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***Neighborhood Newsletter***

***Volume 59—Spring 2025***

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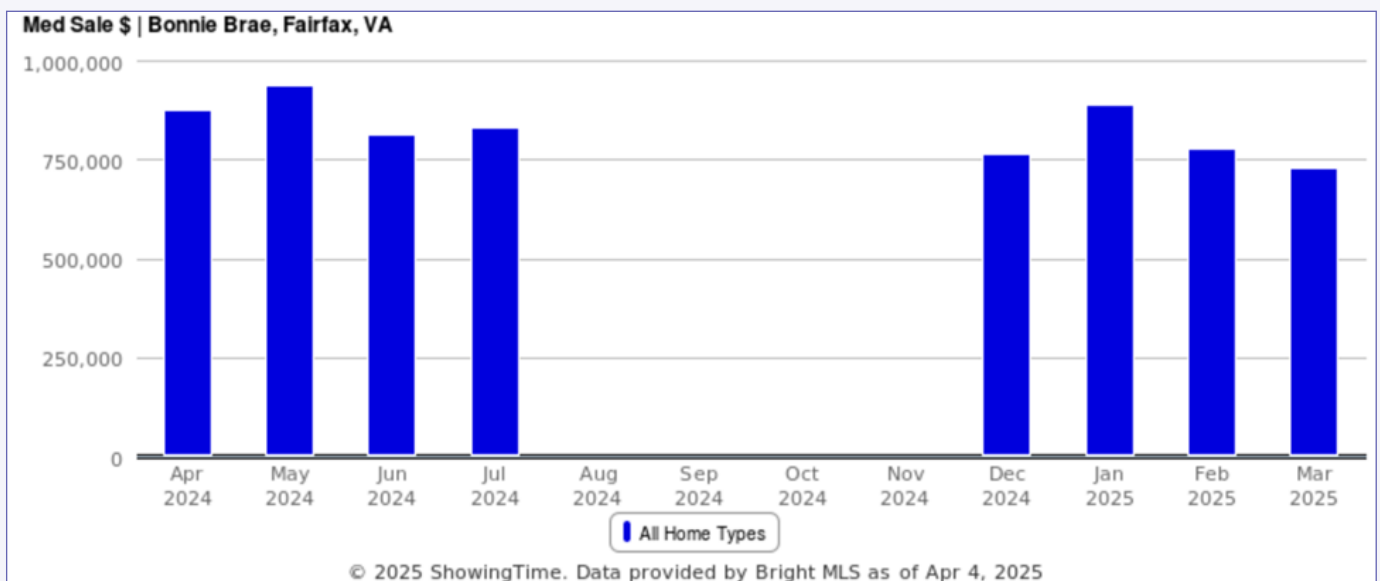
# President's Message

—Tim Royster

## Bonnie Brae 2024/2025 Housing Report

Despite the broader challenges in the real estate market, such as stubbornly high interest rates, tariffs, and economic uncertainty, the Bonnie Brae housing market has remained strong. The continued high demand for single-family homes here, coupled with our neighborhood's **distinctive architectural styles not commonly found throughout Fairfax**, positions Bonnie Brae as a truly exceptional place to live.

We had a total of 13 sales in 2024 and the beginning of 2025 according to the Bright MLS data. The chart below shows the median sold price of sales in Bonnie Brae over the last year.



## What is the BBCA?

The *Bonnie Brae Civic Association* is the membership organization of the 305 homeowners and renters who live in Bonnie Brae. Founded in 1973, this Civic Association is governed by an elected Board of Directors and other volunteers with the goal of sharing a supportive, self-governing, and voluntary bond in a community to help communicate information, mitigate community concerns, and organize community activities. Annual dues, currently \$20/year, are required to be paid at the beginning of each year according to the Covenants of the Association.

The Board meets throughout the year to discuss community issues and plan activities. The Board also addresses issues or problems within the neighborhood and helps the community thrive by addressing problems of neglect or safety. As homeowners, we all share an investment in a beautiful, well-maintained, thriving community.

Currently BBCA plans and supports a Santa visit, an Easter egg hunt, a book club, a New Neighbor potluck and this year, for the first time, a Trivia Night. (We delivered flyers for Trivia Night). We publish an annual Newsletter and biennial Directory of residents and maintain a Bonnie Brae website ([www.bonniebrae.net](http://www.bonniebrae.net)) to strengthen social ties within the community and keep folks informed. We communicate online through [NextDoor.com](http://NextDoor.com) and via printed flyers and signs to announce upcoming events. While all the activities are carried out by volunteers, they do cost money and are supported only by member dues. Each household is responsible for paying annual dues of only \$20.

You get a lot for \$20! Please mail in your 2025 dues, send via Zelle, or give them to your block captains so they don't have to ask twice. The membership form is included with this newsletter.

## BBCA Officers

2025 Bonnie Brae Civic Association		
Tim Royster	President	<a href="mailto:troyster1108@gmail.com">troyster1108@gmail.com</a>
Charlie Gulac	1st VP	<a href="mailto:cgulac88@gmail.com">cgulac88@gmail.com</a>
Margaret Pontzer	2nd VP	<a href="mailto:pontzer@cox.net">pontzer@cox.net</a>
Lisa Travis	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:lisatravis33@gmail.com">lisatravis33@gmail.com</a>
Elaine Hawley	Secretary	<a href="mailto:elainejhawley@gmail.com">elainejhawley@gmail.com</a>

Your Board is always looking for new ways to serve the community, so feel free to contact any one of us with your ideas or concerns.

Fortunately, we have an enthusiastic group of committee volunteers including Marty Beach, Neera Badhwar, Larissa Hohe, Andrea McGowan, Susan Yennerell, Courtney Wikle, John and Lisa McAlduff. Thanks, too, to Emelyn Royster and her brother Hudson for starting up our Bonnie Brae Teen Group. The teens organized and staffed the Easter Egg Hunt in April, and we look forward to more activities for this group.

## Block Captains

We have a hard-working corps of 19 block captains who are always helpful collecting dues and distributing flyers and newsletters.

*Thanks to our section leaders who also serve as block captains:*

Victoria Carroll, Sharon Schwartz, Glen Quesenberry, and Neera Badhwar.

*Thanks as well to the rest of the block captains:*

Dave & Beth Doane, Susan Yennerell, Rachel Hinnant, Larissa Hohe, Jean Schwab, Courtney Wikle, Andrea McGowan, Margaret Pontzer, Barry Azimi, Harry Wong, Jill Turosz, Michael Nickens, Cathy Gulac, and James Chu.

If you don't know your block captain, check out the chart in this newsletter and try to get to know them. It's especially helpful if your block captain has your email address and phone number for timely communication when a flyer doesn't do the job.

*We still need a block captain for Jennifer/Sideburn*, so if you live on or near there, please consider helping out. Contact Elaine Hawley [elainejhawley@gmail.com](mailto:elainejhawley@gmail.com) if you want to volunteer.

# Community Events

*Bonnie Brae Events have gone Online! Use these sites to find the most up to date information*



We are [Bonnie Brae Fairfax VA](#). With 190 members on our Facebook page, this is becoming our main source of communication. Please sign up if you use Facebook. Find out about Bonnie Brae events, cancellations, activities, photos, concerns, and opportunities.

**Bonnie Brae Website** —Our beautiful new BBCA website is now up and running thanks to the efforts of Joe Landry, our neighbor and web designer in Middleridge who worked with our BBCA team. We have started to populate the site with content, good information and photos. We hope this new look shows off our neighborhood to be the beautiful place we all know it to be. Check it out and bookmark it!



For the past few years BBCA has encouraged neighbors to sign up for our local social network, Next Door, as the best way to stay informed about what's going on in our neighborhood and some of the communities near us—whether it's communicating about Bonnie Brae events, finding a babysitter, selling household items, recommending services or businesses, or sharing alerts. This is a free and easy way to connect with your neighbors. NextDoor's mission is to provide a trusted platform where neighbors work together to build stronger, safer, happier communities. Let's get 100% of Bonnie Brae connected — sign up today!

[www.nextdoor.com/join](http://www.nextdoor.com/join) Code: ZNWLQZ

## In case of Emergency

It pays to take a few minutes to figure out where you might get emergency care if you need it. Of course, in a serious emergency (heart attack, stroke, severe injury, etc) calling 911 is likely the best option as you will be taken to a hospital.

But for non-emergency care you should know where you would go. We have many Urgent Care facilities in the area, but they often aren't open 24/7. These facilities often change owners and have limited services and hours so it pays to keep up with the latest availability and know your options before the need arises. I have recently learned that former Urgent Care facility at Burke Centre Commons is now a Primary Care facility that requires appointments.

Our nearest full staffed/always open Inova Emergency Department (ED) is just up 123 towards Fairfax about 8-10 minutes away. Connected to the Fairfax Hospital System, it is a great service to have close at hand.

It's also useful to know that if you have a concern that is not urgent or life-threatening, you should call **the non-emergency number (703) 691-2131**. These non-urgent things might be:

- Non-violent disputes between neighbors
- Property damage vehicle accidents not causing a hazard to the flow of traffic
- Noise complaints
- Leash law violations
- Assistance resolving disagreements involving no crime or violence
- Dumping of trash or materials onto public property



## ELECTION 2025

### Virginia Elections 2025

2025 is an election year for Virginia State Offices including Governor/Lt Governor, Attorney General, Virginia House of Delegates and Local Offices. The Republican and Democratic Primary Elections will be June 17, 2025, and the General Election is November 4<sup>th</sup>. Our voting place is the Bonnie Brae School.

Virginia allows early and absentee voting, but you must register to vote before the election, online or in person at the Government Center. This Virginia Department of Elections website <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation> has information on how to:

- ✦ Register to Vote
- ✦ Check and update registration status
- ✦ Find your polling place
- ✦ Apply to Vote Absentee by Mail

**For complete information about elections, voting, candidates, and issues, follow updates on the Fairfax County Elections website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>.**

**If you would like to help with elections, consider being a trained election officer.**

Fairfax County needs thousands of elections officers to ensure efficient and well-run elections. If you are a registered voter, willing to work from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. on election day, you may apply for one of these positions. It's a long workday and you will get a small stipend (\$250). You will get training in advance and, where possible, will be assigned to a polling place near your precinct. Election officers help set up voting equipment, check IDs and names on the electronic poll book, provide assistance in using the voting machines and, finally, help tabulate the results after the polls close. Bi-lingual speakers are especially needed. Applications and further information are available here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>

### Bonnie Brae Youth Council is ACTIVE

Exciting news from Bonnie Brae! The Bonnie Brae Youth Council is off to a fantastic start, with an overwhelmingly positive response from both young people and their parents. The council has already held three productive meetings, brainstorming ways to serve our community. Their first successful initiative? Leading and assisting with the recent Bonnie Brae Easter Egg Hunt. Get ready for more fun! We're busy planning some exciting summer events for our youth, so stay tuned for details. If your child is interested in getting involved and making a difference, please reach out to me at [troyster1108@gmail.com](mailto:troyster1108@gmail.com), and I'll connect you with the Youth Council. Parents, we encourage you to join us and hang out during the youth meetings – your support is always welcome!

*The Fairfax Choral Society will finish their 2025-26 season with a free concert at Vienna Presyberian Church on Sunday, June 1 at 4pm. For more information, please visit [www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org](http://www.fairfaxchoralsociety.org) or email Gracie Bee at [graciebee@gmail.com](mailto:graciebee@gmail.com).*

## What items can never be placed curbside as trash or recycling?

Some items are too hazardous for recycling or disposal in a landfill. The Transfer Station on Ox Road near Costco will accept most of the items below if you take it to the proper section. Contact your local hauler if you have questions. Some fees, terms and conditions may apply.

- Paint, stain, varnish, thinner and adhesives
- Automotive products such as old fuel, anti-freeze, brake fluid, motor oil and oil filters
- Household cleaners with ammonia or bleach
- Aerosol cans
- Fluorescent light bulbs and lamps
- Computer equipment / television/ electronics
- Dead animals
- Garden products, including pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers
- Propane tanks and fire extinguishers
- Pool or photographic chemicals
- Thermostats, thermometers and other items containing mercury
- Expired prescriptions and non-prescription medications (no controlled substances)
- Sharps (syringes, needles, etc.)\*
- Ammunitions, firearms\*\*

*Glass bottles and jars:* As far as we know, only Evergreen Disposal accepts glass. So if you don't have Evergreen, please deposit glass trash at a special Fairfax County Glass Dumpster. Our nearest one is in the parking lot of the Burke Centre train station/farmers market off Roberts Road (Burke Centre, 10399 Premier Ct, Burke, VA 22015)

\*Contact your pharmacy for instructions

\*\* Contact your local police or sheriff's office for disposal instructions.

## RECYCLING RIGHT

YES, THESE GO IN YOUR CURBSIDE RECYCLE BIN - CLEAN, DRY & LOOSE!

PLASTIC BOTTLES AND JUGS (LIDS ON)

METAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE CANS

CARTONS

MIXED PAPER AND CARDBOARD

NEVER PLACE IN YOUR CURBSIDE RECYCLING BIN

PLASTIC BAGS, FILM AND PILLOW PACKAGING

GLASS\*

FOOD BAGS AND WRAPPERS

NEEDLES AND MEDICAL WASTE

SHREDDED PAPER

DIAPERS

MIXED PACKAGING

HANGERS, HOSES AND CABLES

CLOTHING

FOAM AND PLASTIC TAKEOUT CUPS AND CONTAINERS

BATTERIES

\*GLASS BOTTLES & JARS CAN BE RECYCLED AT ANY PURPLE CAN IN THE COUNTY

## Compost Drop Off

According to our Fairfax County website, food waste makes up as much as one-third of the trash we dispose of every day. Fairfax has been collecting and composting yard waste for several years – now it is ready to tackle food waste, but this must be dropped off at collection sites. You can drop off food waste at all Fairfax County Farmers Markets on Market Day or take it to be composted to the I-66 Transfer Station on Ox Road near Costco.

## Beware of Online Scams

In 2023, over \$12 Billion was reported lost to internet/online scams. AARP conducts local annual seminars (SCAM JAM) to help people understand how various schemes work. Here are a few good references to use if you suspect internet fraud. Read NextDoor to keep up with alerts about various local scamming attempts.

## Where to Report Scams or Fraud



**IC3.gov** This Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) is the central hub for reporting cyber-enabled crime. It is run by the FBI, the lead federal agency for investigating crime. It is the best place to report Internet-based fraud. If reporting

online criminal activity, please provide details such as the website's URL or internet address, the application's name (e.g., Snapchat, Facebook, X, etc.), username of the individual you are reporting or the username of the profile which contains the comment you are reporting, and the date/time of post. Submit your information only once. You may also call 877-908-3360 to report a scam.

<https://tips.fbi.gov/> or 1-800 CALL FBI Access an electronic form to report federal crimes and submit tips regarding terrorist activity.

Test yourself by taking the quick quiz at "Banks Never Ask That": <https://www.banksneveraskthat.com/scam-quiz/>

## 5 Red Flags on phishing in emails, texts, or calls.

- They ask you to open a link you weren't expecting.
- They use urgent or fear-inducing language.
- They send an attachment.
- They request personal info like PINs, passwords, or social security numbers.
- They pressure you to log in, or send money with payment apps.



St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic Church sponsors Bingo Nights during the school year to raise funds to support religious, educational, family, and parish ministry, as well as outreach programs.

Bingo is a fun family-oriented fundraiser that is a perfect Saturday night activity for our Bonnie Brae Community. The Church serves chili and hot dogs, and has a bake sale. The last bingo for this school year (Saturday, May 10, 6:00pm at the Parish Center) is designated for the Car Ministry, a charitable agency that processes and repairs donated vehicles. The vehicles are given at no cost to needy families and persons who can afford to run a car and who have been referred by pastors and social workers. These vehicles transform people's lives because transportation allows them to obtain employment in places that were previously inaccessible, and makes them self-sufficient.

The first Bingo for the 2025-26 school year is scheduled for October 2025. The date has not been picked yet.

—Charlie Gulac

## Public Service Announcement: Find and Use Your Water Shut-Off Valve!

To avoid the disaster that Beth and I had in 2023, shut your water off before you leave the house for an extended period. Find and mark your main water valve. In an emergency, you or someone you know should be able to easily find your main water valve and turn off the water supply to your entire house.

I've heard it said that the best way to learn something is to teach it. I've also heard it said that the best way to learn something is through experience-- often, painful experiences are the best teachers. Both sayings are true for different reasons. I am writing to share a painful experience, with two goals: maybe I can help at least one family in Bonnie Brae avoid misfortune, and maybe, just maybe, I will remember the lesson learned.

Beth and I left our home in July of 2023 to visit family in Canada. We hired a dog sitter to come and check on our best good girl, Matilda, during our trip. Thank goodness for the dog sitter, because she called us at 5 a.m. British Columbia time to report the unthinkable. Matilda was fine, but the ceiling had collapsed and there was water everywhere. Without a dog sitter, the water would have continued to run for days until we returned. Bad as it was, our flood could have been much worse.

We were new to Bonnie Brae, and when we bought our dream home in late May of 2022, the market was hyper-active. To sweeten our offer, we waived the home inspection. We also did some other ill-advised things that are beyond the scope of this article-- suffice it to say, we were motivated buyers. Anyway, I am not sure a home inspection would have caught the proximate cause of our flood.

We had a braided water supply line feeding into the toilet tank in the upstairs hall bathroom. That beautiful

and durable 100-year line was attached to the tank with a typical cheap \$0.25 plastic fitting. Here is the problem: the line was taut. The water supply line should have a little play in it. Please check to ensure your water supply lines have a little play in them. Sometime between 10 p.m. on July 5<sup>th</sup> and 8 a.m. on the 6<sup>th</sup>, tension split that plastic fitting in two. The plastic fitting was not designed to take any tension. Since the main household water supply was still turned on, water flowed freely through that line. How long does it take to fill a 3-gallon toilet tank? About 30 seconds? Imagine water pouring out of a supply line at the rate of 6 gallons a minute. That is 360 gallons per hour, for up to 10 hours.



Thousands of gallons of water flowed, saturating everything in its path: floors, ceilings, walls, electronics, boxes in the basement and their contents. The recovery and repair from the damage went through multiple phases: Repair, replacement, or disposal of damaged property, removal and storage of household goods during repairs to the floors, walls, and ceilings, then repetition of some of the work because the walls were not as dry as they should have been when reconstruction started. It was just over 18 months from the flood to the final release of repair contractors. That is a lot of hassle over a \$0.25 fitting!

A big pile of lessons is sandwiched

between the call in July 2023 which cut our Canadian trip short and the day in January 2025, when our mortgage company finally came and inspected our repaired home. Of course, there is the PSA that motivated this article: in an emergency, you or someone you know should be able to easily find your main water valve and turn off the water supply to your entire house. There is also the corollary PSA: check your water supply lines and replace any that are too tight. And of course, there is the implied lesson about not leaving your grandfather's World War II uniform in a cardboard box in the basement. Water seeks its level and does what it is going to do, and some things can never be replaced.

Beyond the plumbing tips, there is a deeper lesson to draw from this experience. When Beth and I were vulnerable and upset, the good people of Bonnie Brae pitched in to help us in ways big and small. Bear in mind that we were new here, so the acts of kindness shown to us can only be explained by the inherent goodness of people who would have helped anyone in need. While Beth was changing my flight schedule and I was on the way to Kelowna airport, neighbors came into our flooded basement, waded to the water shut-off valve, and stopped the flow of water. They moved valuables to drier spots. Other neighbors relieved the dog sitter and took poor Matilda into their home until we could get ourselves situated in temporary, dog-friendly quarters. Other neighbors brought us food and checked on us. The outpouring of support was truly heart-warming.

Even though we learned some painful lessons from this unpleasant and avoidable flood, we are more certain than ever that moving to Bonnie Brae was worth the risk of waiving that home inspection.

—Dave Doane

## Mark O'Meara: Bringing Art and Entertainment to Fairfax for Over 30 Years\*\*

Give a shout out to Cinema Arts Theater located at Fair City Mall and the University Mall Theater. Both are independent theaters operated by Mark O'Meara. To support this community treasure, and help keep the theater in business, a friend and I try to see a movie every week, especially around Oscar season. Cinema Arts brings in first runs of some of Hollywood's best as well as many good foreign films and independent films that you may not find elsewhere in this area. Below is a good article adapted and reprinted with permission from a piece by Gwen Jones published in the Fairfax County Golden Gazette, April 2023:

"If you have gone to the movies at University Mall Theatres or Cinema Arts Theatre, you may be familiar with Mark O'Meara, whose larger-than-life personality, along with his involvement and service in the community, have made him a popular figure in Fairfax.

The O'Meara family relocated to Fairfax County from upstate New York in 1990. In 1991, A self-described entrepreneur, O'Meara strolled past a shuttered movie theater at University Mall and wondered what it would be like to operate a movie theater. He was excited about the prospect of theater ownership. He had always loved movies and ran a film festival while working in student affairs at Columbia University.

After securing a lease of the theater, O'Meara embarked upon learning the ropes of running a movie theater and succeeded in getting the University Mall Theater up and running. Then, in 1999, a second theater became available at Fair City Mall, giving O'Meara an opportunity to try his hand at running an art house theater with a combination of independent productions, foreign films and first run blockbusters. After making some improvements, O'Meara opened Cinema Arts Theatre and soon had a local fan base for films that were hard to find elsewhere.

While working to make his theaters successful, he and his wife, Loretta, were also busy raising three children. O'Meara coached his children's youth sports teams and has been an enthusiastic member of Robinson Athletic Boosters for over 20 years. His gregarious personality has been put to good use selling raffle tickets and hotdogs in the stands during football games, even though his youngest child graduated in 2010.

In 2014, O'Meara faced a significant challenge. The wear and tear on the seats at both theaters had taken a toll and they desperately needed to be replaced. O'Meara and his staff created a Kickstarter campaign, "Save Our Butts" to raise \$100,000 to replace the seats at University Mall.

Donations poured in and the goal was met within two weeks. A year later, they repeated the campaign for Cinema Arts and again hit their goal. O'Meara credits his staff for their marketing savvy and the fiercely loyal customers who donated. The theaters aren't as luxurious as some in the area, but his movie selection is usually spot on for fans who love to see a movie on the big screen.

O'Meara's popularity can be attributed, in part, to his generosity in the community. He routinely donates movie tickets to nonprofits and community organizations for their fundraisers and his theaters serve as collection sites for Britepaths' back to school backpack drive. He supports the work of young filmmakers at Woodson and Robinson Secondary Schools by hosting screenings (including a red carpet) of their film class projects at Cinema Arts.

Recognized for his community service, in 2013 O'Meara was the Lord Fairfax honoree for the Braddock District and in 2015, he was awarded the Business for the Arts Award from the City of Fairfax.

The COVID-19 pandemic was devastating to O'Meara's theaters, which were closed for nearly all of

2020. [One way he kept his staff employed was to sell "take out" popcorn and snacks from the concession stand. To this day you can drive up to the door of University Mall Theater and call in for a tub of popcorn.]

Although people have been slow to return to the theaters, the passionate support O'Meara has received from some of his customers has been encouraging. When Cinema Arts first reopened, a customer who refused to give her name returned monthly with envelopes of cash. When O'Meara tried to return them, she refused, telling him "You have to survive, you're so important to the community."

O'Meara hopes that the immersive experience of watching a movie in a theater will bring people back. He works hard to keep prices low with special discount days – tickets on Tuesdays at University Mall are half price and he offers Senior Wednesday at Cinema Arts, where all tickets are \$6 for people 60 and older.

Although O'Meara is in his early 70s, he loves what he does and has no intention of slowing down. After all the highs and lows he has experienced during his 30+ years of theater ownership, he is still passionate about movies, connecting with people, and taking on new challenges.

So, we encourage you to go to the movies and enjoy one of these independent theaters in our community. They need our support to stay viable, and we don't want to lose these treasures."

\*\*This article is adapted with permission from the [Golden Gazette](#), a free monthly newsletter which covers a variety of topics and community news concerning older adults and caregivers in Fairfax County. Don't miss out on future newsletters! You may subscribe at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/golden-gazette> to get the electronic version via email or a free printed version mailed to you.

—Elaine Hawley

## Replacing a Deck in Bonnie Brae

The Bonnie Brae development was constructed in 1972 and 1973. Approximately 40% of the homes (based on a satellite photo review) have rear decks or front decks. Most are made of pressure-treated lumber.

Pressure-treated lumber decks last between 20 and 40 years if maintained properly. Some will last longer if well maintained, while some will not make it to 20 years if they are in the shade and remain wet after a rain, or are exposed to runoff. Many of the decks in our neighborhood are due for replacement or significant repairs.

Margaret and I had been limping along treating and painting the deck, as needed, and replacing the occasional board, until I had the time to futz with this project in retirement. While I had worked in construction when I was younger, signed construction contracts for the government, and later litigated construction contracts, my deck at more than 1,000 square feet was a bigger project than I wanted to tackle myself. Also building a deck to code in Fairfax County is no mean feat. Fairfax County has a 28-page guide on building decks which summarizes the applicable state and county codes. See Fairfax County, Virginia, Typical Deck Details, (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/sites/landdevelopment/files/assets/documents/pdf/publications/deck-details.pdf>).

The first step was to gather additional information. We visited five neighbors to see their decks and ask about their contractors. We saw that we would have to make some difficult choices:

Building materials (100% treated lumber, all synthetic except for the frame, or a combination?)

Keep the same footprint? Yes.

Replace the frame? Yes. Our wooden frame showed substantial wear.

We were ready to start consulting with contractors. We contacted two who had done decks for neighbors and used Washington Checkbook (<https://www.checkbook.org/washington-area/>) to find additional contractors. I found three types of contractors: small general construction contractors who could build decks, mid-size contractors who focused on decks, and large design consultant contractors who did substantial architectural and landscaping projects.

Because of the size of the deck, we eliminated the smaller contractors. Because we were simply replacing an old deck and keeping the footprint largely the same, we eliminated the largest contractors. The sweet spot was contractors with 10-plus years of experience who specialized in replacing pressure-treated decks.

We decided to use Trex for the deck, and asked the contractor to complete the deck within six months of contract award, and promise that construction would

continue unabated once the project started. We also realized that it would be easier and cheaper to replace the 100 square foot front porch at the same time.

Our mantra was that the project had to deliver on specifications, on budget, and on time. We received four quotes. We threw out the two highest quotes because the pricing was 25% and 45% higher than the other two without reasonable explanation (for example, the highest quote to pull a construction permit was \$900 compared to \$450 for the lowest).

We opted not to go with the lowest price offer because the quote came with more than eight pages of detailed contract terms and conditions. The attached diagrams and computer-generated renderings were impressive, but the terms and conditions were strongly in favor of the contractor. We opted to go with the second lowest-priced contractor (Pro Deck Installers), because they had a good reputation and a competitive price, and had completed our neighbor's deck.

The lattice work below the deck had a four-foot gap, which was closed by new lattice work. We also got four concrete-enclosed pillars for \$320. Given the size of the project, I figured it would take two to three weeks. We had two days of weather delay because of snow, but once it melted the project continued and was completed in four weeks.

It took five months to go from a notional project to completion – longer if I hadn't been retired! I started gathering information and interviewing contractors in late September 2023. We received offers and made award in December 2023. The contractor started work in early February 2024 and finished by the end of February 2024.



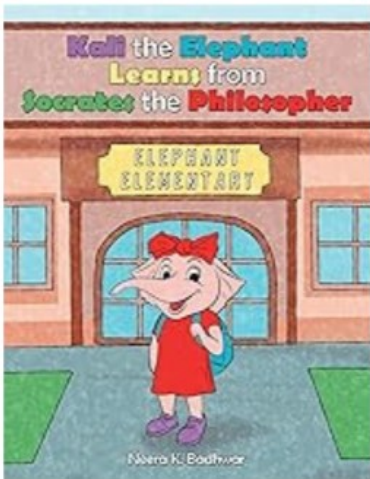
A word of advice: Keep good records. Save every email and text message with the contractor. I went old school by printing them out and dropping them into a folder. Take several photos of the project every day when you walk the project at the end of the day. It will help you see the progress and give you a good record if construction goes sideways.

With the new deck, Margaret and I will be hosting more neighborhood get-togethers. Hope to see you here!

—Pete Pontzer

## Bonnie Brae Creatives

**A** shout-out to the creative neighbors in our community. In addition to painters, architects, photographers, and sculptors, several of whom we have featured in past newsletters, we also have writers. Today we celebrate Neera Badhwar, who has just published her first book for children, *Kali the Elephant Learns from Socrates the Philosopher*, after a successful academic career in philosophy. Neera started writing stories for children when her son was little. In this book she combines her two interests - and hopes that her young readers will start taking an interest in philosophy! With its amusing story by Neera and colorful pictures by the illustrator, Ady Branzei, the book is suitable for kids 2-8 years old (ignore what Amazon.com says about the suitable age-group).



Born in India, Neera moved to the US after earning her PhD from the University of Toronto. She taught philosophy at the University of Oklahoma for 22 years and continues to write and publish academic work along with this renewed venture into children's literature.

Neera has been an active member of our community, serving on the BBCA planning team, as a block captain, and in the BBCA Book Club for many years. She lives in Bonnie Brae with husband, Larry White, who retired as GMU economics professor on June 1st. He participates in the BBCA ROMEO club, where he recently led a short discussion on bitcoin, and has also now become a block captain.

Neera's book is available on <https://www.amazon.com/Kali-Elephant-Learns-Socrates-Philosopher>, <https://www.barnesandnoble.com>, and <https://www.archwaypublishing.com/en/bookstore>. Check it out! Let's make it a best seller! Perhaps you know a kid who loves reading!

—Elaine Hawley

**SIDEBURN RUN**  
RECREATION ASSOCIATION

**Join the fun at Sideburn Run**  
10603 Zion Drive, Fairfax, VA

Featuring open swimming, swim lessons, swim and dive teams, and special events!

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MEMBERSHIP, SWIM & DIVE TEAMS, AND EVENTS CALENDAR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: [SIDEBURNRUN.COM](http://SIDEBURNRUN.COM)

NOW HIRING LIFEGUARDS AND POOL MANAGER - INQUIRE AT: [BOARD@SIDEBURNRUN.COM](mailto:BOARD@SIDEBURNRUN.COM)

### Swimming Pools In or Near Fairfax

Sideburn Run Recreation Association  
<https://sideburnrun.com>

One Life Fitness <https://www.onelifefitness.com/swimming>

Burke Racquet and Swim Club <https://burkeracquet.com/>

Aquatic Racket and Swim Club <https://recreation.gmu.edu/>

Old Keene Mill Swim and Racquet Club  
<https://okmpool.com/>



*The Syverson Family was Number 1!*

## **Holiday Lights 2024**

Last December, the Bonnie Brae Holiday Elves selected the winners of the holiday light contest! Winners receive free membership in the BBCA for 2025. We all enjoy their holiday spirit lighting up the December darkness and look forward to equally bright – or brighter - contests next winter.

There were a LOT of contenders this year, including many past winners. Ultimately, the Elves picked the most original displays. Photos of all the honorees are on the BBCA Facebook page.

5411 Masser Lane - Featuring Krampus (Syverson Family)

5404 Jennifer Drive - Featuring a Blue Star (Logan Family)

5346 & 5348 Aylor – (Zabala and Dale Families) These two neighbors won together because their decorations seemed seamlessly connected

Honorable Mentions:

5338 Black Oak - Clever Grinch Stealing Christmas (Blahusch Family)

5341 Jennifer Drive - A White Light Wonderland (Devlin Family)



## Prague, The Czech Republic

Larry and I made a quick trip to Prague in April. Here are some pictures of the famous 14<sup>th</sup> C Charles Bridge with its life-sized statues (of which there are 30!), and the 9<sup>th</sup> C Prague Castle as seen from the bridge. In my opinion – but not only mine - this view of the Castle from the Bridge at night is easily one of the most sublime sights in the world.

—Neera Badwar



*Statues on Charles Bridge*



*The Gate to Charles Bridge*



*Prague Castle and Palaces*

# BBCA Membership Information

Bonnie Brae is a “mid-century modern” community of 305 homes and our Association activities are supported by dues of \$20 per year. A handbook of by-laws along with a short history of the area is posted on our website: <http://www.bonniebrae.net> and is reprinted in the 2024 Directory.

Your dues help support activities that bind our community together and help keep Bonnie Brae a beautiful place to live. Please join and pay your annual dues to support our BBCA activities:

- Publication of the BBCA Newsletter (also online at [www.bonniebrae.net](http://www.bonniebrae.net))
- Publication of a Community Directory (not online)
- Development and maintenance of our Bonnie Brae Website: [www.bonniebrae.net](http://www.bonniebrae.net)
- Membership in the Braddock District Council of nearby associations
- Maintenance of Bonnie Brae signs
- Printing of Signs and flyers to announce community events
- Social Activities

**Bonnie Brae Civic Association (BBCA)  
Membership Application  
2025 Annual Dues \$20**

Check box if you are new to Bonnie Brae in 2024-25

Names of residents \_\_\_\_\_

Names of residents \_\_\_\_\_

Names of residents \_\_\_\_\_

Names of residents \_\_\_\_\_

Past Members/ Contact Information Unchanged

Fill in contact information if you are new to Bonnie Brae or directory entry needs correcting:

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Give form and payment to your block captain or mail them to:

**Bonnie Brae Civic Association**  
**P.O Box 336**  
**Fairfax Station, VA 22039-0336**

We now also accept annual BBCA dues payment of \$20 via Zelle— use [bonniebraetreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:bonniebraetreasurer@gmail.com) (Be sure to provide your name & street address in memo when paying by Zelle.)

<b>BBCA FINANCIAL REPORT</b> from BBCA Treasurer Lisa Travis as of December 31, 2024	
BANK BALANCE as of 1/1/2024	<b>\$10174.94</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	
Membership Dues	\$2810.00
Newsletter & Directory Ad Sales	
Miscellaneous Income	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$2810.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
<b><u>Administration</u></b>	
Bank Fee	\$4.80
Bank Deposit Correction Fee	
PO Box Rental	\$236.00
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$240.80</b>
<b><u>Communications</u></b>	
Phone Directories	\$428.69
Sign Purchase	
Flyer/Newsletter Printing	\$316.49
Stamps/Envelops	
Website	\$1475.00
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$2220.18</b>
<b><u>Community Safety &amp; Maintenance</u></b>	
Braddock District Council Membership	\$50.00
Neighborhood Watch	
Sign Maintenance	
Yard Sale	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
<b><u>Annual Social Activities</u></b>	
Block Captain Party	
Easter Party	
National Night Out Party	
New Neighbor Party	\$229.07
Halloween Party	
Neighborhood Shaved Ice Party Truck	\$500.00
Santa Event	
Christmas Light Contest	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$729.07</b>
<b><u>Other</u></b>	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$3240.05</b>
<b>Annual Net Income</b>	<b>-\$430.05</b>
<b>BANK BALANCE as of 12/31/2024</b>	<b>\$9744.89</b>

# B.B.C.A. SECTION LEADERS AND BLOCK CAPTAINS

## SECTION LEADERS

SECTION I (82)  
**VICTORIA CARROLL**  
 5350 Black Oak Dr.  
 703-300-5241  
[toriadidit@gmail.com](mailto:toriadidit@gmail.com)

SECTION II (76)  
**SHARON SCHWARTZ**  
 10612 Fiesta Rd.  
 703-895-0324  
[sharons@thedesignminds.com](mailto:sharons@thedesignminds.com)

SECTION III (71)  
**NEERA BADHWAR**  
 10409 Pearl St.  
 703-250-7959  
[nbad@ou.edu](mailto:nbad@ou.edu)

SECTION IV (76)  
**GLEN QUESENBERRY**  
 5335 Aylor Rd.  
 703-303-2080  
[gquesenberry@hotmail.com](mailto:gquesenberry@hotmail.com)

## BLOCK CAPTAINS

#1—BLACK OAK even 5320-5348 (14)  
**Dave and Beth Doane**  
 5332 Black Oak Dr.  
 703-919-0156  
[davebethdoane@gmail.com](mailto:davebethdoane@gmail.com)

#6—ACACIA LANE (16)  
**Jean Schwab**  
 10514 Acacia Ln.  
 703-490-1293  
[jeanpwrow@gmail.com](mailto:jeanpwrow@gmail.com)

#11—AYLOR RD - SOUTH (17)  
**Barry Azimi**  
 10419 Nellie White Ln.  
 703-675-6752  
[barry.azimi@gmail.com](mailto:barry.azimi@gmail.com)

#16— NELLIE WHITE (15)  
**Michael Nickens**  
 10403 Nellie White  
 703-989-4919  
[mnickens@gmail.com](mailto:mnickens@gmail.com)

#2—BLACK OAK (13) 5349 -5405  
**Victoria Carroll**  
 5350 Black Oak Dr.  
 703-300-5241  
[toriadidit@gmail.com](mailto:toriadidit@gmail.com)

#7—ARROWOOD ST (15)  
**Courtney Wikle**  
 10517 Arrowood St.  
 520-437-3130  
[csbrock86@gmail.com](mailto:csbrock86@gmail.com)

#12—FYFE COURT (13)  
**Larry White**  
 10409 Pearl St.  
 405-417-3610  
[nbad@ou.edu](mailto:nbad@ou.edu)

#17— AYLOR north (13)  
**Glen Quesenberry**  
 5335 Aylor Rd.  
 703-303-2080  
[gquesenberry@hotmail.com](mailto:gquesenberry@hotmail.com)

#3—INDIGO & ALLERTON (18)  
**Susan Yennerell**  
 10511 Indigo Ln.  
 210-837-4235  
[yennerell@gmail.com](mailto:yennerell@gmail.com)

#8—FIESTA & SOUTHPORT 5331-5401 (15)  
**Sharon Schwartz**  
 10612 Fiesta Rd.  
 703-895-0324  
[sharons@thedesignminds.com](mailto:sharons@thedesignminds.com)

#13—JENNIFER south/even + 5401& SIDEBURN south/odd (14)  
**Harry Wong**  
 5408 Jennifer Dr.  
 703-249-8373  
[hkwong2@gmail.com](mailto:hkwong2@gmail.com)

#18—CRISTFIELD CT (13)  
**Cathy Gulac**  
 5347 Cristfield Ct.  
 703-323-6694  
[cdgulac@gmail.com](mailto:cdgulac@gmail.com)  
[cgulac88@gmail.com](mailto:cgulac88@gmail.com)

#4—ZION & SIDEBURN even (23)  
**Rachel Hinnant**  
 5330 Sideburn Rd.  
 703-359-5515  
[rhinnant@flinthill.org](mailto:rhinnant@flinthill.org)

#9—SOUTHPORT 5424-5506 & FIRESIDE (16)  
**Andrea McGowan**  
 5424 Southport Ln.  
 202-438-0697  
[acmcgowan4301@gmail.com](mailto:acmcgowan4301@gmail.com)

#14—PEARL ST (17)  
**Jill Turosz**  
 10403 Pearl St.  
 240-447-2323  
[jturosz@gmail.com](mailto:jturosz@gmail.com)

#19—JENNIFER north/odd & HOLLYOAK (16)  
**James Chu**  
 5347 Jennifer Dr.  
 571-278-6909  
[mjwed@yahoo.com](mailto:mjwed@yahoo.com)

#5—BLACK OAK Private Dr 5312-5318 & odd 5329-5347 (14)  
**Larissa Hohe**  
 5346 Black Oak Dr.  
 704-582-9788  
[larissa.hohe@gmail.com](mailto:larissa.hohe@gmail.com)

#10—SOUTHPORT 5402-5422 (14)  
**Margaret Pontzer**  
 5406 Southport Ln.  
 703-250-0273  
[pontzer@cox.net](mailto:pontzer@cox.net)

#15—MASSER LANE (10)  
**Neera Badhwar**  
 10409 Pearl St.  
 703-250-7959  
[nbad@ou.edu](mailto:nbad@ou.edu)

#20—JENNIFER north/even & SIDEBURN north/odd (19)  
**Vacant**  
*Please Volunteer!*  
[elainejhawley@gmail.com](mailto:elainejhawley@gmail.com)