

The Village Way

Fall 2009

Vol. 42 No 2

ALL SIGNS POINT TO FALLS CHURCH CITY

The City of Falls Church and VPIS recently completed a joint project to have eight new City of Falls Church signs constructed and installed at secondary entrances to the City. These signs are somewhat smaller, but similar in design to the five large City of Falls Church signs located at the major entrances to the City at East and West Broad Streets, North and South Washington Streets and Roosevelt Blvd. The original signs were designed by former VPIS Board Member, Mary Madeline King, and the first two were installed on Washington Street during America's Bicentennial in 1976. VPIS and the City shared the cost of the project, with VPIS donating the money for the signs and the City contributing the cost of the installation.



New sign locations in the City of Falls Church:

*Grove Ave. & Spruce St
N. West St & Great Falls St.
Great Falls and N. West Sts.
E. Columbia & Underwood Sts.
Annandale Rd. & Hillwood Ave.
S. West St. & Laura Dr.
Lincoln Ave. & Yucatan St.
Little Falls St. & W&OD Trail*

The current project was spearheaded by VPIS Board Member Gerald Pressman, in an effort to boost recognition of the City of Falls Church. The City is often confused with the Falls Church area of Fairfax County, which is seven times the size and ten times the population of the City. Mr. Pressman met with City Manager Wyatt Shields to propose the project and received a commitment from the City to fund a portion of its cost. The Village Society contributed the amount not covered by City funding.



Virginia Municipal League Achievement Award For Neighborhood Tree Program

Seth Heminway, the VPIS coordinator of the Falls Church Neighborhood Tree Program, represented VPIS at the Annual Conference of the Virginia Municipal League to receive a 2009 Achievement Award for the expanded Neighborhood Tree Program. The original Neighborhood Tree Program was initiated by VPIS in 2000 and since its creation has planted more than 460 trees in the City of Falls Church.

The Neighborhood Tree Program received the award for the program's initiative to increase planting opportunities in healthy locations for shade trees. The NTP was judged the best program for localities under 35,000 residents. As a partner in the program, VPIS raises money each Saturday at the Farmer's Market booth, which goes to cover the cost of the trees. VPIS volunteers assist in the planting and the City delivers trees to and helps prepare the planting sites.

The Virginia Municipal League is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of city, town and county governments established in 1905 with a membership that includes all 39 cities in the state, 156 towns and 11 counties.

The Village Preservation and Improvement Society, founded in 1885, is an active non-profit citizen volunteer organization in the City of Falls Church, Virginia. The Society works to preserve our natural and built environment, historic structures and landmarks, and it promotes cultural activities. The members are primarily residents and former residents or neighbors of the City of Falls Church and are of all political persuasions. They are bonded by their interest in and commitment to improving the city. Send donations, comments, questions or letters to the editor to: Village Preservation and Improvement Society, P.O. Box 6824, Falls Church, VA 20040 or email to villagesociety@yahoo.com. For income tax purposes VPIS is an approved 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization. A financial statement is available upon written request from the Virginia Office of Consumer Affairs.

**Falls Church Village Preservation and
Improvement Society**
P. O. Box 6824
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www.VPIS.org

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President's Message

The past several months have been a busy period for VPIS. In addition to the traditional VPIS activities, several new projects were completed or initiated.

VPIS continues to invest time and energy in our longstanding summer community activities including:

- the Memorial Day Parade (the VPIS float won a prize);
- the Neighborhood Tree Program tree planting event (a VPIS specialty);
- concerts in Cherry Hill Park (especially high turnout this year);
- Independence Day reading in the courthouse (moving as always); and
- the weekly VPIS booth at the Farmer's Market (please stop by).

Some of the new projects going forward over the past several months include:

- final installation of the new signs at the major entrances to the City (a cooperative project of VPIS and the City);
- final approval by the VPIS Board of *Five Environmental for Falls Church* (new and measurable goals for improving the Falls Church environment); and
- initial approval by the VPIS Board of a \$15,000 investment of VPIS funds in a new Arbor Day Commons (an important new addition to Frady Park).

You can learn more about all of these projects at the VPIS Fall Membership Meeting on Sunday, November 15th at 3:00 in the Community Center. Some of the meeting topics include a panel of speakers describing different periods of Falls Church history (a chance to learn a lot about Falls Church history from the experts), the biennial VPIS Design Awards (always a favorite) and election of VPIS officers for 2010 (come and use your vote.)

Finally, with the election of new VPIS officers at the Membership meeting, I will step down as VPIS President. I want to express my appreciation to VPIS members for all the help and encouragement you have given me over the past two years. Falls Church is lucky to have a dedicated and active group of citizens dedicated to strengthen the community and it has been an honor for me to be a part of this work.

Jeff Peterson

Nominating Committee Report

The VPIS Nominating Committee, Ruth Rodgers, Carol Sly, and Mike Volpe, presents the following candidates for election as Directors for terms ending December 31, 2012: Nancy Brandon, Elizabeth Meade, Mark & Ellen Gross, Jon Hundley, and Keith Thurston (all reappointments).

The Committee presents the following candidates for election as Officers for terms ending December 31, 2010:

President - Karl Ensign; Vice President - Michael Volpe; Treasurer - Melissa Teates; Recording Secretary - Ruth Rodgers; Corresponding Secretary - Barry Buschow; Immediate Past President - Jeff Peterson.

Mark your Calendars
VPIS Fall Meeting
Sunday, November 15
3:00 – 5:00 pm
Falls Church Community Center

Please join us for the Fall Meeting of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society. The meeting will include a number of business items, a brief presentation of the accomplishments of the Society and the presentation of local design awards. You will be asked to participate in the election of 2010 Board members and new officers. We are pleased to present a featured talk by local historian Ric Terman titled "Mapping the Historical Development of Falls Church," which will cover the time period from the mid 1800s, when Falls Church became a City, through the early 1900s. Expert comments on the presentation will be provide by Ross Netherton and Linda Lau. The meeting will be followed by a social hour.



VPIS Grant Helps Eagle Scout

This summer was a busy one for a local Boy Scout, Noam Terman. He was awarded a grant from VPIS to establish a rain garden at the Falls Church Scout House on S. Spring Street in the City. Noam is a member of BSA Troop 895 in the City of Falls Church and this project helped him earn his Eagle Badge.

His project accomplished several things including beautification of the front yard of the Scout House. This project benefits the surrounding community as well as providing an attractive appearance to visitors of the facility.

Noam developed a water loving native plant and shrub garden that is in an area where water stands after a heavy rain. The plants absorb the rain runoff in the front yard of the facility thus decreasing flooding and storm drain concerns. The project required soil preparation, providing walkways to the garden area and planting native plants and shrubbery appropriate for existing water conditions.

The Falls Church Scout Building Association, which owns and maintains the Scout House, praised both Noam and VPIS for this wonderful project.

Noam is the Grandson of long time VPIS member Ric Terman. Noam is shown above with his father and fellow scout helpers.

More information on VPIS grants can be found at www.VPIS.org.

VPIS ENCOURAGES STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS FOR FALLS CHURCH CITY

A new VPIS brochure outlining environmental goals recommended for the City will soon be available to the public at the Farmer's Market and on the VPIS website. Here are some excerpts from the brochure.

The City of Falls Church has a long record of forward-looking environmental programs and policies. The City is recognized as a local leader in the implementation of strong and effective programs for a sustainable environment. For the past 30 years, the Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) has promoted and supported strong programs to protect the environment in the City.

Today, however, the quality of the environment in the City is at risk from causes as diverse as rapid development and a changing climate. In order to maintain its position of leadership in addressing serious environmental problems, VPIS encourages the City of Falls Church to renew its commitment to strong environmental programs and make a concerted effort to expand environmental protection efforts in five key areas:

1) Increase Tree Canopy

The City should adopt a goal of restoring the tree canopy across the City.

2) Increase Solid Waste Recycling

The City should adopt a goal of increasing the percentage of the residential solid waste that is recycled and provide incentives for expanded recycling at commercial buildings.

3) Reduce Release of Greenhouse Gases Causing Global Warming

The City should adopt goals of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases that are causing global warming from City operations and from the City overall.

4) Increase Green or Pervious Surfaces

The City should adopt a goal of improving storm water management by increasing the amount of green or pervious surface across the City.

Environmental Goals (Continued)

5) Promote Building Environmental Standards

The City should require that large new commercial construction meet at least the Silver level in the Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program and adopt incentives for attainment of LEED ratings by existing commercial and residential buildings.

These five goals for strengthening environmental sustainability are described in more detail on our website (www.vpis.org). Each goal includes measurable baselines and performance targets for future years. In addition, VPIS will take specific steps to promote both the adoption of these goals and the implementation of policies and programs needed to assure their attainment.



2009 Neighborhood Tree Planting Events

**Saturday, Nov. 14th
Planting Party, 9 am**

**Contact: Seth Hemingway at
hemingway.seth@gmail.com**

**Visit the VPIS Booth at the
Farmer's Market every Saturday
Where you can
Make a contribution to the
Neighborhood Tree Program**

Historically Speaking (5)

FALLS CHURCH DURING THE CIVIL WAR

by Ric Terman



After Lincoln's election, the Harper's Ferry insurrection, and Ft. Sumter's bombardment, a Virginia referendum on secession was held on May 23, 1861.

The seventy Falls Church precinct voters (all white males) were split, with 44 for and 26 against secession, a vote that reflected the recent influx of northerners. The Civil War started near Falls Church on May 24, 1861, when Federal forces crossed the Potomac occupying the Arlington heights and Alexandria, and by June 19 Union forces occupied the village. On June 24, civilian balloonist Thaddeus Lowe made several tethered ascents to observe Confederate activities, from the Taylor's Tavern site at Seven Corners, the highest ridge at the edge of Union territory. This was the first aerial reconnaissance in American military history.

The troops advanced south and a major battle ensued July 21 at Bull Run with a resounding victory for the Confederates, after which they advanced cautiously towards Washington. On September 9 General Longstreet moved his headquarters to Falls Church and Colonel J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry occupied Munson's Hill at Bailey's Crossroads and Upton's Hill near Seven Corners. During September, they were under constant balloon observation by Lowe, who even directed artillery fire on their positions. By October, the Confederates had withdrawn and Union troops returned and built forts, including Fort Buffalo at Seven Corners and its adjacent Taylor Battery .

The focus of the war shifted elsewhere later in 1861 and early 1862. In August, the Confederates again moved north to win another victory at Bull Run, but were stopped at Chantilly and Antietam. Unionists in northern Virginia established a home guard, and one local unit in Falls Church was captained by Reuben Ives. On December 26, 1862, Major General J.E.B. Stuart made another three-day raid into Fairfax County and he left behind Colonel John S. Mosby and nine men to form a partisan rangers that operated extensively in northern Virginia for the rest of the war. The Gray Ghost became a folk hero and the subject of legend and myth. In 1864, the Rangers operated in our area, and killed two Home Guards during one raid.

From 1861 to 1865, the village suffered under the occupation by the Union troops. Life was difficult for the populace of mixed loyalties. Churches periodically served as hospitals, and The Falls Church was used briefly as a stable. From this area, at least nine others died in uniform during the war. Peace was welcomed.

CAY WIANT

Cay Wiant, a long time and very active member of the VPIS Board of Directors, died last June after a year-and-a-half-long struggle with cancer. Cay was not just "on" the VPIS Board. She also ardently disseminated VPIS's message about the importance of trees and other aspects of nature in Falls Church.

Cay was a very popular middle and high school English teacher at George Mason. Every year, without fail, she took the time to organize the Arbor Day celebrations at George Mason, and always accompanied the celebrations with an explanation to the students of how important the natural environment is to the City, and by planting a new tree at George Mason. Many of the trees at the high school can be attributed to Cay's Arbor Day celebrations. In her memory, the school system has created a butterfly garden at the high school.

Cay was also an enormously talented story teller. Falls Church residents, young and old, had the pleasure of hearing her tales at Cherry Hill and the Library – on Valentine's Day, Halloween, Christmas, and other occasions.

Cay was an accomplished writer. She wrote fiction all her life and, at the time of her death, had nearly completed her novel – a fantasy/adventure story set for young adults. Teaching and writing were her passions, and she imparted those passions to many of her George Mason students.

We were all so lucky to have known and worked with Cay and she will be dearly missed in Falls Church.

EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

Maintaining the Quality of the Neighborhoods



The Village Society stands for protecting and improving the quality of our community environment including maintaining the contexts of neighborhoods and preserving period structures as sustainable reminders of our heritage. It is in this built environment that we see the character of our community that provides a sense of place for us, and the sense of quality perceived by visitors.

At times we all may have wanted to complain about new or renovated houses or commercial buildings, and their lack of context to the city. The positive way to make our sense of community character known is to publicly recognize those homeowners, developers and architects that are producing beautiful additions to the City that are sensitive to the character of the community. The Excellence in Design Awards provides that recognition in a lasting way with a plaque to be placed on the structure.

Anyone can nominate a structure, landscape or garden for a design award. In some cases, neighbors submit a house because they are so pleased with new home construction or renovation. They are also nominated by the homeowners, architects and other professionals involved. But you do not have to be associated with the development to nominate it.

After the nominations are received, a Village Society committee supported by architects who do not practice in the city visit each nomination location and consider the quality of design and execution; design context; expression of local characteristics; style and period; sensitivity to the neighborhood; the compatibility of structural improvements to provide an overall design that works as a single whole; the demonstration of design value to the people that inhabit or use the building; sustainability; environmental responsibility; and overall site development including landscaping (if present) that is compatible with the overall period and style of the structure. Landscapes and gardens may be nominated separately without regard to the structure. A nomination form follows on the next page.

**No project is too modest for
consideration.**

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Nominations for the 2009 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN of the Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society are encouraged from residents and businesses. The Society wishes to recognize good design solutions which contribute to and enhance the visual character of the City of Fall Church. New or renovated residential and commercial buildings finished within the past 5 years, and gardens and landscaping are eligible for consideration. All entered projects must be located in the City of Falls Church. Official Entry forms should be received by Oct. 30, 2009, with the judging taking place in late October/early November. The awards will be presented at the VPIS Annual Meeting, on Sunday November 15, 2009.

Please provide the following information:

Entry Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Submitter's Name _____ Phone _____

Entry Category (Check One)

Residential Commercial Landscape/Gardens

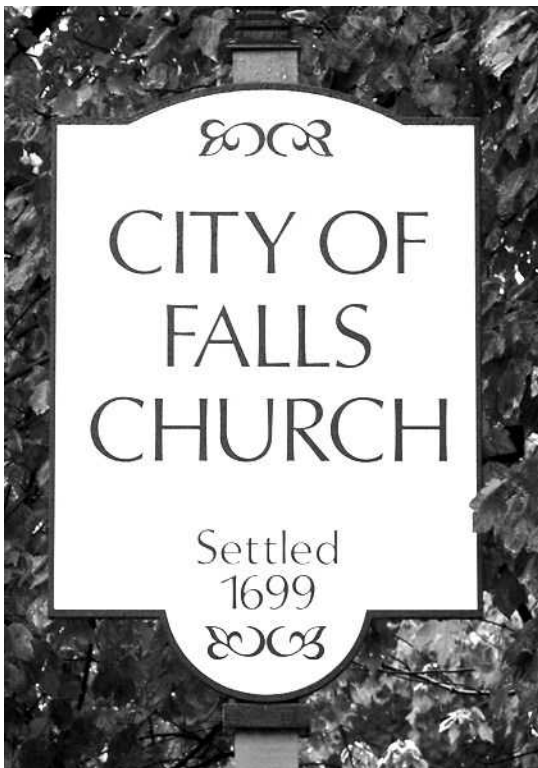
*Please describe entry using additional sheets if needed. Please indicate if a renovation is for the entire building or just a particular portion of the building. **No project is too modest for consideration.** Each entry will be judged on its own merits. You are encouraged to provide drawings or photographs if necessary to fully describe the project.*

Submit entry to
**VPIS Excellence in Design Awards Committee,
P. O. Box 6824, Falls Church, VA 22040.**



Falls Church Village Preservation and
Improvement Society
P. O. Box 6824
Falls Church, VA 22040
Email: VillageSociety@yahoo.com
www.VPIS.org

**NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FALLS CHURCH, VA
PERMIT NO. 66**



*Take a walk, bike or ride
to see our new signs.*

*Locations in the
City of Falls Church:*

*Grove Ave. & Spruce St
N. West St & Great Falls St.
Great Falls and N. West Sts.
E. Columbia & Underwood Sts.
Annandale Rd. & Hillwood Ave.
S. West St. & Laura Dr.
Lincoln Ave. & Yucatan St.
Little Falls St. & W&OD Trail*