks Estates Homeowners Association, c/o Sequoia Management Company, Inc., 13998 Parkeast Circle, Chantilly, VA 20151-2283, 703-803-9641, 703-968-0936 (fax), or e-mail jfenton@sequoiamanagement.com.

Open Space Committee. Not surprisingly, we exceeded the snow-removal budget this year, but the good news is that we're under the estimated expenses for the overall Open Space budget. Our contractor did a good job clearing the sidewalks. Now it's clean-up and repair time. The giant piles of snow at the West Ox Road entrance took a toll on the old white fence. We will get it repaired. There's lots of gravel, even on the sidewalks, and we cleaned the common area sidewalks. There were several pine or cypress trees that toppled under the weight of the

snow. One large cypress fell and blocked the path leading from Ox Hill Road to the small tot lot. Thanks to **Bob Milne** for reporting this problem; we had the tree cut up and removed. We also righted the pines along Alder Woods Drive.

As **Ron Crowe** indicated above, we've selected a new landscaping contractor but need some minor clarifications on the contract. We had a detailed "Mow Map" and Statement of Work, which helped get three roughly comparable bids. We're also trying to repair the brick monument at the Alder Woods Drive entrance that has developed a large crack near the base. Finally, if you notice some nice spring flowers at the entrance gardens, thank the **Hautbois** family.

FOEHA Flashes. Certain events arise where rapid communications are best handled electronically. Consider checking the Fair Oaks Web site for "What's New" postings. For those of you who find e-mails helpful, we would like to compile your addresses. They would be safeguarded and used only for time-sensitive notices from the Board, such as change of date for a homeowners meeting. Recipients would not see addresses for others on the e-mail. If you would like to participate, please send a note to **Rick Oborn** at obornr@cox.net.

REMEMBER YOUR CIVIC DUTIES FOR APRIL:

INCOME TAX AND CENSUS.

(SORRY, YOU CAN'T TAKE YOUR PICK; YOU NEED TO DO BOTH.)

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FAIR OAKS ESTATES RECREATION ASSOCIATION (FORA) NEWS

The FORA Annual Meeting took place on March 18th at Navy Elementary School. Many thanks to those who attended. Your support is greatly appreciated.

We would like to welcome a new member to the Board. **Cathy Baptista** was elected at the Annual Meeting and will hold the office of Secretary. Welcome, **Cathy**!

Opening day is just around the corner. We will be having the Annual Clean-up Day on Saturday, May 1st, from 8:00 a.m. until 12 noon. Dust off those lawn and gardening tools and help get your pool in tip-top shape!

Important dates:

- Clean-up Day is Saturday, May 1st.
- The pool opens on Saturday, May 29th.

The FORA Board is still in need of a few good men and women *volunteers*. Please consider volunteering your time in support of the pool and its members. We have been searching for quite some time and need additional support to keep the Board functioning and strong. Call or e-mail any of the current Board members if you are interested in learning how you can contribute.

For the latest news on FORA, please go to our Web site at <http://www.fairoaksrec.com/>.

FAIR OAKS SHARKS SWIM TEAM

The Fair Oaks Sharks is a community swim team open to children of FORA families. The Junior Sharks is a developmental team for younger swimmers (ages 5 to 8) who are comfortable in the deep end and independent in the water but who are not quite ready for the big Sharks. Registration Night will be Thursday, April 22nd in the Navy Elementary School cafeteria from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. A new parent information meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. A representative from Cassel's will be on hand to take swimsuit orders, and Swim Team Committee members and coaches will be available to answer questions. The staff for this summer includes Head Coaches **Billy Norfolk** and **Alison Griffith**, Assistant Coach **Kyle Ford**, and Age-Group Assistant **Rob Ikeda**. Junior Sharks coaches will be announced later.

For more information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.vikaza.com/FairOaksSharks/>.

READER'S RECOMMENDATION (Greg Shepherd)

We recently had our kitchen and family room painted—ceiling, trim and walls all new. The results were excellent, as well as clean up and attention to detail were spot on. We received the estimate last November and finally scheduled the work in late February, and they came and finished it all (two coats) in one day. J&V Decorating, 703-451-3544. You can Google their phone number and see more information about where they are and at least one other neighborhood recommendation. Ask for Javier.

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SPRING HAS SPRUNG—CHECK OUT THE FLOWERS

Thanks. The snows of December, January, and February have melted but not the memory of a big man with a big heart and a big snow blower. Heartfelt thanks from many Fair Oaks neighbors go to **Don Rosenberger**, who was blessing to older folks, children, and dogs during the snowstorms.

White Squirrel News. Thanks to two sharp-eyed students, **Rachel McRorie** and **Kevin Briggs**, we know that White Squirrel survived the February snows. **Rachel** and **Kevin** spotted him in his usual place at the top of Ox Hill Road while they were on the way to school after the snowstorms.

Cherry Blossoms Beyond the Tidal Basin. Meadowlark Botanical Gardens (located in Vienna on Beulah Road between Route 7 and Route 123) has more than 100 cherry trees surrounding a lovely lake, an extensive shade garden, native wildflowers, gazebos, birds, butterflies, seasonal blooms, and foliage. On April 11th from noon until 3:00 p.m., sushi will be available to enjoy under the trees for a small fee—a memorable experience to end the Cherry Blossom Festival! Check the Web site at <http://www.nvrpa.org/parks/meadowlark>.

Green Spring Gardens. There's something here for everyone: a wooded stream valley with ponds, a naturalistic native plant garden, more than 20 thematic demonstration gardens, a greenhouse filled with tropicals, and a well-stocked horticultural reference library. There is a garden shop and two gift shops, where you'll find gift ideas ranging from books and gardening gloves to china and wind chimes. Green Spring was donated to Fairfax County in 1970 by editor and publisher Michael Straight. Straight purchased the property in 1942 and made several modifications to the 1784 historic house and accompanying gardens. The landscape around the Straight home was that of a "gentleman farmer" and was used primarily for entertaining. Designed by Beatrix Farrand, the gardens included boxwood hedging, roses, and perennial borders. Green Spring is located at 4603 Green Springs Road in Alexandria, and the Web site is <http://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/gsgp>.

River Farm. A historic 25-acre site on the banks of the Potomac River, River Farm was once part of George Washington's original five farms and currently is the headquarters of the American Horticultural Society. The grounds offer spectacular river views, a wildlife garden, and delightful children's areas, including the Fairy Tale and Hummingbird gardens. River Farm is located at 7931 East Boulevard Drive in Alexandria. River Farm is open to the public from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding national holidays. From early April through September 25th, River Farm also is open on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Check the Web site at http://www.ahs.org/river_farm.

How To Attract Butterflies and Birds To Your Backyard. At the GFWC-Western Fairfax County Woman's Club (GFWC-WFCWC) meeting to be held on Monday, April 19th at 7:00 p.m. at the Greenbriar Community Center, Audubon Society naturalist Cliff Fairweather will present a program on how to build a habitat in your backyard to attract wildlife like songbirds and butterflies. Mr. Fairweather is a naturalist with more than 13 years experience in Northern Virginia, focusing on environmental education, citizen science, water quality, and habitat conservation and restoration in the urban environment. He also is nearing completion of a Master of Natural Resources degree at Virginia Tech. Guests are welcome to attend; refreshments will be served. For more information on the club, please call President Eileen Chambers at 703-378-7054 or Vice President Randi Weston at 703-266-0428.

TRAFFIC CALMING PROGRESS

The Traffic Calming Task Force had its first meeting on March 4th. Chaired by **Peter Okoli**, its members include **Andrew McNulty, Art Treiber, Chris Mustain, Dan Hautbois, Dana Nowack, Douglas Knoche, Jack Springer, John Armstrong, Mark MacDonald, and Ron Crowe**. Those in attendance were **Ron Crowe, Dan Hautbois, Doug Knoche, Mark MacDonald, Dana Nowack, Jack Springer, John Armstrong, Art Treiber, and Peter Okoli**. The first order of business was to determine whether there was a traffic problem warranting action. After a lengthy discussion about traffic issues on Charles Stewart Drive and Ox Hill Road, it was unanimously agreed that the problems were serious enough to warrant some traffic calming measures.

Various measures that are available for consideration were discussed, and tentative proposals were developed for the positioning of the measures within the neighborhood. The Task Force agreed on the following:

- 3-way Stop sign at Ox Hill Road and Charles Stewart Drive.
- A Raised Traffic Median at 12400 Ox Hill Road (where the path crosses Ox Hill Road).
- 4-way Stop sign at Charles Stewart Drive and Alexander Cornell Drive or at Charles Stewart Drive and Lt. Nichols Road.
- 3-way Stop signs along Ox Hill Road and any other suggestions that would help slow down the traffic on Ox Hill Road.

The Task Force also agreed to avoid speed humps and raised cross walks, if possible. The specific locations and type of measures will be addressed by Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) at a meeting on March 25th with the Task Force at County Supervisor Frey's office. Results of the meeting and subsequent developments will be reported in the May issue of *The Acorn*. In the meantime, please contact **Peter Okoli**, Chairman, Traffic Calming Device Task Force, at 703-758-7744 or pokoli@verizon.net if you have any questions or comments.

FROM THE PAGES OF THE ACORN

Here's more news from *The Acorn* from 25 years ago. These items are from April 1986:

- The "Gardening" column in the newsletter noted that the *average* frost date in our area is April 20th and recommended waiting at least two weeks after that date to set plants outside in order to avoid late frosts.
- An "It's Your Turn" column reminded parents to instill safety consciousness and respect for community property in their children who use the tot-lot equipment.
- In honor of April Fool's Day, Mr. Editor concocted an historical fable about who Alexander Cornell was and how one of our streets came to bear his name. Note—everything you read in the *current* issue of *The Acorn* is true, as far as Mr. Editor is aware.
- Demonstrating that it's always been tough to get volunteers to fill community service positions, the Homeowners Association was seeking volunteers to serve as Vice President and Secretary, and the Recreation Association was seeking volunteers to serve as Treasurer and Member-at-Large.

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REMEMBERING SKIP CARDIN OF OX HILL ROAD

(Editor's Note: Thanks to Gene Lane, Jack and Kathy Briggs, Joan McRorie, and Carol Buettner for sharing their insights on what Skip Cardin meant to our community.)

Fair Oaks Estates mourns the passing of one of its original homeowners and a neighborhood “institution,” **Skip Cardin**, on March 20th at the relatively young age of 62. **Skip** was born in Holyoke, Massachusetts on May 16, 1947 and grew up with his two sisters as “military brats”—children of a career US Army X-ray technician. Apart from his roots in Massachusetts, **Skip** lived in Alabama, North Carolina, Italy, and Germany. The family was a witness to history in July 1956 when returning by sea from a three-year tour in Italy; they witnessed the aftermath of the collision between the *SS Andrea Doria* and the *MS Stockholm* that resulted in the sinking of the *Andrea Doria* with the loss of 46 lives. Some 1,660 people were rescued by a variety of ships, including the one **Skip** and his family were traveling on. **Skip** graduated from the “old” Fairfax High School in 1965. (The “old” Fairfax High School is now the campus of Paul VI High School.) **Skip's** high school yearbook noted that he enjoyed bowling and basketball and that he wanted to become a printer.

After high school, **Skip** worked for years as a reservationist for United Airlines. He moved to Fair Oaks Estates in the early 1980s, and in 1989 he made a career change and became an independent food service operator, delivering food on a daily basis to construction sites in the area in his well-known “chuck wagon.” The “chuck wagon” sparked some controversy in the neighborhood because commercial vehicles are not allowed to be parked in driveways, but after much wrangling, arbitration, and a special Homeowners Association meeting, the community voted 148 to 58 to grant **Skip** an exemption to park the “chuck wagon” in his driveway. The faltering economy and his own faltering health—he'd been diagnosed with congestive heart disease more than a decade ago—forced **Skip** to retire and sell the “chuck wagon” in December.

Skip enjoyed gardening, boating, bird watching, and especially NASCAR. He was particularly partial to Chevys and reportedly once owned one of the infamous Chevy Novas. (The “Nova” name became a textbook example of poor marketing because when General Motors tried to sell the “Nova” in Spanish-speaking countries, the company learned that “Nova” was Spanish for “It doesn't go.”) **Skip** later moved to the high end of the Chevy line and bought himself a Corvette, which looks and sounds good in any language.

Skip was a surrogate father for several generations of neighborhood kids, offering wisdom and sage advice. He was always outside in the afternoons cleaning the “chuck wagon” and always took the time to chat with the kids about how they were doing in school and how things were going for the local sports teams. The fact that he left for work in the wee hours of the morning meant that he would sometimes spot kids coming home later than they should; the fact that he was home cleaning the “chuck wagon” in the afternoons meant that he saw kids doing things that their working parents didn't see. He often let the kids help him with stocking the items on the “chuck wagon,” and some kids learned a lesson about hard work by accompanying **Skip** on his rounds to the work sites he served.

We offer our condolences to **Skip's** companion, **Sarah Harris** (long-time coordinator of the neighborhood Stitchin' Time group), his sisters **Linda** and **Nancy** and their families, his stepchildren **Laura Anne**, **William**, and **David**, and his grandson **Trace**.

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FROM THE EDITORS

All righty. We have “sprung ahead” to Daylight Saving Time, celebrated Saint Patrick’s Day, spread most of the mulch that was delivered in March, survived the Ides and floods of March, and are hopeful of surviving the Ides of April—also known as Tax Day. Summer can’t be far behind.

As **David Boggs** notes in the Open Space Committee section of the monthly report from the Board of Directors, there is a lot of sand and gravel still around on our streets and sidewalks—a lingering reminder of the snows of December, January, and February. Although County contractors spread the stuff, they don’t clean it up—individual homeowners need to do that. So while you’re attending to your other “civic duties” of preparing your taxes and

census returns in April, please take on the added “civic duty” of clearing the grit from the sidewalk and street in front of your home.

As some long-time readers will recall, we occasionally “borrow” space from the “Bulletin Board” section of the newsletter when we have a lot of news to report. Such is the case this month. The only items in the “Bulletin Board” section this month are new ads; we’ve “borrowed” the rest of the space to cover more pressing issues. We apologize in advance to anyone who might feel inconvenienced.

Coming next month—Issue Number 300 of The Acorn! Can you believe it?!

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