



HILLBROOK HILITES

Hillbrook Tall Oaks Civic Association (HTOCA) Newsletter

May 2020

HILLBROOK-TALL OAKS RESIDENTS ADAPTING AND RISING TO THE OCCASION

We are now almost 2 months in to what has become a somewhat new normal. Those of us who can are working from home. Kids are distance learning through the end of the academic year. We have delayed or in many cases, canceled, non-essential appointments, visits, special occasions and travel. We are all learning to adjust to what life looks like during a pandemic.

But many of us are enjoying our neighborhood now more than ever, too. Greeting neighbors we haven't seen before as we stretch our legs and get outside. Watching plants and trees bloom and the wild animals that make Hillbrook-Tall Oaks their home. Offering assistance to neighbors in need and the local restaurants and shops that rely on our support, especially now.

So perhaps we're not just adjusting, but adapting. We are proud of our neighbors' resilience and selflessness as we all rise to the challenge and build upon our strong community roots. Here are just a few of the highlights:

- **Helping neighbors in need** - Outreach efforts resulted in nearly 45 volunteers offering to check in on vulnerable and elderly neighbors, shop for groceries and other essentials, and provide other needed services. THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP!
- **Keeping kids active & entertained** - first with the Zoo Walk to identify stuffed animals in neighbors' windows, and now with the Scavenger Hunt in progress through mid-May. See p3 for more details.
- **Maintaining social distancing** - following the 6-feet or more guidelines as we're out and about. Avoiding gatherings of 10 or more. Walking on the left and biking on the right. Observing all local signs, including stop signs - especially critical with so many of us outside now.
- **Cleaning up after our pets** - our furry friends are getting plenty of attention and exercise these days! Cleaning up after your pets during a walk helps keep them (and your neighbors) healthy and happy.
- **Keeping local restaurants and businesses going** - by letting neighbors know who's open for our business using Nextdoor and Hillbrook-Tall Oaks Facebook page.
- **Using the Little Library** - located on the northeast corner of Dodson Drive & Silver Lane, the little library is stocked up with both adult and kid titles.

Need assistance? Want to help? Email hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com. While HTOCA does not endorse any particular business, including restaurants, residents may post recommendations on the social forums above.



In This Issue...

- Know Thy Neighbor: Meet The Brundage Family
- Scavenger Hunt Underway
- Updated Events Calendar
- How We Can Help: Local Restaurants & Food Pantries
- Women's Wellness Group Is Now Virtual
- Neighborhood Crime Statistics
- Directory Update Coming Soon
- Neighborhood Drainage Issues
- Nature Alerts: White Oak Declines and Honeybee Swarms

KNOW THY NEIGHBOR: MEET THE BRUNDAGES!



Photos courtesy of the Brundage family

If you've heard a bagpiper entertaining the neighbors or operatic voices resounding throughout Hillbrook-Tall Oaks, you have no doubt met the **Brundages!**

Longtime Hillbrook residents **David and Mary Anne** have lived in the neighborhood for 32 years. They raised their three children Julia, Cynthian and Ian here. The talented Brundage family has music in its DNA and has made it their life's work.

A native of Toledo, Ohio, **David** is a professional vocalist (bass) and instrumentalist (oboe, oboe d'amore, English horn, recorder) who has appeared in many of the area's prominent venues, including all four Kennedy Center theatres. He has been a member of the American Federation of Musicians since 1966.

Raised near Bailey's Crossroads, **Mary Anne** is a freelance musician and composer. She is the former director of music at Galilee United Methodist Church and has published two CDs.

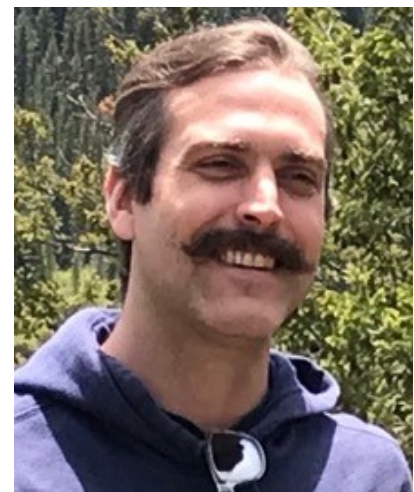
Daughter **Master Sergeant Julia Cuevas** (right), is an alto vocalist with the Singing Sergeants in the United States Air Force Band stationed at Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling. She also founded Celtic Aire, the premier Celtic ensemble of the Air Force Band. Julia began her military career in 2005 after earning a Bachelor of Arts degree with an emphasis in voice at Virginia Tech and completing graduate work at the University of Colorado at Boulder. In school she was active in the Early Music Ensemble, Chamber Singers, Roanoke Opera & an Irish band.



Photo by Rick Stockwell

Daughter **Cynthian Knight** (left) is an accomplished mezzo-soprano. She made her professional debut in 2011 with the Toledo Opera in *La Traviata*. Among her professional achievements in main stage opera roles, concerts and recitals, Cynthian was a finalist in the Harold Haugh Light Opera Competition and the Franco-American Vocal Academy's Grand Concours de Chant. She lives in Annandale with her husband and two young sons.

Rounding out this musical family is son **Ian Brundage** (right). Ian has created an impressive array of computer-composed music. You can find more than 30 examples of his work on SoundCloud under the name Nature Rage: <https://soundcloud.com/search?q=nature%20rage>.



Outside of the musical realm, **David has been a member of the HTOCA Board of Directors for several years.** He and his son-in-law built and installed the Free Little Library, which we unveiled in September 2019 during the Neighborhood Block Party and Potluck.

THE SCAVENGER HUNT IS UNDERWAY

Last month we invited you on a Zoo Walk to find the neighborhood stuffed animals residents put on display.

Now we're going on another hunt - this time with a chance to win a prize!

Between now and May 9, we invite all neighborhood children 18 or younger to join our Scavenger Hunt. Participants search for items on the card (right) that the HTOCA Board distributed via email on Saturday, April 25.

To play, kids search for and write down the house number for each of the 24 items listed. All items are visible from the street outside homes on Colburn, Dodson, Kingston, Silver and Winter.

WINTER House #: _____ Congratulations Graduate, Annandale High School sign.	DODSON House #: _____ Congratulations, Graduate, Thomas Jefferson High School sign!	KINGSTON House #: _____ Ohio State Decoration	KINGSTON House #: _____ Congratulations, Graduate, Trinity School sign!	KINGSTON House #: _____ Washington Capitals Flag
DODSON House #: _____ Flower Spinners	DODSON House #: _____ Gnomes in the yard	COLBURN House #: _____ House with a red door	DODSON House #: _____ House with a heart on it	SILVER House #: _____ House with a floral flag
KINGSTON House #: _____ Dome climber in Yard	WINTER House #: _____ Wooden sign out on the yard with Doc and a thank you note to all helpers		COLBURN House #: _____ 5-foot teddy bear on chair in front porch	KINGSTON House #: _____ Red bungy cord between two trees
SILVER House #: _____ Little free library	KINGSTON House #: _____ Blue and green marble decor in garden	DODSON House #: _____ Basketball hoop	DODSON House #: _____ Congratulations Graduate, Annandale High School sign.	WINTER House #: _____ String of Lights
WINTER House #: _____ Gazebo	DODSON House #: _____ Two black scarecrows	DODSON House #: _____ Two White Lawn Chairs	KINGSTON House #: _____ Washington Capitals Flag	COLBURN House #: _____ RV

Younger children may receive support from a family member to read the card, receive context clues to support their answers, and write down house numbers.

Please submit your completed cards no later than this Saturday May 9, along with the name and age of your child, to hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com or text 617-290-0728 for a chance to win a prize. We would also love a photo of your child in front of their favorite find to feature in an upcoming newsletter.

Please reach out to Terry Boyd (tboydunc84@aol.com) or Alisha Martinez (alishakmartinez@gmail.com) if you have any questions or need a copy of the Scavenger Hunt card.

UPDATED HTOCA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events and dates are **subject to change pending updates to Virginia's Stay at Home order**. Please check your email for updates as dates get closer.

- **POSTPONED: SPRING YARD SALE** (Reschedule TBD)
- **ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL:** Sunday, June 7
- **FOOD TRUCK SATURDAYS:** Fourth Saturday of each summer month starting with June 27 and July 25. DC Slices (pizza) and Healthy Fool (Vietnamese fusion) scheduled to visit
- **BLOCK PARTY & POTLUCK:** Sunday, September 13
- **HALLOWEEN PARTY & OKTOBERFEST:** Sunday, October 25

Questions?

Need to Pay Your Annual \$25 Dues?

Want to Get Involved?

HTOCA

PO Box 1112
Annandale, VA

22003-9112

Email:

hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com

Visit our website:

www.HTOCA22003.org

TREAT YOURSELF: DINING OUT WHILE STAYING IN

At this point in the pandemic, even the most eager home chefs may be getting weary of their own cooking, not to mention their own four walls. Many of us are hungering (yep, we said hungering!) for a change of pace.

So while you continue to do the right thing and stay at home, why not **treat yourself and those living with you to a night of dining out while staying in**? Consider ordering takeout or home delivery from your favorite Annandale establishments while helping them through this difficult time.

Most local establishments now offer contactless delivery and pickup services on some, if not all, of their regular days and hours of operation. Let's do our part to help them and keep Annandale a vibrant dining community by dining out (at home) during these challenging times.

Your favorite home chef might be thankful, too.

Click on this [link](#) to see a list of Annandale restaurants that includes up-to-date information on whether they are providing delivery or pick-up service, along with each restaurant's current menu and ordering information. Bon appétit!

OTHER WAYS TO HELP THE COMMUNITY

[Annandale High School \(AHS\) Pantry](https://annandalehsptsamembershiptoolkit.com/ahspantry) - provides assistance and support for the 60+% of students who participate in the federally funded free and reduced lunch program. Currently accepting non-perishable food, personal hygiene and household items. For more details or to donate:
<https://annandalehsptsamembershiptoolkit.com/ahspantry>

[Annandale Christian Community for Action \(ACCA\)](#) - provides emergency food for individuals and families referred by social workers and ACCA member churches. Volunteer food captains receive these requests and arrange for volunteer drivers to pick up from the ACCA Food Pantry and deliver to homes.

[Britepaths](#) - food assistance is by referral only from a social worker or case worker from the Fairfax County Health and Human Services or a Fairfax County Community Based Organization (CBO) or Faith Based Organization (FBO). Please visit the Britepaths website for more information.

[Food for Others](#) - If you need food, you may come to one of the neighborhood site distributions. Click on website link for specific locations and times. The only question asked is, "How many people are in your household?" Please bring your own grocery bags.

[Real Food for Kids - Chefs Feeding Families](#) is collaborating with Pizzeria Paradiso to distribute whole grain, veggie pizzas starting at 2:30 p.m. until supplies last on Saturdays at the ACCA Child Development Center: 7200 Columbia Pike #2, and Sundays at John Calvin Presbyterian: 6531 Columbia Pike.

WOMEN'S WELLNESS GROUP NOW VIRTUAL

When (workout) life hands you lemons, local women have made lemonade by going virtual!

Designed to bring neighborhood women together to have fun and stay healthy, all are invited to participate in daily online workouts as part of the **Hillbrook Tall Oaks Community Women's Wellness Group!**

Dates: Mondays through Saturdays

Times: Monday-Friday at 5 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

Class Description: A variety of sessions in a 30-minute workout, including cardio, weight training, pilates, yoga, and resistance band-focused activity. This class is appropriate for all ages and fitness levels.



Image courtesy of Alisha Martinez

How to participate: Join the Facebook Group Hillbrook Tall Oaks Community Women's Wellness Group or via Zoom to join the live workout or participate via recorded sessions. Contact Alisha Martinez (617-290-0728 or alishakmartinez@gmail.com) to sign up or for more details.

DIRECTORY UPDATES COMING SOON

HTOCA Board members reached out to approximately 180 households in our community throughout March and April to say hello and:

- Ask if you need assistance during this time with shopping or errands
- See if you would like to volunteer to help those who do
- Provide any updates to your Neighborhood Directory information

On the third point: We plan to publish an updated version of the Neighborhood Directory sometime this year. Thanks to everyone for providing your latest, greatest information for the directory.

if you have updates to share or would like to advertise your business in this year's directory, please email hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com.

Questions?

Need to Pay Your
Annual \$25 Dues?

Want to Get Involved?

HTOCA

PO Box 1112
Annandale, VA

22003-9112

Email:

hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com

Visit our website:

www.HTOCA22003.org

NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME STATISTICS: A SNAPSHOT

Criminal activity in the Hillbrook-Tall Oaks community is relatively low. However, an examination of Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) records of complaints for 2015-2019 indicates there has been a small uptick in activity.

Most notably, the number of **larcenies (property theft)** complaints rose to five in 2019 from one in 2018 -- a level that represented a decline from three larcenies in 2017. The streets where larcenies occurred in 2019 included Cherry Lane, Cindy Lane, Colburn Drive, Kingston Drive and Pacific Lane.

The number of **burglaries** remains low. Police records recorded one complaint for 2019 compared to zero in 2018 and a single case in 2017. This burglary took place on Kingston Drive. Three previous burglaries were reported in by one or more residents on Oak Court in 2015. Data did not report any burglaries for 2016-2018.

There were no complaints for **assaults** filed with the FCPD for 2019. Three total complaints were filed in 2016 and 2017.

On the matter of **illegal narcotics** activity, there were no complaints filed with FCPD in Hillbrook-Tall Oaks in 2019. In 2018, there was one complaint on Pacific Lane. In 2017, there was a single complaint filed regarding an issue on Cherry Lane and a second on Oak Court.

Civil disputes reported to FCPD for Hillbrook-Tall Oaks numbered just one in 2019. This level of incidents is below the two cases recorded for 2018, equal to the single case for 2017, far below the four complaints filed in 2016, and on par with 2015's single case.

While Hillbrook-Tall Oaks is a generally a safe neighborhood, keeping it safe requires that residents keep watch for unusual or odd events in the neighborhood. Here are some additional tips to keep our neighbors and our property safe:

- Bring your cell phone during walks around the neighborhood
- At night walk with a flashlight
- Lock all vehicle, home and shed doors and windows, especially at night
- Report events to the FCPD immediately, even if they do not constitute an emergency
- If you arrive at home and find your door ajar or a window open that was previously closed, do not enter the house. Call the police and go to a neighbor's house until the police arrive
- Dial 911 in case of an emergency

For more information, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/chief/messages/crimereports>.

APRIL RAINS BRING TROUBLED DRAINS

T.S. Eliot's poetry declared April to be the cruelest month. Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" depicted it as a period when showers "sooke to the roote."

April is a month known for its heavy downpours, and 2020 has been no exception.

This past month's heavy rains have also created street culvert and drainage systems problems in the neighborhood. These systems experience heavy water accumulations and result in slippery streets, cracked pavement and local road puddling that are not only inconvenient, but can also create dangerous driving conditions.

HTOCA President Al Sample has noted **overruns and poor drainage on Colburn Drive near Dodson Drive as you exit the neighborhood on the south side**. His photos document culvert degradation and deteriorating pavement conditions.



Photos courtesy of Al Sample

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is responsible for maintaining our streets and storm drainage systems. The HTOCA Board is documenting neighborhood drainage issues and will send this information to VDOT's Fairfax office for further investigation and resolution.

If you are aware of other neighborhood storm drains either overflowing or with other attendant drainage issues, please contact Al Sample at alsample@pinchot.org or Doug Birnie at mdbirnie@aol.com. **Thanks for any help you can provide to help us identify and document neighborhood storm drainage and street culvert issues.**



Questions?

Need to Pay Your
Annual \$25 Dues?

Want to Get Involved?

HTOCA

PO Box 1112
Annandale, VA

22003-9112

Email:

[hillbrooktal-
loaks@gmail.com](mailto:hillbrooktal-loaks@gmail.com)

Visit our website:

www.HTOCA22003.org

WHITE OAKS IN DECLINE: WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

In 2019 this newsletter shared an alarming trend as it related to our community's beloved oak trees in rapid decline, including *Quercus alba* (white oaks) and *Quercus montana* (chestnut oaks). Neighbors noticed that some of the trees appeared to have infestations of ambrosia beetles as well.



Sawdust-like frass (from ambrosia beetles at the base of a white oak with brown foliage. (Photo: David Clement, 2019)

Although the problems seem to have appeared suddenly, forestry experts note that some of the oaks' decline has been happening for awhile now. One important factor in many of Virginia's oaks is the age of the trees; many were already mature when neighborhoods like Hillbrook-Tall Oaks were under development in the 1950s and 1960s.

Older trees are more vulnerable to stress caused by human activity, poor soil and weather, among other factors. Add Virginia's prolonged drought to the mix, and trees stressed by other factors become more vulnerable to disease and insect pests.

One main culprit is the ambrosia beetle, a "secondary pest." This means that they typically do not attack healthy, unstressed trees - but will accelerate destroying a tree that is in decline. Suburban trees also deal with urban heat islands,

turfgrass competition, pollution and construction challenges, including compacted soil and root issues that interfere with a tree's uptake of oxygen, water and nutrients.

Concerned about the health of your oak trees? According to the University of Maryland Extension officials in a "Browning of White Oaks" 2019 article, the accelerated decline has had several distinct characteristics.

LOOK FOR THESE ISSUES AND SYMPTOMS:

- Effects to mature trees, mostly (40-80 years old)
- Rapid and sudden browning of leaves and the crown in late summer/early fall
- Trunk wounds, previous root damage and previous branch dieback (in some trees)
- Evidence of opportunistic invaders: ambrosia beetles, Hypoxylon canker, fungal root rot (in most trees)

WHAT CONCERNED TREE OWNERS CAN DO:

- Find a reputable certified arborist to confirm any issues and determine next steps and optimal timing
- Avoid construction, soil compaction and ancillary tree damage near affected oaks
- Provide ample root watering during dry spells
- Improve soil with wood chips placed at least three inches away from the tree trunk

For more information and resources, visit the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia (www.mgnv.org).

HONEYBEE SWARM SEASON HITS HOME

With the exception of beekeepers, a basketball-sized clump of bees hanging in a tree or a bush may understandably scare people.

Late spring and early summer are common times for honeybee swarming. Swarming occurs when a colony gets big enough to split in two, when the queen takes as much as half of the colony with her to find a new home. During the search, the swarm may stop over in a tree, bush, wall or attic for a day or two.

The honeybee, whose recent plight is well-known, is generally not aggressive, especially while in a swarm. With no home and no honey, they have nothing to defend and will not sting unless thoroughly provoked.

Tall Oaks residents Kurt Diercksmeier and Ashley Grubor recently discovered a swarm that decided to make the attic - and subsequently their home's upstairs interior - its permanent location. Luckily for them (and the bees), they found dozens of beekeepers in northern Virginia who were more than willing to safely remove the honeybees and relocate them to a proper home.

A quick Google search for "bee removal" yielded both professional exterminators and professional beekeepers. The non-profit Northern Virginia Beekeepers Association (NVBA) put Kurt and Ashley in touch with a beekeeper, who removed approximately 40,000 bees, including the queen, from the attic a few weekends ago. The beekeeper safely relocated the bees to a farm in southern Maryland.

Kurt shared some advice following this ordeal: "If you happen to see a honeybee swarm, remember they are not aggressive and will likely leave on their own within a day. However, if you wish to have it removed or if the bees decide they like your home as much as you do, **please have them removed by a professional instead of exterminating them. I hope we all understand how helpful honeybees are to the ecology of our planet.**"



Photos courtesy of Ashley Grubor & Kurt Diercksmeier



Questions?

Need to Pay Your
Annual \$25 Dues?

Want to Get Involved?

HTOCA

PO Box 1112
Annandale, VA

22003-9112

Email:
[hillbrooktal-
loaks@gmail.com](mailto:hillbrooktal-loaks@gmail.com)

Visit our website:
www.HTOCA22003.org