

# Rose Hill Rambler

MAY 2026

A quarterly newsletter for Rose Hill, Sunny Ridge Estates and Guilford neighborhoods from the Rose Hill Civic Association

## RHCA Members Set to Elect New Officers

The Rose Hill Civic Association will meet Tuesday May 26 at 7 p.m. in John Marshall Library to elect new officers and consider changes to the association's constitution and bylaws.

Current nominees are Wes Hanney for president, Katya Derzon for vice president and Ken Marr for treasurer. No one has yet been nominated for secretary. Anyone interested in serving as secretary, or any other position, will have the opportunity to be nominated at the meeting prior to a vote by members in good standing.

In addition to these four officers, RHCA members will be asked to vote on adding two additional officeholders. One is editor of the Rose Hill Rambler and the other is webmaster. Current Rambler editor Daniel Bearth and webmaster Brian Donohue have agreed to stand as nominees for the new positions.

All six nominees would serve as members of the RHCA board of directors and serve for one year. Anyone who has paid dues is eligible to vote.

Current president Carl Sell and Vice President Rob Thomson have each decided not to seek re-election. Sell has served as president for many years and has experienced some health issues recently. He is 89 years old. Thomson's parents were one of the original homeowners in Rose Hill in the 1950s.

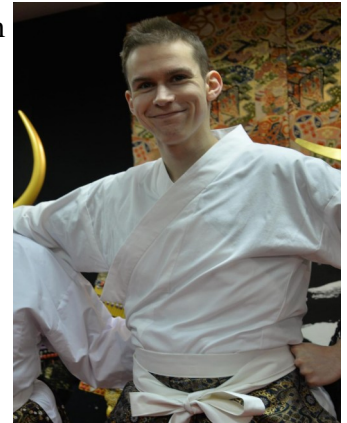
Hanney, 39, a software engineer who bought a

home on Willowood Lane in 2022, said he wants to extend the reach of the association and make it easier for residents to participate in decision making. "I'll also be working to strengthen public transit," he said, adding that he wants to make the area more walkable and the streets safer.

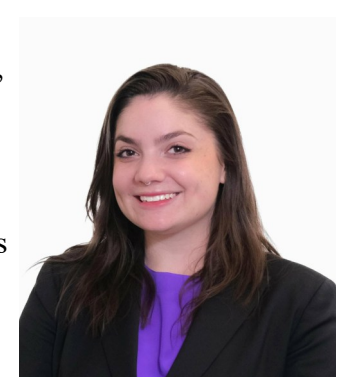
Derzon, 31, has lived in Northern Virginia since she was 5 years old and purchased a home on Leewood Drive in March 2023.

"I'm a paralegal by trade," she said, "but a chaos gardener, safety enthusiast, ecologist and crafter at heart."

Derzon said she also wants to make the RHCA more accessible and attractive to the community, and will place special emphasis on safety, public transit/services, beautification and conservation. (Continued on page 2)



Wes Hanney



Katya Derzon

## Rose Hill Civic Association

**JOIN US.** Annual dues: \$10. Mail: Box 10891, Alexandria, Va. 22310. Website: myrosehill.com. Facebook: Rose Hill Farm

**COME TOGETHER.** Meeting: May 26 at 7 p.m. in John Marshall Library.

**VOLUNTEER.** Find out how you can help your neighbors, enhance traffic safety, monitor zoning and land use issues, support police, fire and emergency medical personnel, organize community gatherings, contribute to cleanup and beautification projects, distribute copies of the Rambler and more.

# Residents Press for Crosswalk Safety Improvements

By Daniel Bearth

Rose Hill residents are making a new appeal to Fairfax County officials to fund crosswalk improvements on Franconia Road at Mark Twain Middle School where at least three incidents of pedestrians being struck have occurred in recent years.

In a letter to Franconia District Supervisor Rodney Lusk, AnnMarie McBride expressed frustration that none of the money set aside by the County's Board of Supervisors for pedestrian and bike improvements has been allocated to improvements at Mark Twain.

For the past three years, McBride has headed up a special committee called Rose Hill for Safe Streets to push for the installation of traffic lights in the crosswalk, stricter traffic enforcement, including the use of speed cameras and traffic calming measures, and better signage to control the flow of traffic on Franconia Road.

In 2024, volunteers documented traffic safety concerns, including drivers ignoring blinking warning lights to slow down, poor sight lines due to the curvature of the road and congestion caused



by vehicles stopping in front of homes and on nearby residential streets to drop off and pick up students.

In recent weeks, workers from the Virginia Department of Transportation were seen applying markings to road surfaces near the school, but county officials say they don't think the markings are related to potential crosswalk improvements.

Aaron Campbell, deputy chief of staff for Supervisor Lusk, said the intersection of Craft Road at Franconia Road is one of 15 projects in the Franconia District competing for \$25 million in current funding for pedestrian and bike improvements in Fairfax County.

In its description of the project, Campbell noted, the existing crosswalk at Mark Twain M.S. would be improved "by upgrading pedestrian lighting and potentially constructing curb extensions or a pedestrian refuge island."

"This is a preliminary concept and is subject to change," Campbell explained. "Should the project be selected for funding, additional traffic engineering analysis would be conducted and feedback from the community would be sought before final design." A decision on funding is expected this summer.

## RHCA Members Slated to Vote on New Officers at Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Marr, 49, a physicist who said he studies "wind in the upper atmosphere, orbital debris and micrometeor impacts on the moon," describes himself as a transplant from California by way of the Boston area. He has been treasurer since 2024.

"I enjoy puzzles, board games and making music," Marr noted. "I would like to see more community engagement and social activities for our residents."

Bearth, 73, is a retired print journalist and caregiver for his wife Ingrid and step-daughter Michelle. He has been editor of the Rambler since 2019 and serves as email coordinator for the association.



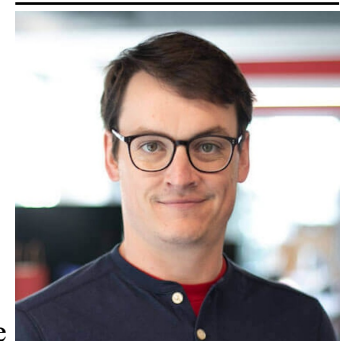
Daniel Bearth

Donohue, 38, is cybersecurity communications specialist and dad with two kids attending Rose Hill Elementary. He took over management of the RHCA website in 2023. A former competitive swimmer, Donohue volunteers with the Highland Park Hurricanes swim team and would like to see expanded recreational opportunities for residents, along with "improved restaurant, retail and walkability in Rose Hill and surrounding areas."

If you are a RHCA member and cannot attend the meeting in person, you are welcome to send a message with your vote via email to Daniel Bearth at [idmbearth@aol.com](mailto:idmbearth@aol.com).



Ken Marr



Brian Donohue

## Rebuilding Entrance Sign: Here's Where Things Stand

[Editor's Note: A car crash in March 2024 severely damaged the community entrance sign (at right). Since then, RHCA officers have attempted to rebuild, replace or remove remnants of the sign. Wes Hanney currently serves as the point person in the process.]

By Wes Hanney

First, thank you all for your patience; getting to this point has taken real effort and we appreciate your continued support.

The Rose Hill Civic Association has worked with the Virginia Department of Transportation to nail down clear requirements for replacing our sign, and we're confident we can install a new one in the same location. We've identified a sign manufacturer capable of producing VDOT-compliant plans and carrying out the full project from design through installation and we're actively coordinating with them now. Design work is currently underway, which will finalize the total cost.

Our current rough estimate is approximately \$60,000 for a complete installation (design, demolition, construction and install). So far, we've raised



about \$14,000 — including a generous commitment of \$10,000 from a RHCA member and roughly \$4,000 in other donations from community residents. We still have a ways to go and every contribution counts.

If you'd like to help, whether through a financial donation, demolition or construction or connecting us with local business leaders, please reach out at [myrosehill.com/contact](http://myrosehill.com/contact). Thank you for your support.

## Franconia Nights Concerts Bring Music to the People

Free concerts are always a highlight of the summer and on Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. at the Leonadus K. Plenty Amphitheater in Franconia Park, here's what is coming:

July 1: Rock Steady Project (R&B/Go-Go), July 8: Pablo Perez/Rene Ibanez and Cubano Groove (Salsa/Latin Jazz), July 15: Texas Chainsaw Horns (Rock/Soul), July 22: Natyabhoomi School of Dance (Indian Dance/Music), July 29: The Nighthawks (Blues), Aug. 5: The Pietasters (Ska), Aug. 12: Junkyard Band (Go-Go), Aug. 19: Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lillie (Acoustic/Rock).




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# Fraternity Members Volunteer Time to Beautify Trails

In January Franconia Rec Center welcomed The Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity from George Mason University. They worked with the trail team to clear the Blue trail and paint hash marks on trees.

The Blue trail is the closest trail to Rose Hill and can be accessed from Telegraph Road across from Splitrock Rd. or from behind the carousel. Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity has truly become a valued partner to our trail team with members signing up for our monthly trail beautification activities and coming out to paint our amphitheater before the summer concert series Franconia Nights begin in July!

Trail beautification is an amazing way to get to know Franconia Rec Center, the park in your back yard. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday monthly at 9 AM and are finished before noon. If you would like to learn more about the Trail Beautification team or any other volunteer opportunities reach out to Julie Margolis, volunteer coordinator, at [Julie.margolis@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Julie.margolis@fairfaxcounty.gov)

Look for other upcoming activities including New Pilates Reformer Classes and registration for our 2026-27 preschool class! Our Kids Play Preschool at Franconia Rec Center is for children between 2.5 and 4 years of age and provides activities that focus on art, science, outdoor play, music and circle time. Classes are half-day and range from two to five days a week.



## Amanda's Cleaning

I am Amanda Florian and I want to offer my services to the residents of Rose Hill.

It would be a pleasure to help you keep your home clean and disinfected. As a precaution, we continue to use masks and disinfectant products to help avoid the spread of Covid-19.

As always, I don't charge more for pets. We offer recurring cleanings, as well as one-time deep cleaning and cleaning for move-ins and move-outs.

I have been cleaning houses for 20 years and have references available. I have the best prices in the area.

**Call or text me for a free estimate.**

**571-217-3142**



# Childcare Center Is Now Open in Rose Hill Plaza

By Cecilia Blancas

My name is Cecilia and I am the owner of Little Dreams Daycare. I have over 18 years of experience working with children. I began my career as a lead teacher in 2008 and have worked in different childcare centers in Alexandria, Va.

In 2017, I started my own home daycare, which allowed me to build strong relationships with families and provide more personalized care. Over time, demand from families — especially those looking for care for infants — continued to grow and in 2024, I decided it was the right moment to take the next step.

Opening at Rose Hill Plaza has been a meaningful but challenging journey. The process required meeting county regulations and completing multiple inspections to ensure the space was safe and fully prepared for children. It was a challenge, but I'm proud to say that I was able to successfully open the center this April.

My goal has always been to create a safe, loving and structured environment where children feel happy, supported and at home. We serve children from infants to early preschool age with both full- and part-time care. Our center focuses on play-based learning with activities that promote language development, social skills, creativity and school readiness.

I am very excited to be part of the Rose Hill community and to support families with quality childcare.



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# 'It Was a Beautiful Day to Work to Spruce Up the Entrance Sign'

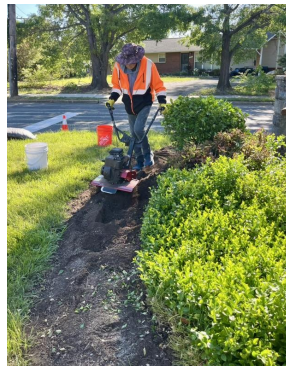
Robin Dodson and a group of volunteers showed up on Saturday May 16 to plant flowers, pull weeds and cut grass in and around the base of the former Rose Hill community entrance sign on Rose Hill Drive at Franconia Road.

Joining the clean up crew was Robin's husband David and their daughter Jennifer Dodson, Cathy Riddick, Margie Alston, Cindy Schmidlein, Ulysses Guerrero and the Palmer family (Kyra, Richy and Jordan). Carl Sell and Phillip Campos supplied bagged mulch and lawn



debris paper bags.

"I am truly grateful and thankful to the 7 amazing residents that showed up to help with today's cleanup," Robin said afterwards. "It was a beautiful day to work to spruce up the entrance sign."  
— Daniel Bearth




Photos by Jennifer Dodson

## Community Notes

**Franconia Museum** is seeking volunteers to put artifacts on display in its new location inside the new Franconia District Government Center at 7130 Silver Lake Blvd., suite 103, Alexandria, Va. 22315. If you can help, contact Don Hakenson at [dhakenson@verizon.net](mailto:dhakenson@verizon.net) or call 703-971-4984 (home) or 703-785-5294 (cellphone), or contact the museum via email at [franconiamuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:franconiamuseum@yahoo.com), or call 703-489-6408. You can also support the museum by becoming a member for \$25 per year.



**Davie Alexander**, a long-time resident on Craft Road in the Sunny Ridge Estates subdivision, passed away April 4 at Brightview Senior Living on Telegraph Road. Davie was married to Joe Alexander who represented Franconia District and Rose Hill on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for 32 years. He died in 2020.



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## Homes For Sale (May 2026)

| Status  | Address                | Bedrooms | Price       | Finished Sq. Ft. | Subdivision         |
|---------|------------------------|----------|-------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ACTIVE  | 6515 Carriage Drive    | 4        | \$750,000   | 1,107            | Rose Hill Park      |
| ACTIVE  | 4406 Roundhill Road    | 4        | \$849,950   | 3,615            | Rose Hill Farms     |
| ACTIVE  | 6500 Haystack Road     | 4        | \$730,000   | 2,007            | Rose Hill Park      |
| PENDING | 6219 Thornwood Drive   | 4        | \$784,900   | 2,664            | Hawthorne Manor     |
| PENDING | 6211 Guilford Drive    | 4        | \$1,047,421 | 2,964            | Guilford            |
| PENDING | 6107 Craft Road        | 3        | \$649,900   | 2,178            | Sunny Ridge Estates |
| PENDING | 4607 Mayor Place       | 4        | \$650,000   | 1,660            | Rose Hill Park      |
| PENDING | 5939 Craft Road        | 4        | \$675,000   | 1,635            | Rose Hill Manor     |
| CLOSED  | 4507 Tipton Lane       | 5        | \$675,000   | 1,132            | Sunny Ridge Estates |
| CLOSED  | 6302 Saddle Tree Drive | 4        | \$725,000   | 1,952            | Rose Hill Farms     |
| CLOSED  | 6408 Maryview Street   | 3        | \$800,000   | 2,672            | Maryview            |
| CLOSED  | 6511 Carriage Drive    | 4        | \$642,000   | 1,714            | Rose Hill Park      |
| CLOSED  | 4603 Picot Road        | 4        | \$635,000   | 1,009            | Sunny Ridge Estates |
| CLOSED  | 6208 Guilford Drive    | 6        | \$1,350,000 | 4,843            | Guilford            |
| CLOSED  | 6019 Rose Hill Drive   | 3        | \$655,000   | 1,092            | Rose Hill Farms     |

Source: Tom & Cindy and Associates

## Apartments For Rent (May 2026)

| Status | Address                 | Bedrooms | Price             | Finished Sq. Ft. | Subdivision     |
|--------|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| ACTIVE | 6242-1A Rose Hill Drive | 1        | \$2,099-2,124/mo. | 690              | Rose Hill Farms |
| ACTIVE | 6248-1A Rose Hill Drive | 1        | \$1,974-1,999/mo. | 690              | Rose Hill Farms |
| ACTIVE | 6250-3B Rose Hill Drive | 2        | \$2,365-2,390/mo. | 960              | Rose Hill Farms |
| ACTIVE | 6256-3B Rose Hill Drive | 2        | \$2,290-2,315/mo. | 960              | Rose Hill Farms |
| ACTIVE | 6244-3A Rose Hill Drive | 2        | \$2,115-2,140/mo. | 960              | Rose Hill Farms |

Source: Vanessa Marroquin, property manager, Rose Hill Apartments

**Members of the Rose Hill Civic Association or residents who provide services in kind qualify for a FREE listing in the business directory.**

### Photography

**Tisara Photography.** 703.625.2331. Specializing in family and business portraits and life events, Tisara Photography in Old Town Alexandria is now run by Nina Tisara's son, Steven Halperson. Nina lives on Hayfield Place.

### Heating and Air Conditioning

**Dove Heating and Air Conditioning.** We service and install heat pumps, air conditioners, furnaces, hot water heaters, and humidifiers. David and Linda Nichols, 703.971.8897. The Nichols have been in business for 38 years and have lived in Rose Hill for 49 years.

### Home-based Business

**Stampin' Up!** is a company specializing in decorative stamps for greeting cards, craft projects and memory keeping. The products are available for purchase through independent distributors. My name is Tracy and I'm a Stampin' Up demonstrator. Contact me at stampin13@yahoo.com.

### Lady's Clothing

Large sizes, mostly 1x, 2x, and a few 3x. Includes tops, pants, capris, and bathing suits. Quality brands. My loss is someone's gain. Contact Sandy Benarick, 703.229.2210, at 6270 Rose Hill Drive. Email: majo39@verizon.net

### Party Planning

**S&J Celebrations** specializes in balloon arches and kids' birthday parties. We have packages available based on what you are looking for. Follow us on Instagram @sandjcelebrations or call 703.688.2740. Email: sandjcelebrations@gmail.com

### Ministry to Coaches and Athletes

Steven Able represents the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in the Greater Fairfax South area, working with coaches and athletes at seven public high schools, including Edison. Email: sable@fca.org

### Education/Child Care

**Freedom Learning Center** provides educational support to families. We offer a preschool program, full-day to homeschoolers, homeschool enrichment classes and tutoring. In addition, we provide after school care to students in the Bush Hill community. Contact Heather Able at freedomlearningcenter7@gmail.com or go online to find more information at [freedomlearningcenter.org](http://freedomlearningcenter.org).

### Mental and Behavior Health Therapy

**Crescent Counseling Center** is a small woman-owned business that offers a variety of services such as individual and couples/family counseling, behavioral modification, parent coaching and consultation. We believe that compassionate care, high team morale and a calm environment are not only helpful to the therapeutic process, but absolutely essential. Established in West Springfield in April 2021 and now located off Franconia Road at 6400 Grovedale Drive, suite 200, in Alexandria. Contact Jessica Taylor online at [crescentcounselingva.com](http://crescentcounselingva.com) or call 571-414-9645.



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### RHCA Officers

**President:** Carl Sell, 703.971.4716, [sellcarl@aol.com](mailto:sellcarl@aol.com)

**Vice President:** Rob Thomson, 703.597.6869, [r6b2o@aol.com](mailto:r6b2o@aol.com)

**Secretary:** Vacant

**Treasurer:** Ken Marr, [apechow@gmail.com](mailto:apechow@gmail.com)

**Editor, *The Rambler*:** Daniel Bearth, 703.991.3723, [idmbearth@aol.com](mailto:idmbearth@aol.com)

**Webmaster:** Brian Donohue, [brianconohue@gmail.com](mailto:brianconohue@gmail.com)

**Email Coordinator:** Vacant

### Rose Hill Civic Association

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Rates are per issue with payment due prior to publication.

Advertising in The Rambler is an excellent way to reach 1,000+ homes in our community. In addition, the ads are posted on our website, www.myRoseHill.com, for the world to see.

Listing in the business directory is free to members of the Rose Hill Civic Association and residents who own their own business.

*The Rose Hill Rambler is published 4 times a year in February, May, August and November*

Anyone interested in placing an ad can send it via email to Daniel Bearth at idmbearth@aol.com in tiff or jpeg format. Make payments to the Rose Hill Civic Association, Box 10891, Alexandria, VA 22310.

# Proposed Changes to RHCA Constitution and Bylaws

In addition to electing new officers, members of the Rose Hill Civic Association will be asked to consider changes to the constitution and bylaws at its next meeting Tuesday, May 26, at 7 p.m. at John Marshall Library. Here are some of the proposed changes:

## Constitution

**Article III-Area.** Add Sunny Ridge Estates and Guilford to Rose

Hill as area served by RHCA.

**Article VI-Organization.** Add Rambler Editor and Webmaster to elected officers and board of directors.

## Bylaws

**Article I-Membership.** Delete requirement of membership card.

**Article II-Dues.** Increase annual membership from \$10 to \$20.

**Article III-Meetings.** The vice president shall maintain updated email list to inform residents of upcoming meetings and business.

The secretary shall provide copies of all meeting reports to the president and Rambler editor and email notices of upcoming meetings.

**Article VIII-Representation on County Civic Federation.** Make representation optional.

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## Rose Hill Civic Association (members as of May 2026)

### Apple Tree Drive

Julia Calhoun

### Bernard Avenue

Tom & Julie Paradis, Mark Allen & Ana Torres-Davis

### Blossom Lane

Barbara Digman

### Climbhill Road

David & Nicole White, Carolyn Slenska

### Cottonwood Drive

Marlene Hass Smith, Luis Castro, Ian MacIntire, Carl Sell Jr., Robert Thomson

### Craft Road

Maron & Marian Selby, Kyle Schlarman

### Dew Grass Drive

Nina Weber

### Dove Drive

Cathy Riddick

### Driftwood Drive

Arlene Shapiro, Bruce Jones, Carolyn Erickson, Rebecca & David Chiang

### Eastchester Circle

Jeannette Bottomly, Matthew & Cynthia Johnson-Dailey

### Eaton Place

Christin Berry, Cindy Schmittlein, Lew Moore, David & Johanna Wheeler, Catherine Long

### Hayfield Place

Kayla Hinrichs

### Haystack Road

Mark & Lorraine Broxterman

### Leewood Drive

Yancey & Patricia Hull, Robert & Shirley Herr, Kowalik Family, Katya Derzon, Michael Smith & Ratri Friend, Jesse Burdick

### Lillian Drive

Donald & Carol Hakenson

### Maryview Street

Denise Smith

### May Boulevard

Zoe-Ann Freitag

### Mission Court

Cheri Schipper

### Rose Hill Court

Ronja Roberts

### Rose Hill Drive

B.T. Nguyen, Daniel & Ingrid Bearth, Thomas & Alice Mangum. Mai & Thanh Luu, Sandra Benarick, Rachel

Edwards, Gene & Lisa Sible, Ken Marr

### Roundhill Road

Steve & Holly Dougherty, Charbel Antoun, Sandra Worley

### Rye Court

Brian Wood

### Silo Road

Linda Walton, John Cashmire

### Squire Lane

Arline Moore, Mary Hertling, Donna Smith

### Telegraph Road

Mimi Minarik, Pamela Mckinley

### Thornwood Drive

Marge McConnell, Vereen Family, Elizabeth Biddle

### Treetop Lane

Lori Scheibe, Ann Schappi

### Wayside Place

Victor Grafton

### Willowood Lane

Raul Costillo, Wes Haney, William & Janelle Parker, Frank & Patricia Jencks

### Winston Place

Brenda Edleson

(Continued on next page)

## Talking About Trees with Jim McGlone, ISA Certified Arborist



*Jim McGlone welcomes your questions and comments about trees and plants. Contact him via email at: dofmcglone@gmail.com*

Spring is sprung, but winter may still be with us. Compared with recent winters, this past one was particularly brutal, especially for evergreens. There are several ways that winter can damage trees.

Frost cracks can occur when temperatures drop and the wood contracts. Because of the structure of the wood in the tree, trees contract more around the circumference than across the diameter, so the rings split resulting in a vertical crack. When temperatures drop suddenly the colder outer rings will contract more than the warmer inner rings. Wood also contracts more as it dries out, so frost cracks typically appear on the drier south and west sides of the tree. Healthy trees will heal from these wounds and sometimes leave a long lump up the side of the tree.

Frost burn occurs in evergreens when air temperatures rise while the ground is frozen. With warmer air temperatures, evergreens will try to photosynthesize, which uses water. If the ground is still frozen, water from the roots is not available and the plant will use up the water in the foliage, causing the foliage to dry up and die. The threat to the plant depends on the extent of the burn. Again, this injury typically occurs on the warmer south or west sides of the plant. The only thing you can do is prune out the dead foliage. With minor damage, broad leaf evergreens like holly or azaleas will quickly fill the damage site with new sprouts. Conifers do not sprout the same way and take a long time to recover their shape.

Road salt is a problem for most plants. Water moves from areas of low concentrations of dissolved chemicals to areas of higher concentrations. Normally, plant roots are areas of higher concentration than the soil, so water moves from the soil into roots. But road salt can flip this and cause roots to dry out. When salty snow melt or slush is splashed on evergreens it can burn the leaves by drying them out. Prune out the dead foliage and flush soil where road salt has accumulated, particularly around trees and shrubs. DO NOT fertilize. Many fertilizers are nutrient salts and can make the problem worse.

Freezing temperatures can kill small woody parts of trees. One issue with plants in pots, planters and raised beds is that soil around the roots easily freezes and damages the roots. Although "snowcrete" was miserable to deal with, it may have spared tree roots from frost damage. Snow and ice are good insulators, so the snowcrete may have kept the soil warmer during the deep cold we had in the weeks after the storm. I'll admit, I didn't think of this benefit while I was chopping my way out of my driveway.



Frost crack rib on an aspen.

(Continued from previous page)

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# Gardening in Rose Hill With Peggy Riccio, Virginia Horticulturist

This summer, add a pop of color by filling containers with these drought tolerant, flowering plants. Because containers dry out quicker than garden beds, using drought tolerant plants means you do not have to water as often. These full sun plants will bloom all summer long, unfazed by our heat and humidity.

If you like snapdragons, try planting angelonia, which has a similar upright growth habit but loves the heat and humidity. Angelonia is about a foot tall with spikes of flowers, but the florets are more open faced than the two-lipped snapdragons. This plant does not need to be deadheaded and could be used in fresh floral arrangements.

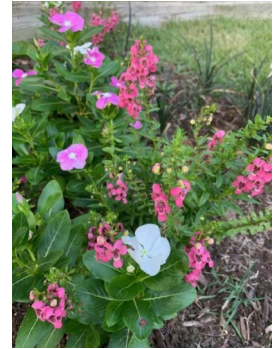
Gomphrena has round clover-like flowers in pink, purple, red, or white. Also, about a foot tall, gomphrena flowers will bloom from summer to fall. The flowers will retain their shape and color after you cut them making them perfect for dried flower arrangements. Again, no need to deadhead.

You may think marigolds are common, but they are workhorses. Height varies from 6 inches to 2 feet tall so try the smaller ones like French marigolds in containers. Marigolds should be deadheaded but you can save the seed for next year. Like marigolds, zinnias are overlooked as container plants but there are short varieties such as Thumbelina at 4-6 inches tall, the Profusion and Zahara series, and Persian Carpet or *Zinnia haageana* (easy to grow and save seed). Zinnias attract butterflies, bees, and pollinators. They should be deadheaded but they can be cut for floral arrangements.

Commonly used as a groundcover, vinca can be grown in a container and does not need to be deadheaded. The five-petaled flowers are available in every color but blue with a contrasting "eye". Also used in the ground but could work in a container is the Egyptian star flower or penta. This looks like a small shrub but will work as a thriller in a large container. The plants are covered in clusters of small, five-petaled, star-shaped flowers in pink, yellow, purple, or white.



Geranium



Angelonia



Gomphrena

And then there is your old-fashioned geranium or pelargonium. You would be surprised by how drought tolerant this plant is, plus it blooms all summer long. It does have to be deadheaded but it is easy to snip off the flowering stems. Geraniums do well in both formal and informal settings from terra cotta containers to Greek urns to whisky barrels.

Try these colorful annuals this summer, they should be easy to find at the local garden centers.

### ROSE HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please fill out this form and mail, along with your check, to:  
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EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed is a check for: \$10 Annual Membership

\$\_\_\_\_ Donation for replacement and upkeep of Rose Hill entrance sign. \$\_\_\_\_ Donation for RHCA General Fund.

# How I Turned My Backyard into a Wildlife Sanctuary

By Lydia Lawless

Thank you, Rambler readers, for your thoughtful and supportive response to my previous article about my effort to produce honey in the backyard of my home on Roundhill Road. In that essay, I shared that Aster Waves was inspired, in part, by my passion for pollinator conservation. Now, I would like to describe how, at the same time, my property came to be certified as a wildlife sanctuary.

During the 'COVID' summer of 2021, I decided to plant an 8'x8' pollinator garden with the goal of attracting hummingbirds, adorable Carolina wrens, striking goldfinches, and any kind of butterfly.

Consequently, I became an ambassador for the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance (formerly the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia) and I quickly learned how our suburban landscape could become a resource for maintaining biodiversity.

Douglas Tallamy, an entomologist and ecologist at the University of Delaware, is often credited with starting (or at least encouraging) this idea with his book, *Bringing Nature Home*, and NVBA offers a certification program to support those who want to bring natural landscaping to their yards.

The certification process has several key steps:

First, there is a consulting visit by an NVBA ambassador. This typically entails a one-hour property tour in which the ambassador seeks to understand your goals and challenges; a written report with recommendations follows. I, or another ambassador from our immediate area, typically manage visits in our neighborhood since we have experience with the local soil and microclimate. (This is a free service.)

Secondly, there is a need to sight and identify at least 10 sanctuary species on the property. These include goldfinches, skinks, and fireflies among many others. These are species that need more intentional habitat support than common suburban wildlife, like robins and cardinals. Fireflies, for example, require leaf litter to complete their life cycles.

Once an NVBA ambassador certifies that enough habitat elements (e.g., heated water sources, native trees and shrubs, rain barrels) are in place and the sanctuary keeper commits to eco-friendly best practices, such as removing invasives, avoiding broad spectrum mosquito spraying which harms all pollinators, and responsibly managing water runoff, a formal application for certification can be submitted.

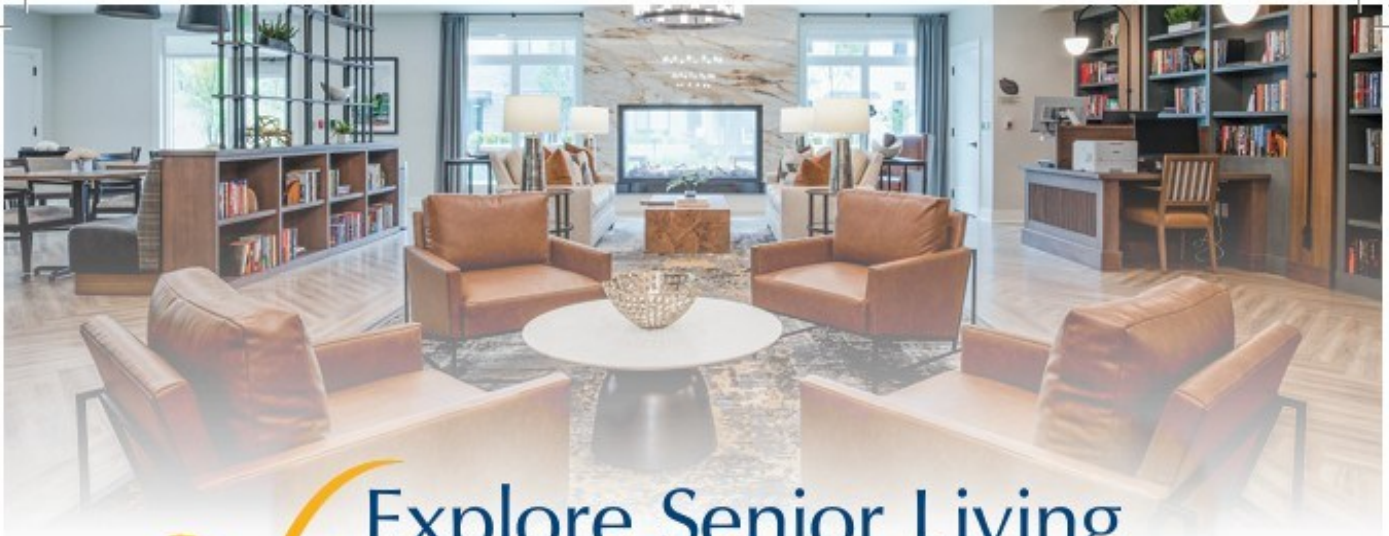
Creating a sanctuary returns part of our suburban landscape to the wild creatures who share our community. In addition, spending more time in nature has been found to promote wellbeing by calming the nervous system. Sanctuary spaces also provide a home for parasitic insects that naturally control pests without chemical applications which can harm wildlife and our domestic pets.

My experience as an ambassador is like my experience as an urban farmer. Both have encouraged me to learn and build skills, and both have made life more interesting through new friends and connections.

For more information about creating a wildlife sanctuary on your property, contact the Northern Virginia Bird Alliance at [nvbirdalliance.org](http://nvbirdalliance.org) or email me at [asterwavesurbanfarm@gmail.com](mailto:asterwavesurbanfarm@gmail.com).



*Lydia Lawless PhD is the founder of Aster Waves and lives on Roundhill Road.*



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## Ask a Veterinarian By Casandra Fowler DVM

**Q. Heart disease can affect pets as well as humans. What should pet owners watch for?**

Heart disease is fairly common in both dogs and cats and often develops quietly. Dogs frequently develop leaky heart valves or heart muscle disease, while cats are more prone to thickening of the heart muscle.

Early on, many pets show no obvious signs at home. As disease progresses, pet owners may notice coughing (especially in dogs), decreased energy, faster or more labored breathing, or reduced interest in activity. Cats tend to be subtle, so even small changes in stamina, increased respiratory effort at rest, or secluding themselves more can be important.

Veterinarians often first identify heart disease during routine exams by hearing a heart murmur or abnormal rhythm. Bloodwork and more extensive testing by a veterinary cardiologist can help determine how serious the issue is. Some pets simply need monitoring, while others benefit from medication and lifestyle adjustments. Early detection allows for better planning and, in many cases, a good quality of life.

Regular wellness exams and year-round heartworm prevention for both dogs and cats are simple but meaningful ways to protect your pet's heart.



*Casandra Fowler is the owner of Harmony Animal Hospital at The Shops at Telegraph Village.*

## Seen on the Street

John Lytle is once again commemorating Memorial Day on May 25 by placing hundreds of American flags along Rose Hill Drive, Bee St., Willowood Lane and Maryview Street. Lytle, a former Marine, owns a real estate business

that caters to military personnel. He started the practice of planting flags as a way to honor all who have died in the line of duty.



John Lytle planting flags on Rose Hill Drive.  
(Photos by Daniel Bearth)

# Is It Time To Replace Your Aging Roof?

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Further, the metal flashings around chimney areas and at adjoining exterior walls (or rooflines), the penetration Collars (around plumbing and heat stacks) and all other vents become worn and prone to water infiltration.

Next time you're outside take a close look at your roof (most people don't pay attention to it until there's a problem). How does it look? Is it rough and weathered? Are the shingles "curling or cracking? Is one section very distinguishable from all other areas? Finally, are you proud of the way your roof helps "show" your home, or are you embarrassed by its appearance?

**Remember:** By the Time you have waited "as long as possible," you have probably waited too long and will end up spending your hard earned money on interior and sub-structure repairs as well as much needed roof replacement.

*Call or visit our web site to learn about the other 5 misconceptions and other important information you need to know before hiring a contractor.*



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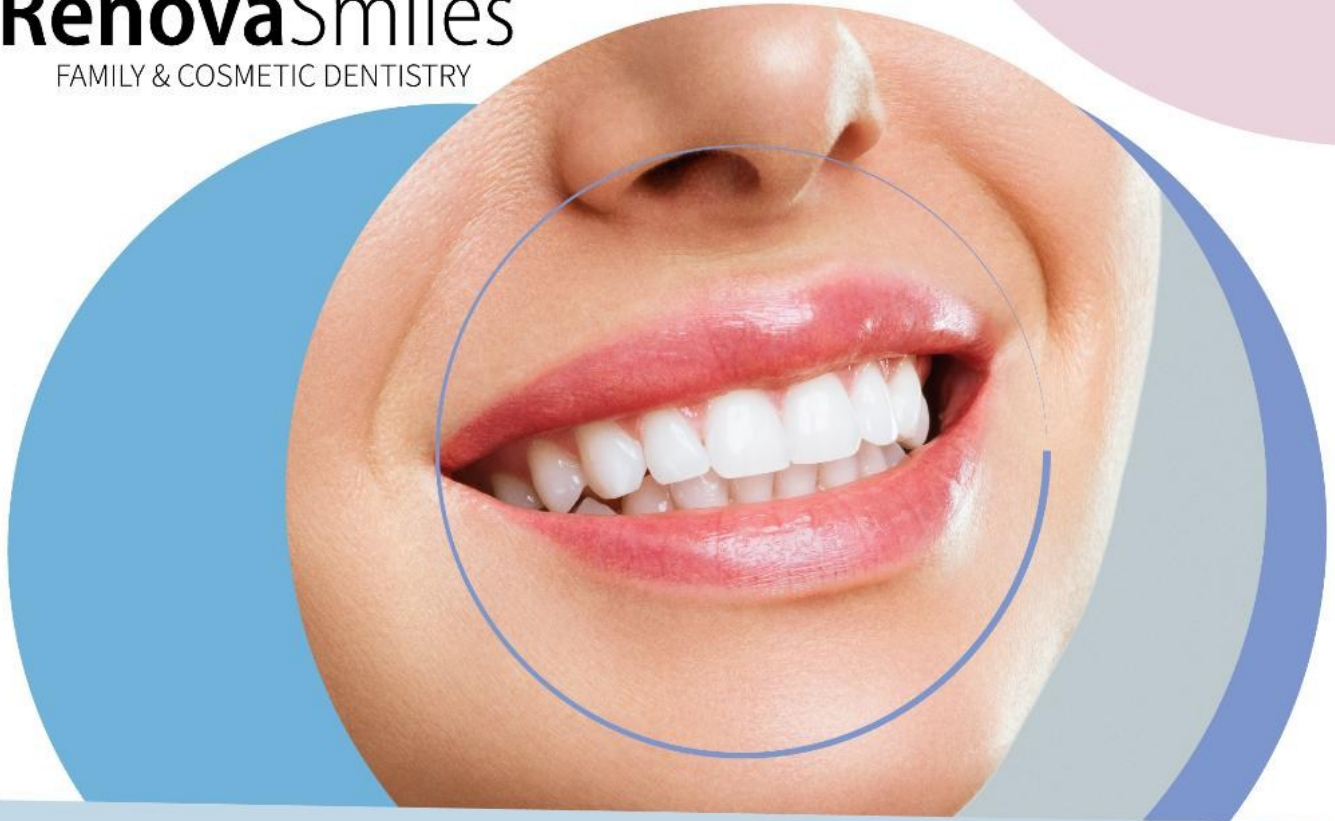
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