



June 2025

Vol. 55, Issue 2

Kings Park West Civic Association

Summer’s right around the corner—school is wrapping up, gardens are in full bloom, and the sidewalks are busy with neighbors walking dogs or chitchatting. There’s something about this time of year that brings a natural rhythm of connection. It’s a great time to pause, wave to a neighbor, and maybe even say yes to something new.

As I mentioned back in March, our civic association runs on people power. Everything we do happens because neighbors pitch in. And right now, we’re looking for a few more folks to help keep things moving.

We’re recruiting for:

- **Vice President** – a thought partner to help steer the ship
- **Block Captains** – our most important neighbor-to-neighbor connectors
- **Membership Chair** – the heart of helping folks feel part of things

These roles aren’t just tasks—they’re opportunities to shape the future of our neighborhood and strengthen the ties that make Kings Park West feel like home. Whether you’ve been here for thirty years or just moved in, there’s a place for you to get involved.

If one of these speaks to you (or you know someone who might be great), send us an email at board@kpwca.org. None of these roles require superhuman hours – just a little consistency and care. We’ll be setting up a few informal info chats this summer if you’re curious and want to learn more.

More than anything, we’re building community. Not just planning things, but getting to know each other. Not just keeping busy, but making this a place we’re proud to call home. Will you join us?

See you around the neighborhood!

Helen Santoro
President, KPWCA

Community Calendar

- KPWCA Monthly Board Meeting - June 17
- Free Share Saturday - June 28
- Braddock Nights at Royal Lake - July 11 (7:30pm)
- KPWCA Monthly Board Meeting - July 15
- Braddock Nights at Royal Lake - July 18 (7:30pm)
- Braddock Nights at Royal Lake - July 25 (7:30pm)
- Free Share Saturday - July 26
- Braddock Nights at Royal Lake - August 1 (7:30pm)
- Braddock Nights at Royal Lake - August 8 (7:30pm)
- September Herald Submission Deadline - August 9
- First Day of School (FCPS) - August 18
- KPWCA Monthly Board Meeting - August 19
- Free Share Saturday - August 30



Help us continue to provide fun activities to all. Join at www.kpwca.org

OR

Scan the QR code to make the membership process even easier

Kings Park West Civic Association 5616i Ox Road #7114 Fairfax Station, VA 22039 General Information: board@kpwca.org Website: kpwca.org		
Officers		Email
President	Helen Santoro	president@kpwca.org
Vice President	Merideth Manella	vp@kpwca.org
Secretary	Pamela Thibodeau	secretary@kpwca.org
Treasurer	Alan Morris	treasurer@kpwca.org
Members-at-Large	Jeremy Hatfield Vacant Jonathan Reiser	boardmember1@kpwca.org boardmember2@kpwca.org boardmember3@kpwca.org
Committees		
Common Grounds Maintenance	Laura Hall / Linda Reamy	
Membership	Vacant - this could be you!	
Parks and Lake	Kelley Newsad	parks@kpwca.org
Communications		
Herald Content Editor	Christine Jones	editor@kpwca.org
Herald Layout Editor	Rose Luczak	editor@kpwca.org
Herald Advertising and Classifieds	Vacant - this could be you!	classified@kpwca.org
Signboards	Jonathan Reiser	boardmember3@kpwca.org
Web Admin	Tim Hartle	website@kpwca.org
Community Services		
Invasive Species	Greg Sykes	greg@grsykes.com
Special Activities		
Fall Festival	Keith Jodoin	kjodoin@gmail.com
Scholarships	Vacant - this could be you!	board@kpwca.org

How do I join the Kings Park West Civic Association? Visit our website (kpwca.org) to complete the online membership form and to pay online. You can also print the membership form from the website to fill it out and mail your form and check to 5616i Ox Road #7114 Fairfax Station, VA 22039	How do I get my news in The Herald? The easiest way to get your news items in The Herald is to email the editor at editor@kpwca.org . We invite items on neighborhood schools, churches, organizations, and other noteworthy neighborhood news. News items and letters will be published if deemed suitable and as space permits. We reserve the right to edit any item submitted to The Herald. Acceptance of news items does not constitute an endorsement by the KPWCA.															
The Herald Published in print four times a year and hand-delivered to all 1,900 homes in KPW. Next deadline: August 9, 2025 for September print edition. Note: Acceptance of articles and advertising does not constitute an endorsement by the KPWCA nor liability for products or services advertised in its publications.	How do I advertise in The Herald? Please contact classifieds@kpwca.org for more information on publishing an ad or a classified in The Herald. The deadline for submissions for the June edition is August 9, 2025. The 2025 ad pricing structure is: <table style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">1-2 issues</th> <th style="text-align: center;">3-4 issues</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>▪ 1/8 page</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$30/issue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$27/issue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▪ 1/4 page</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$55/issue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$50/issue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▪ 1/2 page</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$110/issue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$100/issue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▪ Full page</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$360/issue</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$350/issue</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Classified ads are \$5 per issue for 35 words.		1-2 issues	3-4 issues	▪ 1/8 page	\$30/issue	\$27/issue	▪ 1/4 page	\$55/issue	\$50/issue	▪ 1/2 page	\$110/issue	\$100/issue	▪ Full page	\$360/issue	\$350/issue
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Community Notes: Summer 2025

Early Voting for June 18 Primary

Early voting is underway through Saturday, June 14. Locations include the Fairfax County Government Center and Burke Centre Library. For hours and details, visit the Office of Elections' website.

Burke Farmers Market at the VRE Station

The Burke Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to noon through November 22. Located at the Burke VRE Parking Lot (5671 Roberts Parkway), the market offers fresh produce, baked goods, meats, dairy products, and more. Please note that pets are not allowed, except for service animals.

Free Lead Testing at Farmers Markets

The Fairfax County Health Department offers free lead testing for household items at local farmers' markets. Upcoming events:

- Annandale Farmers Market – Thursday, June 12
- Mount Vernon Farmers Market – Wednesday, June 18

Both events run from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Low-Cost Pet Vaccine & Microchip Clinics

Fairfax County Animal Shelter's Pet Resource Center provides low-cost vaccination and microchipping services without the need for a veterinary exam. Upcoming clinics:

- Monday, June 12 – Fire Station 40, 9:00–11:00 a.m.
- Friday, June 23 – Lorton Campus, 9:00–11:00 a.m.

Summer Entertainment Series at Royal Lake Park

Enjoy free, live performances at Royal Lake Park Amphitheater (5344 Gainsborough Drive, Fairfax, VA 22032). Upcoming shows:

- **June 14, 7:30 p.m.** – Uncle Ty-Rone (Kid's Comedy, Ventriloquist)
- **July 12, 7:30 p.m.** – Munit & Z Love Bugs (Children's Music)
- **August 16, 7:30 p.m.** – Shake It Up Jam (Children's Music)

Stay Informed

For more events and updates, subscribe to the Braddock Beacon and Walkinshaw Advisory newsletters at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/braddock

Transportation Corner: What's Coming to Our Roads

Big changes are coming to the roads and walkways many of us use every day. Fairfax County and VDOT are working on a range of projects to improve safety, reduce congestion, and support more ways to get around. A few highlights:

Braddock Road Multimodal Improvements

Plans are underway to add shared-use paths, a pedestrian overpass near Burke Lake Road, and new HAWK signals for safer crossings. Key intersections like Wakefield Chapel and Port Royal are also slated for upgrades.



 Learn more: fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/projects/braddock-multimodal

Guinea Road Bike Lanes

Buffered or standard bike lanes may be coming to Guinea Road, along with crosswalk improvements near Southampton Drive and Thames Street. These changes aim to make biking and walking safer and more appealing for everyday trips.



 Learn more: vdot.virginia.gov/programs/paving/locality.asp?county=Fairfax

Capital Bikeshare Expansion

New bikeshare stations are proposed for Americana Drive and Patriot Drive. These would add more options for short trips around the neighborhood and nearby parks.



 Share your input: engage.fairfaxcounty.gov/r2887

Your voice matters!

If you have thoughts, questions, or concerns about these projects, now's a great time to speak up. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation to learn more or submit feedback. If you'd like to connect with other neighbors to share your input as a group, email us at board@kpwca.org—we'd be happy to help coordinate.





Volunteer Spotlight: The People Who Make It Happen

Each quarter, we'll highlight a volunteer who's making an impact. These are everyday people who decided to step up, and we're grateful for every one of them. Know someone we should feature? Let us know by emailing board@kpwca.org.

KPW Resident Callum Chang Awarded Braddock Young Person of the Year!

By Paul Gross



Callum Chang, 14-year-old KPW resident and 8th grade honors student at Robinson Secondary School, recently received the **Braddock Young Person of the Year Award**.

Nominated by Assistant Scoutmaster of BSA Troop 697 and fellow KPW resident, Gordon Goetz, Callum was recognized for his outstanding volunteering in the community, leadership in Scouts, and acceptance into the prestigious Virginia House of Delegates Page Program.

A frequent volunteer at St. Mary of Sorrows Church, and with the Knights of Columbus, Callum also helps with a local Cub Scout den, removes invasive plant species from around Royal Lake, and has managed the sign board on Commonwealth and Twinbrook for the neighborhood since 2020. An enthusiastic member of the Mock Trial and Eco Clubs, Callum was recently inducted into the National Junior Honors Society and received the Gold Level President's Volunteer Service Award for the second year in a row.

With a goal of making Eagle Scout and earning all 139 merit badges sometime next year (current count – more than 120), he has earned dozens of BSA awards, and credits Scouts for giving him confidence, fearlessness with public speaking, and leadership skills.

This past January through the end of February, Callum worked as a House Page for the VA House of Delegates in Richmond. The rigorous application process involved multiple letters of recommendation from teachers, permission from each teacher, including the Principal and Guidance Counselor, an interview with his local Delegate's office, a written essay, and a high GPA. With more than 300 applicants across Virginia, 32 were ultimately chosen for this experience.



Leaving home for seven weeks and keeping up with his schoolwork after paging all day was a testament to his dedication to service and interest in governing. Callum left this program with a desire to pursue law and perhaps one day run for office.

Congratulations, Callum!

Did you know that KPW has a new Little Free Puzzle Library?

The **KPW Woodworking Club**, led by Tim Hartle, was looking for a project to benefit the community for its inaugural project. Lifelong puzzle-lover and club member Tanis Gray put forth the idea of a Little Free Puzzle Library, a spin on the Little Free Book Libraries seen throughout the neighborhood.

Upcycling an old kitchen cabinet, Hartle spearheaded the project with help from Gray, using his vast woodworking knowledge Hartle worked with Gray to build the supported roof, weatherproofed it, shingled it, cut out the doors and installed acrylic, sanded, and weatherproofed the entire inside and out, replaced the hardware, painted whimsical clouds with floating puzzle pieces, and lined the shelves. The final touch for the project was the addition of a plaque declaring it the first project made by the KPW Woodworking Club hung with pride by the duo on Mother's Day weekend.

Posting a call out on the KPW Facebook page (@Kings Park West), Gray solicited puzzles from the neighborhood and collected dozens to stock the library. Completely reliant on community donations, Gray encourages residents to "leave a puzzle, take a puzzle," asking fellow puzzlers who may be cleaning out their stash to leave them on her front porch to be rotated in when space is available. She also encourages folks to post pictures of themselves enjoying the puzzles on Instagram @puzzlelibrary_KPW.

Located directly next to the Royal Lake Park entrance on Gainsborough and Eastlake on the left side, Tim and Tanis hope you'll swing by to enjoy this new community gem and borrow a puzzle or two.

Interested in joining the KPW Woodworking Club? Contact Tim at timhartle@gmail.com.





IN KINGS PARK WEST

By Linda H. Bassert

Public Meetings Calendar – Summer 2025

JUNE

- **June 10, 9:30 AM** – Board of Supervisors Meeting
Board Auditorium, Government Center
Regular county board business and updates
fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/june-10-2025
- **June 17, 9:30 AM–5:00 PM** – Board Committee Meetings
Topics: Land Use, Personnel, Audit
fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors/2025-board-meetings
- **June 24, 9:30 AM** – Public Comment Meeting
Open mic on local issues
fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors

JULY

- **July 2, 7:30 PM** – History Commission Meeting
Government Center, Historical topics and preservation
fairfaxcounty.gov/history-commission/meeting-schedule
- **July 8, 9:30 AM–5:00 PM** – Board Committee Meetings
Topics: Housing, Environment, Land Use
fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors

- **July 16, 1:00–3:00 PM** – Commission on Aging
Pennino Building, Rooms 200 & 206
fairfaxcounty.gov/calendar
- **July 30, 10:00 AM** – 250th Commission Planning Meeting
Government Center, Conference Rooms 2/3
fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/historic/250-workgroup

AUGUST

- **August 6, 7:30 PM** – History Commission Meeting
Government Center
fairfaxcounty.gov/history-commission/meeting-schedule
- **August 26, 9:30 AM** – Public Comment Meeting
Speak up on community concerns
fairfaxcounty.gov/boardofsupervisors
- **August 27, 10:00 AM** – 250th Commission Meeting
Planning for Fairfax County’s 250th Anniversary
fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/historic/250-workgroup

Want more? Browse the full calendar at: fairfaxcounty.gov/calenda



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Spring Clean-up

- Leaf Removal
- Remove spent, dead foliage
- Renovation Pruning
- Routine Shrub Pruning
- Bed Edging
- Mulching

Wooded Backyard Renovation

- Removal of Invasives (Including English Ivy)
- Brush Removal
- Tree Limb Elevation
- Turf Restoration

Landscape

- Plant Native Plants
- Renovate/Redesign
- Add trees for Beauty or Shade
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- Patios/Walkways
- Design fee may apply

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Friends of Royal Lake 10th Anniversary

By Sarah J. Lennon & Paul Gross

“Volunteering is crucial for both individuals and society as it fosters personal growth, strengthens communities and contributes to the well-being of others.”

So says Google’s AI summary, and it’s hard to argue with that! The Friends of Royal Lake (FORL) began as a Friends organization in **2015** as a volunteer group advocating for exercise stations along the trail surrounding Royal Lake and later to numerous other capital improvement park projects. Additionally, FORL has provided many hours of volunteer labor for a variety of activities such as trail improvements, invasive plant management, and park cleanups. Now in 2025 we are celebrating our 10th Anniversary.



At our **10th Anniversary Celebration** on April 28th, FORL was joined by Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw, Fairfax County Park Authority officials who were instrumental in the completed **Lakeside Picnic Area Shade Structure project**, as well as many members of the community who enjoy the park, lake and trails, including several Kings Park West Civic Association (KPWCA) representatives. We want to give a special shout-out to the KPWCA for providing the refreshments!

Supervisor Walkinshaw presented FORL with a plaque noting a Fairfax County Board of Supervisor’s Resolution that commended “the Friends of Royal Lake for ten years of outstanding volunteer service at Royal Lake Park.” FORL was recognized for embodying volunteerism, community engagement and environmental leadership that enhance neighborhoods and improve life for Fairfax County residents.

The newly installed shade structure over the picnic area next to the playground has been a long-desired feature at Lakeside Park. FORL did two community surveys in 2017 and 2023, and we have advocated for this type of amenity with **Supervisor Walkinshaw** and the Fairfax County Park Authority for several years. It became a reality in April and is already very popular with park patrons!

FORL is all about working together to improve our corner of the world, but our work as a community has major implications (beyond KPW, the Braddock District or Fairfax County) in terms of trash removed from the watershed or invasive species removed from parkland allowing beneficial natives to take hold.

FORL is always looking for inputs from those who enjoy Royal Lake parks. Please feel free to let us know what’s on your mind at



friendsofroyallake@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/friendsofroyallake. Don’t forget to check out our website at www.friendsofroyallake.org.

A final thought about the important impact of volunteering, which is at the heart of FORL: Pope Francis once said: *“Rivers do not drink their own water. Trees do not eat their own fruit. The sun does not shine on itself, and the flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...Life is good when you are happy, but much better when others are happy because of you.”*

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KPW Real Estate Corner by Cathy DeLoach



We have now reached the midpoint of 2025, with 27 homes either sold or pending sale. The average selling price stands at \$893,492, and notably, six homes have exceeded \$1,000,000! The average time on market to secure a sold contract is just 12 days.

For more details about the homes, feel free to scan the QR code on the right!



Model	Address	List Price	Current Price	CDOM	Status
Baron	4909 Heversham Ct	\$1,085,000	\$1,135,000	2	Sold!
Baron	10326 Collingham Dr	\$1,074,500	\$1,130,000	10	Sold!
Baron	10208 Dundalk St	\$1,125,000	\$1,125,000	4	Sold!
Baron	5250 Ridge Ct	\$1,125,000	\$1,085,000	18	Sold!
Queen	10101 Commonwealth	\$989,500	\$1,025,000	4	Sold!
Duke	5212 Gainsborough Dr	\$989,500	\$1,000,000	4	Sold!
Cromwell	10440 Stallworth Ct	\$899,900	\$955,000	5	Sold!
Regent	10424 Collingham Dr	\$924,999	\$953,658	5	Sold!
Regent	9807 Lord Ct	\$949,000	\$906,500	43	Sold!
King	5074 Dequincey Dr	\$899,995	\$899,995	7	Pending
Regent	5212 Noyes Ct	\$885,000	\$885,000	6	Pending
Regent	5347 Gainsborough Dr	\$875,000	\$875,000	11	Pending
Regent	5223 Tooley Ct	\$874,500	\$875,000	5	Sold!
Regent	5356 Gainsborough Dr	\$919,000	\$869,000	15	Sold!
Regent	4915 Wycliff Ln	\$850,000	\$854,900	0	Sold!
Prince	5116 Thackery Ct	\$849,000	\$849,000	4	Pending
King	10181 Wavell Rd	\$830,000	\$830,000	4	Sold!
Baron	4773 Farndon Ct	\$895,000	\$825,000	2	Sold!
Prince	5213 Ellington Ct	\$820,000	\$820,000	1	Sold!
Essex	5255 Pumphrey Dr	\$820,000	\$820,000	11	Sold!
Baron	10427 Collingham Dr	\$875,000	\$815,000	76	Sold!
Queen	10006 E Constable Ct	\$774,000	\$801,000	5	Sold!
York	10304 Nantucket Ct	\$785,000	\$785,000	14	Active/Under Contract
Queen	5214 Gainsborough Dr	\$735,000	\$780,000	0	Sold!
Regent	5238 Harrowby Ct	\$799,900	\$775,000	22	Sold!
Cromwell	4784 Catterick Ct	\$700,000	\$761,000	5	Sold!
York	10316 Collingham Dr	\$699,233	\$689,233	28	Sold!

*as of May 8, 2025

The Fairfax Garden Corner

By Charlie Boring

The urban gardener has many exciting and fun ways to grow plants that not only beautify the landscape, but make our gardens more organic. I enjoy experimenting with different edible plants to see if they can be grown in Virginia.

This year, I am doing a number of experiments, some of which may be unsuccessful, according to my Italian gardening friends. The first is attempting to grow leaf Broccoli de Creazzo in the spring. My late mother-in-law, Gilda, grew these cooking greens in northern Italy and I loved them. However, she grew them in the fall and waited for the first frost before harvesting them. I planted them in the late winter and my Italian gardening friends tell me that they will not be good for eating due to the lack of a frost. This picture shows them after germination. My plan is to harvest them before the weather becomes too hot.



But I do have a backup plan if my harvest does not produce a tasty result. I plan to allow some of the plants to go to seed and replant them in the fall, perhaps in early September, for a late

October/early November harvest. I will keep you posted on the results

The red spot in the center of the picture is the top of my experimental worm tower. I used a coffee mate container and drilled 1-inch diameter holes in the bottom and sides. Then I filled the container with kitchen waste and leaves. Hopefully, the tower will attract earthworms, who will feed on the waste and return to the garden to leave their great worm-castings fertilizer.

I have also modified one of my raised beds, where in the past, I grew strawberries and asparagus. I took out as much of the asparagus as possible and all of the strawberries and replanted the bed with mustard greens around the perimeter and tomatoes down the center of the bed. This picture shows the bed before with the asparagus and after with this year's plants. I also added a worm tower made from a cat litter container.



The plants you see in the second picture are mustard greens in the upper left and Swiss chards around the worm tower. Now, I face a problem of my old asparagus crowns sending up shoots, which I harvest immediately to eventually kill the asparagus crowns.

I have also modified the types of fruit trees that I am growing. I eliminated my two pear trees and my apple tree, since these plants were too susceptible to fire blight and therefore seldom produced much edible fruit.

My peach, pawpaw, persimmon, cherry and jujube trees have bloomed and set a lot of fruit. Hopefully, we will harvest them all this year. Our garlic was planted in early November and is doing well. It will be ready to harvest in early July. We are already harvesting strawberries from the beds that are interspersed with our landscaping plants such as Azealia bushes.



My experiment with trying to overwinter about 20 artichoke plants did not succeed. I had only two artichoke plants that made it through the winter; but they should produce artichokes this year. I have concluded that the problem was too little mulch on top of the plants. Bag to the drawing board!

Have a great Spring in your garden!



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KPWCA Scholarship Thank Yous

Each year, using donations from our membership, the Kings Park West Civic Association grants scholarships to high school seniors in our neighborhood. To be eligible, the students' parent or guardian must be a current member of the KPWCA at the time of application.

This year we are proud to announce that these amazing students each received a \$1,500 scholarship from the Kings Park West Civic Association:

- Abigail Meehan
- Lando Rebeyro
- Joseph Watkins

Huge congratulations to our winners and thank you to our membership for continuing to support our neighborhood scholars.

Our scholarship winners sent notes of thanks for us to share.

Dear KPWCA,

I want to express my immense gratitude for being a recipient of the KPWCA scholarship. It will go towards furthering my education at the University of Tennessee where I will be majoring in supply chain management.

I would also like to thank the Kings Park West community for always supporting me through all of my endeavors. I have met so many amazing families and children through coaching and participating in sports in and around the community. I am forever thankful for getting to be a part of this neighborhood that exemplifies unity, inclusion, and love.

Thank you again for this generous scholarship,

- Abby Meehan

Dear Kings Park West Civic Association,

Thank you very much for selecting me to be a winner of one of your scholarships. I am truly honored to be recognized by the neighborhood where I've spent my entire life. As I continue my education, your support will help me greatly. I'm proud to be part of a community that values and invests in its young people.

- Joseph Watkins

Hello KPWCA,

Thank you for choosing me to be a recipient of this scholarship! I am extremely grateful that the fine people on the committee saw potential in me and my future as a film major. This award is extremely helpful in achieving my future goals. I have been in this community all my life and appreciate the sense of belonging it has brought me. All the programs the committees do makes this community feel more in touch and engaged with the residents. I'm grateful you are making my college future possible for me.

Thank you again,

- Lando Rory Gilles



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KPW Recommends



by cathy deloach

“To sit in the shade on a fine day and look upon verdure is the most perfect refreshment.”

-Jane Austen

As the warmer weather beckons us to enjoy the great outdoors, it's the perfect opportunity to refresh the exterior of your home. Essential maintenance for this season includes **power washing** and **lawn care**, and you can conveniently handle both with just one phone call!

Ismari Menjivar, the owner of Neighborhood General Services, can help you create a stunning yard and home. Revitalize the lushness of your lawn while banishing the green stains from your siding. Afterward, relax with a tall glass of your favorite cool beverage and bask in the beauty of your surroundings.

Ismari Menjivar
neighborhoodgeneral@gmail.com
(703) 477-3673

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To seek recommendations from your neighbors, or to recommend a contractor or service that has done an amazing job, head on over to the the KPW Recommends Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/kpwrecommends>.

The Problem with Straw Erosion Netting

By Greg Sykes

Traditional ways of starting a lawn include grass seed mixed with organic matter, spreading straw that contains seed, or applying sod to bare ground. The soil should be tested for pH and nutrients before appropriately amending only as needed, preferably using organic methods. Over the decades, these methods are proven effective for good grass growth.

Recent years saw a new product introduced: straw erosion netting. It goes by different names depending on the manufacturer, but the principle is the same. Straw is mixed in a plastic (often polypropylene) netting. The unrolled sheets are positioned on the ground and secured, usually with long, metal staples. The advertised benefits are that the netting holds the soil while grass takes root. When photo-degrading netting is used, sunlight is supposed to break the plastic down within a year. This method is favored by budget contractors, utility companies, and municipal agencies such as VDOT.

The problem with straw erosion netting lies in its unnecessary plastic usage. The netting can get dislodged by any combination of pushing up plant growth, lawn equipment, foot traffic, and flood waters, to name a few. Figure A shows a lawn with detaching plastic net and B is a close-up image. Once up, the netting can become trip hazards, get chopped by mowers, or a big enough piece could wrap around and bend a mower's blade shaft. Wildlife has been found dead after being entangled in the webbing. Wind blows the netting chunks into other areas where they contribute to plastic pollution. Photo-degrading plastics often endure longer than advertised. If or when plastics break down, they just become smaller and smaller—eventually becoming microplastics, which are increasing health concerns:

- Potential Health Impact of Microplastics: A Review of Environmental Distribution, Human Exposure, and Toxic

Effects

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11504192/>

- Health Effects of Microplastic Exposures: Current Issues and Perspectives in South Korea
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10151227/>

Any old, buried netting is a nuisance when encountered while doing yardwork.



The best remedy for plastic netting is to pull it up once grass seedlings start growing. At that stage, much of the young grass remains in the ground while the plastic litter goes into the trash. Removing the netting is difficult amongst large, mature grass blades or Bermuda grass's wiry stolons. If a landscaping project requires erosion control while plant roots develop, biodegradable meshes such as coir netting (made from coconut fibers) are excellent alternatives. Wooden stakes holding the coir weave will safely degrade over time.

Continue using the previously mentioned traditional means of starting a lawn, but when using sod, make sure it has no plastic mesh reinforcement.

A Close-Up Photo Study of a Mature Forest: Part 1

In the article, [“Ecological Succession” \(September 2024\)](#), we saw how an old growth forest comes to be. This edition features photo essays showcasing some of the plant and fungal species that live in Northern Virginia's older growth forests. Part 1 takes a macroscopic approach at viewing soil microbes—the ecosystem's foundation. Mushrooms are the fruiting bodies from the vast, microscopic network of fungal threads (aka hyphae). A quick survey of the mushrooms present gives an idea of the soil's biodiversity.

The mushrooms here emerge from the ground or grow on logs—the latter is converting that wood into soil. All mushrooms were in a small, healthy, undisclosed, mature forest and photographed near [official trails](#), so appreciating such vast biodiversity can be done from pathways without trekking off-trail and disturbing the woodlands.

There are no statements about edibility since mushroom identification requires expert knowledge including subtleties such as spore color and the tree species from which the log originated.

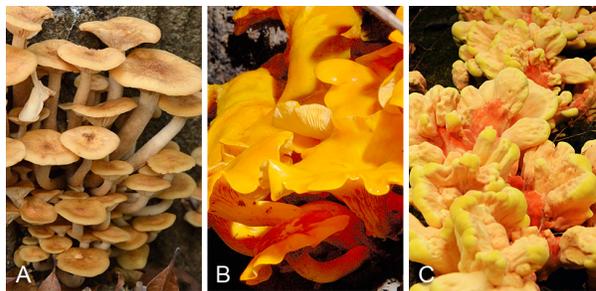


Figure 1 - (A) Ringless honey mushroom (*Armillaria tabescens*), (B) jack-o'-lantern mushroom (*Omphalotus olearius*), and (C) chicken-of-the-woods (*Laetiporus sulphureus*), recently emerged specimens.



Figure 2- (A) Lion's mane (*Hericium erinaceus*), (B) parrot mushroom (*Gliophorus psittacinus perplexa*), and (C) viscid violet cort (*Cortinarius iodes*) with smaller, unidentified mushroom on the left

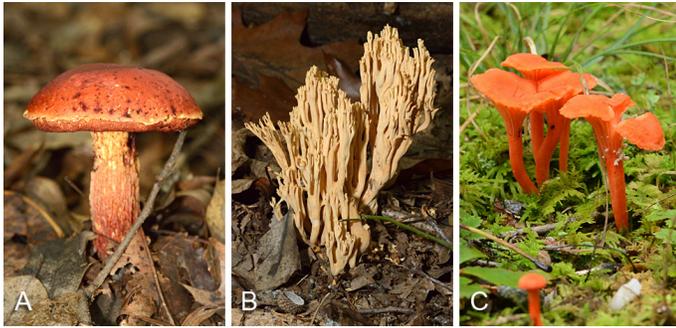


Figure 3- (A) Frost's bolete (*Exsudoporus frostii*, formerly *Boletus frostii*), (B) strict-branch coral mushroom (*Ramaria stricta*), and (C) red chanterelle (*Cantharellus cinnabarinus*).

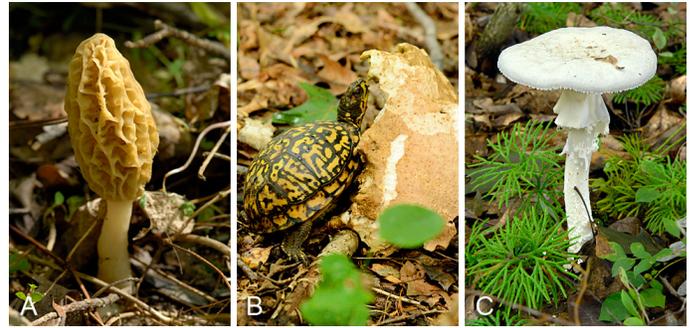


Figure 4- (A) Yellow morel (*Morchella esculenta*), (B) eastern or woodland box turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) eating a bolete mushroom (family: *Boletaceae*), and (C) eastern destroying angel (*Amanita bisporigera*) growing amongst fan clubmoss or comm

Part 2 delves into some of the plants inhabiting mature forests.



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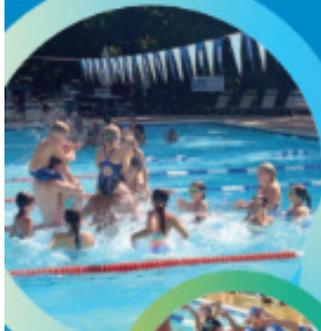
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Cut Here _____



Welcome to Kings Park West! Family Guest Pass

Present this pass at the Guard House and enjoy a family day at Lakeview Swim Club, compliments of the pool board.

KPWCA Scout Pack 1967 June Update

Since our last missive, Pack 1967 has been bustling with activity! Along with completing adventures and working toward their badges, Scouts have been actively engaged in their community, growing physically, mentally, and morally. On Saturday, December 14, they gathered at Old St. Mary's Church to take part in National Wreaths Across America Day—a special event to remember the fallen, honor the brave, and reflect on the value of freedom.

Scouts have been working hard over the winter to create, construct, and fine-tune their Pinewood Derby Cars, and on February 22, they finally got to test their designs. The Pack held its annual Pinewood Derby at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day, where our young engineers and artists met for what was truly a fusion of function and form, substance and style. From sleek speedsters to imaginative designs, each car was a testament to hard work and ingenuity. Beyond the thrill of competition, the event celebrated teamwork, resourcefulness, and the joy of building something from scratch. Congratulations to our Den champions, who will go on to race in the Patriot District championships in March!



As we look forward to warmer weather, we're excited for the two summer camps that Pack 1967 traditionally attends. If you'd like to learn more about these camps, our Scouts, or the exciting adventures ahead, we'd love for you to join us at a Den meeting – feel free to reach out! cubscout.pack.1967@gmail.com



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			7	4			8	
4			5			6		
	6		3		1			
3	5		8	7			9	
7				5	9			1
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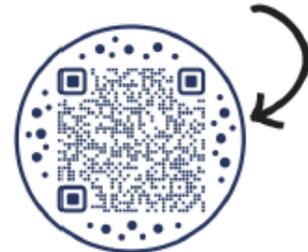
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