



WORDS FROM THE RIDGE

A Newsletter for the Residents of the Forest Ridge Community



Spring 2021

FRHOA PO Box 493, Sterling, VA 20167-0493

E-mail: info@forest-ridge.org

Web: www.forest-ridge.org

Notes from HOA President Fred Stewart

Thank You for Your Support

On behalf of the Forest Ridge Homeowners Association Board of Directors, thanks to all of our homeowners for their continued support throughout the year. Your suggestions and comments have been key in determining our direction and priorities. We look forward to working together to continue to make Forest Ridge an even better place to live, to maintain and *improve* property values and to distinguish our physical community from others. Thanks again for your continued support.

FRHOA Improvements to Better Serve Our Homeowners

The Board has been looking for ways to improve our services and to save money. Our FRHOA annual dues are a good value at \$135 per year. Most HOAs have a fee in excess of \$100 per month. Your Board is constantly looking for ways to manage its financial resources and better serve the Forest Ridge community at the same time. This electronic version of our spring newsletter is an example. Please feel free to provide feedback Re: this electronic media. If you are not sure if we have your email address, please send it along with your name (owners name) to info@forest-ridge.org. In addition to the emailing, the newsletter will be posted on our website accessible to everyone www.forest-ridge.org. As of now our FRHOA Fall Newsletter will continue to be hardcopy mailed to each homeowners' address via the U.S. postal system to ensure distribution of our annual election and proxy information.

Signage

Election season is so long past that all campaign-related signage should be gone. Our FRHOA Covenants (written in the late 1970s) allow homeowners to display political signs in their yards 60 days before an election and remove them no later than 10 days after the date of any federal, state, or local election.

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LOUDOUN HUNGER RELIEF MOBILE MARKET MONDAYS AT STERLING COMMUNITY CENTER

Loudoun County residents needing help with food can make an appointment at www.loudounhunger.org – click on “GET FOOD”. Mobile Market is located at 120 Enterprise St., Sterling on Mondays, 1:00-2:30PM.

See website for holidays/weather closures.

Notes from HOA President Fred Stewart (Continued)

Sheds

The FRHOA does not allow detached sheds. Our Covenants only allow for one structure on each lot. That structure is a single-family home. Occasionally a homeowner will request approval for installation of a detached shed. Our covenants would need to be modified to allow them. However, in order to modify our covenants, we must have signatures from 75 percent of all homeowners. Seventy five percent of our 550 homeowners is 413. The signatures must be from homeowners, not tenants. Many factors would need to be considered, including but not limited to: size; architecture; structure composition; electric power, placement on lot, Fairfax and Loudoun county regs, etc. In many ways not having backyard sheds likely makes for a much more attractive community.

Become Involved in Your HOA

The FRHOA is composed of volunteers. We are always looking for interested homeowners to volunteer to help. A good way to become involved is to attend the monthly FRHOA Board meetings which are held the first Thursday of each month except for July. These meetings are held at 7:30 PM in the Eastern Loudoun County Sheriff's office 46620 E. Frederick Drive, Sterling, VA. Currently we are using ZOOM to conduct our meetings in addition to physical presence. The Board has invested in some electronic equipment to improve the quality of our ZOOM experience.

Information on the FRHOA can be accessed anytime by going to our website at www.forest-ridge.org. On our website you can find the minutes of recent meetings, our By-laws, our recent newsletters, a listing of the Board of Directors, all of our important documents, our Architectural Control Committee (ACC) Regulations and our ACC Architectural Change Form. This form is required to be filled out and submitted before you make any changes to the exterior of your home including decks, driveways, fences, shingles, shutters, siding and swimming pools. Come join us. We always welcome additional volunteers. You can make a difference in your community.

Respectfully, Fred Stewart, President FRHOA



Birds Are Linked to Happiness Levels

A new study reveals that greater bird biodiversity brings greater joy to people, according to recent findings from the German Center for Integrative Biodiversity Research. In fact, scientists concluded that conservation is just as important for human well-being as financial security. The study, published in *Ecological Economics*, focused on European residents, and determined that happiness correlated with a specific number of bird species. Visit this link for more information:

<https://www.ecowatch.com/birds-happiness-study-2649413979.html?rebelltitem=2#rebelltitem2>

8 Ideas for Attracting and Feeding Birds in Spring

Attract more species to visit your feeders during migration season. Here are some proven tips for feeding birds in spring from fellow backyard birders.

[https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/5-ideas-to-attract-spring-](https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/5-ideas-to-attract-spring-birds/?_cmp=BNBINSider&_ebid=BNBINSider322021&_mid=402270&ehid=CCF61D339EE18D67FA064D789CD8FF8991E3670F)

[birds/?_cmp=BNBINSider&_ebid=BNBINSider322021&_mid=402270&ehid=CCF61D339EE18D67FA064D789CD8FF8991E3670F](https://www.birdsandblooms.com/birding/attracting-birds/feeding-birds/5-ideas-to-attract-spring-birds/?_cmp=BNBINSider&_ebid=BNBINSider322021&_mid=402270&ehid=CCF61D339EE18D67FA064D789CD8FF8991E3670F)



Forest Ridge Trees

The beauty of our common areas is a major attraction for our neighborhood and increases our property values. Many of us chose this neighborhood because of the pleasing mix of homes and woods. The HOA Board makes a valiant effort to keep the common areas attractive and safe by cutting down unsafe trees we are made aware of. Starting last year, most trees that we cut down are also cut into fireplace length blocks and stacked to encourage homeowners to take the wood for their own use. This has worked well for us in that most of what is cut is also picked up.



Winter went easy on us again this year so, we're hoping that we will not have many damaged or dangerous trees to remove because of that. If this proves to be true, there may be less firewood available than usual. Currently, an easy to get to wood pile is in the common area behind 101 Almay. That wood is only a short distance from South Dickenson Avenue. You will need to cut it to lengths that work for you. If there are other trees down in the wooded areas that you want to cut for firewood, you are welcome to them. Just remember the rules our Homeowner's Association has in place relating to the common areas.

These are found in the ACC Amended Regulations on page 8/14:

- Common grounds are for the enjoyment of the entire FRHOA community and all users are required to clean up after activities.
- No motorized vehicles are allowed on common grounds.
- No dumping of yard waste or trash is allowed on common grounds.
- No cutting or removal or planting of bushes, shrubbery, or trees is allowed on common grounds.

Please contact the HOA Board by email at trees@forest-ridge.org or commonarea@forest-ridge.org if you have any questions or to report a dangerous tree.

While you're taking a look at the trees, please notice and pick up any trash that you find. If we all do just a little, it will help us all to keep the appearance of our neighborhood up. Now is the best time to do that as the foliage isn't developed and the underbrush doesn't block your view. As a reminder, it is a violation to store or discard any foreign objects such as: lumber, yard furniture, bricks, car parts, play sets, etcetera in the common area. If you have done this, please remove them asap. We all thank you for your help on this.

Forest Ridge Common Areas (Lawns)



We have a contract with a landscape company to mow the common area lawns. Their work will start soon and run through the summer. Wave to the workers when you see them.

HOW DOES PLANTING NATIVE TREES HELP THE ENVIRONMENT?

When you plant local trees, you help local wildlife live and thrive. Animals like birds and butterflies have looked to native plants for years for food and shelter. When there aren't enough native trees around, these populations can quickly decline. That's why native trees are important—they help support our local ecosystems.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF PLANTING NATIVE TREES?

There are so many great reasons to plant a native tree. They don't just benefit the wildlife we share space with, but native trees can actually help us, humans, too. Here's how:

- Many insects, birds, and animals depend on native trees for food and shelter. They'll thank you for planting them!
- Living somewhere with blisteringly cold or awfully hot seasons? Native trees are well-adapted to the local climate, which means they'll have the best chance at survival.
- While non-native trees might not do well up against local pests, native trees often don't have as many pest problems.

Tried and True Native Plant Selections for the Mid-Atlantic: <https://mgmv.org/plants/trees/>

Architectural Control Committee

Spring and summer have in past years been busy times for the HOA's Architectural Control Committee (ACC) members. The majority of time spent by the volunteers is completing resale inspections for properties going on the market and reviewing ACC Change Requests for homeowners looking to repair, replace, or update the exteriors of their homes, decks, and fences during the favorable weather conditions of summer.

Our ACC volunteers work hard to quickly review all change requests. Although the HOA Covenants allow us 30 days to review a Change Request, we did most of the requests this past year within about two weeks from the time the ACC began the review of the change request. The ACC reviewed and approved over 30 change requests between April and August 2020. To speed the review process, applications must include all details and supporting documents. Several submitted change applications made in 2020 required additional details regarding styles, colors, locations of exterior changes as well as plats, delaying HOA review. The ACC will disapprove change requests that lack the necessary supporting details and documents.



The ACC will only review ACC Change Requests and supporting documents in PDF format or hard copy submitted to the ACC email box: ACC@forest-ridge.org or the Forest Ridge HOA P.O. Box. 493, Sterling, VA 20164. Electronic PDF submissions shorten the review process, particularly when the ACC needs to contact homeowners for needed clarification or additional details. Please note that no changes can be made prior to ACC approval and that the ACC cannot start its review until all necessary details/samples for the proposed change are submitted to the committee.

With warmer weather around the corner, homeowners should plan to have siding, fences, and decks power washed to keep the neighborhood looking well maintained, particularly as the spring and summer home sale season kicks off. The HOA/ACC does not need to be contacted for general landscaping or tree trimming/cutting within your property. Please avoid plantings that will crowd sidewalks or block line of vision along our streets. Any garden wall, flowerbed, or terrace wall 18 inches or higher needs to be approved by the HOA. As a reminder the common areas are for the enjoyment of all HOA members and should not to be used to dump yard waste from an owners property and not used as an area to discard old Christmas trees.



For those planning to sell their property, please notify HOA's resale coordinator at resale@forest-ridge.org and resale.packets@forest-ridge.org directly or via your realtor. Notification will initiate the resale inspection and printing of the resale packet. The HOA's resale certifications this past year often listed such violations as siding, decks, and fences with mildew/algae, decks and fences with rotted boards, cracked and crumbling asphalt driveways, and the need to repaint door and window frames, as well as fascia boards where the paint has peeled off. So those looking to put their property on the market, please plan ahead to tackle anything that would detract from the look of the exterior of the structure to ensure a "clean" resale certification. The ACC will only inspect a property once so any violations found during inspection will be listed on the resale certification for the buyer. All violations found during a home resale inspection that are not remedied by the closing date for the property convey to the new owner(s) and are required to be corrected within 30 days of taking ownership.



NEED A NEW WATER HEATER? WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

When you buy a hot water heater, there are several factors to consider. Fuel, size, energy efficiency and cost are all important to consider when purchasing a new unit. Many newer models are designed to save you money in the long term, but cost much more at purchase. You have to gauge what you're in the market for, as well as what your house has space for.

The first thing to determine with your water heater options is what kind of fuel your new heater will use, which will largely depend on how your home is powered. Conventional heaters are fueled by electricity or gas power, which are still the most common fuel sources. However, you could also use natural gas, geothermal energy or solar power to run your water heater. But the easiest option is a conventional power source, such as electricity, gas or propane.



Second, you want to determine what type of heater you're buying, regardless of how it's powered. Conventional heaters store water in a tank, allowing hot water on demand. Tankless systems don't store water ahead of time, but heat the water when it's needed. Here's a helpful infographic that presents the strengths and weaknesses of both types:

<https://www.rotorooter.com/plumbing-basics/plumbing-infographics/hot-water-heaters-compared/>

One thing to remember when buying your new water heater is capacity. Make sure to take measurements of the space you plan to install your new water heater. Keep the size of your current unit in mind when shopping.

These aren't all of the factors you'll have to consider, but fuel, type and capacity are the most important ones when buying a new water heater. Once you determine which is best for you, then you can begin to have the conversation about budget, cost and warranty.

Let Them Sniff

Why is it important to let your dog sniff on walk?

- Dogs "see" the world through their noses
- Slow scent/sniffy walks let your dog absorb and process all the scents
- Gives you insights into their behaviours
- Mentally and physically stimulating
- Decreases their heart rate
- Decreases their stress levels
- Improves behaviour
- It's their walk not yours



 W.F.A.



A Community That Cares

Sterling is a wonderful place to live precisely because of its generous & diverse people. We at the Sterling Foundation are dedicated to doing all we can to support our neighbors & our community.

THE STERLING FOUNDATION

[\(https://www.sterlingfoundation.org/\)](https://www.sterlingfoundation.org/)

Founded in June of 1989, the Sterling Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit dedicated to the town and citizens of Sterling, Virginia. For 30 years it has worked with a network of volunteers to beautify the surroundings of Sterling, engage with neighbors, and foster a welcoming and inclusive community.

The foundation began with a singular goal: to care for, clean, and maintain the hometown main street, Sterling Boulevard. That mission continues to this day, 30 years later. But that mission has also grown. They now maintain the Helen Casey Memorial Butterfly Garden, are developing the Linek Garden, and they regularly work with an amazing network of volunteers to clean and maintain our various waterways.

Just a single yearly donation as low as \$20 can have a huge impact on your hometown community! By becoming a member of the Sterling Foundation, every cent of your donation goes directly toward our many initiatives to maintain our environment and strengthen our community. <https://www.sterlingfoundation.org/membership/>

Why You Should Be Cleaning Your Grill With An Onion

Now that grilling season is upon us, it is time to take stock. While most of us would like to believe that we are the supreme grill master, there's always improvements that can be made. There are few things that are more annoying than scrubbing the grill once all of the cooking has been done. The process is a messy one and we all know how labor intensive it can be.



Fortunately, there is a better way. You are probably tired of using the smelly grill cleaners that are found in most stores and you may be sick of spending sizable amounts of time cleaning the grill after using it. We are also willing to bet that you were unaware that the antidote to these concerns has been lurking inside of your own kitchen this whole time.

This alternative is non-toxic and inexpensive. The Brillo pads can stay under the sink because they are no match for the awesome power of the onion. All you need to do is chop an onion in half and the rest of the process is shockingly easy. Take the onion and face it downward on the grill. This will allow it to clean the heated grate far more quickly than you ever have in the past.

You'll want to make sure that the grill is nice and hot before you start trying to remove any food that has dried up on it. As soon as this step is complete, take another onion and stick it on the end of your longest grilling fork. Those that require a bit more scrubbing power can spray the grates of the grill down first with white vinegar and lemon juice.

In general, onions are an underrated cleaning tool because they are rich in natural antibacterial properties. Are you the sort of person who likes to cook with charcoal when you are grilling outside? If so, you can toss the onions directly into the coals whenever you are finished. This allows you to add some much-needed flavor to whatever you have decided to whip up.

This hack is definitely a game changer and we urge you to share it with all of the would be grill masters in your life. They are sure to appreciate the help. After all, no one likes cleaning a grill!

Forest Ridge Homeowners Association
PO Box 493
Sterling, VA 20164-0493



MEETING INFORMATION

Meetings are held at **Eastern Loudoun Sheriff's Station**
ACC Meetings: First Thursday of every month @ 7:00 PM
Board Meetings: First Thursday of every month @ 7:30 PM
NO MEETING IN JULY
 (Meeting dates, locations and times are subject to change.)
 All homeowners are invited to attend.

"Every day is a renewal, every morning the daily miracle. This joy you feel is life." -- Gertrude Stein

Forest Ridge Neighborhood Contact Information

FOREST RIDGE HOMEOWNER'S ASSOC. CONTACTS			IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS			
info@forest-ridge.org		General Info			FAIRFAX COUNTY	LOUDOUN COUNTY
trees@forest-ridge.org		Trees and Common Areas	Report an Emergency	Emergency	911	911
www.forest-ridge.org		Homeowners Association's Website	Local Law Enforcement	Non-Emergency	(703) 691-2131	(703) 777-1021
acc@forest-ridge.org		Architectural Control Committee (ACC) Email	To Report Traffic Violations	Traffic Division	(703) 691-2131	(703) 777-0408
news@forest-ridge.org		Newsletter Submissions	To Report Parking Violations and Expired Decals		(703) 691-2131	(703) 777-0408
resale@forest-ridge.org		Resale Packets	To Report an Overcrowding Housing Situation	Zoning Enforcement	(703) 324-1300	(703) 737-8190
assessments@forest-ridge.org		Annual Assessment questions	To Report Noise Complaints		(703) 691-2131	Sheriff Non-Emergency (703) 777-1021
info@forest-ridge.org		Subscribe to the FRHOA e-mail distribution list	To Report EPA Violations and Non-Emergency Fire Hazards	Fire Marshal	(703) 246-4800	(703) 737-8600
			To Report Sidewalks/Roads in Need of Repair	Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Transportation	(703) 383-VDOT (8368)	

Newsletter Information

Business Advertisements:
 Full Page - \$100
 Half Page - \$50
 Quarter Page - \$25
 Business Card - \$15

Homeowner FOR SALE classifieds are free. The newsletter is distributed to all owners within the Forest Ridge development. The FRHOA Board reserves the right to reject any ad, article, or classified.

Editor: Juanita Easton

The FRHOA Newsletter is published twice a year; emailed to residents around April 1st and printed/mailed out around September 1st. **To place an ad, submit an article or comment, send an email to news@forest-ridge.org.**