

UPCOMING EVENTS

02/09 SLCA BOARD MEETING  
7:30 PM VIA ZOOM

# THE LANDING PAGE

The Official Newsletter of Stratford Landing

## SLCA Leadership

- Christopher Morgan**, President
- Matt Dunne**, Vice President
- Celia Boertlein**, Treasurer
- Jarrett Brant**, Secretary
- Patricia Barron**, Public Safety
- John Bioty**, Transportation
- Keith Kettell**, Rules
- Stori Zimmerman**, Membership
- Leah Chapla**, Planning and Zoning
- Glenn Ferri**, Historian/Website
- Anne Holloway**, Social Media

The Stratford Landing Citizens' Association is a not-for-profit, non-partisan team of volunteers founded in 1959 to promote the civic interests and general welfare of the residents of the Stratford Landing community. Membership is open to all who live within Stratford Landing and leadership opportunities are currently available.

Visit: <https://www.stratford-landing.org> or scan the code below to join today.



## A Letter from the President

### Happy New Year!

A new year means new resolutions and Stratford Landing is no exception. As we return to normal, our citizens' association and I will be focused on the following in 2022:

- Activating the NVCT land for better citizen use
- Updating our by-laws to improve business efficiency
- Increasing our membership numbers
- Doubling down on our local history initiatives



Photo Credit: Claire Kluskens

### Activating the NVCT land for better citizen use.

The Northern Virginia Conservation Trust owns a parcel of land adjacent to the pumping station on Stockton Pkwy and keeps it as mini-park and conservation space. Did you know that? There's no shame if you didn't – the site is relatively unmarked and honestly a bit uninviting. The SLCA has previously committed to funding new signage and the installation of two picnic benches and those improvements will be installed within the year. We're also working with groups such as the Friends of Little Hunting Creek and the NVCT for additional capital improvements to the area over time.

### Updating our by-laws to improve business efficiency.

Any update to our governing documents requires your involvement. Either a Special Meeting can be held, or a Referendum can be published. We anticipate invoking that process in early summer and will be asking for maximum participation to both understand the proposed amendments and for you – our members – to vote. While we are still working on the details, the proposed amendments will re-define membership criteria and how dues are determined.

### Increasing our membership numbers.

With more involvement and input, our citizens' association can do more. That's the simple math. That means more events, more capital improvements, and more pressure on our elected leaders to advocate for our agenda. Our goal is 100% membership for eligible members and look to each of you to advocate to your neighbors – new and old – to become involved.

### Doubling down on our local history initiatives.

Led by neighbor Glenn Ferri, over the past year we've collected dozens of historical documents about Stratford Landing, the Fort Hunt area, Mount Vernon, and more. These include newspaper clippings, advertisements, maps, and other documents. We've also gathered and scanned our community newsletters from a bygone era. Only a few of these documents are currently hosted on our website, and we're interested in expanding this project. We are actively seeking additional source material, so if you have any and are willing to share, please reach out soon.

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# A Letter From the President (*continued*)

## **“Trust in Allah, but tie your camel”.**

While serving in Iraq that’s a phrase one of my interpreters would often say when we needed more than just faith and luck on our side. My father would say that “locks keep honest men honest”.

Both phrases are good to keep in mind as we think back to several criminal acts affecting Stratford Landing recently.

On Christmas Eve, nearly a dozen vehicles on Creek Dr, Stockton Pkwy, Wittington Blvd, and Bluedale St. were rifled through. Personal property was stolen, including a vehicle right from the owners’ driveway. This is unfortunately in addition to a violent shooting nearby the 1st week of the year and a series of driveway catalytic converter thefts.

Why rob a bank? Because that’s where the money is. Stratford Landing residents have well-maintained properties and are exceptionally trusting people. Crime in both the metro region and our corner of Fairfax County is on the rise and we’re unfortunately going to find ourselves the target more-frequently until we can pressure our elected leaders to act. What we can do is to stay alert, report all crimes and suspicious activities, and think about remaining safe.

## **Neighbors Are Stepping Up.**

Since our last call for volunteer engagement and involvement, we’re pleased to announce two new additions to the SLCA Executive Committee.

Jarrett Brant has agreed to serve as your interim Secretary (until officially voted in by our members). Having recently served 7 years with the U.S. Marine Corps and having moved to Stratford Landing last summer, Jarrett is jumping in and is very eager to help strengthen our community.

Patricia Barron is returning to the Executive Board for a third term as your dual-hatted Public Safety Chair and the Public Safety Representative to the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens’ Associations. Having lived in Stratford Landing as both a youngster and an adult, she has previously served as the Public Safety Chair and as Treasurer. Her focus will be on educating neighbors and sharing information on safety incidents.

We thank them for serving our neighborhood and remind everyone that there are multiple other service options available to you including Block Captains, the Recreation Chair, Environment & Recreation Representative, and Military Family Liaison.

## **Here’s to a great 2022 for everyone in Stratford Landing.**

Christopher Morgan, President

## Around the Neighborhood...

### **Let’s Keep it Clean**

Unfortunately, a significant number of dog waste bags have been found littered in the NVCT conservation area next to the pumping station. If you’re able to snap a photo or video of anyone littering in Stratford Landing, please let us know so we can pursue an appropriate response. Litterbugs are not welcome in our neighborhood.

### **We Hear You**

Several neighbors recently expressed their concern over the traffic patterns and backed-up cars on Boswell Ave and Sherwood Hall Lane. We’ve heard your concerns and your Executive Committee passed an official Resolution addressing this issue. While this may be a slow process, it’s the right way to pressure our elected officials and government agencies to act and serve our community. This is another example of your SLCA leadership working for you.

### **Sewer Line Replacement Update**

Stockton Pkwy is now closed between Turbridge Ln and Waterford Rd while Fairfax County work crews excavate and replace the sewer line. Please do not enter this area. The road closure is expected to last through the end of May. Expect the construction noise, vehicles, and presence of crews to continue.





Red Fox Photo Credit: Claire Kluskens

# Animal of the Month

Claire Kluskens, Contributor

Foxes are commonly seen in our neighborhood. Fairfax County has two species—Red and Gray—that weigh 8-12 pounds and stand 12-16 inches tall at the shoulders. Red Foxes are often seen during the day and are usually red but can be black or marbled, and have a solid red tail or a white tip to the tail. Gray Foxes are mostly active at night (nocturnal) and are gray and have a black tip to their tail.

Foxes eat fruits, insects, small rodents, reptiles, amphibians, roadkill, and an occasional bird. Foxes may bark at night in late winter and early spring when attracting mates and preparing to raise young. Do not encourage a fox to approach you and never purposely leave food out for foxes. They are wild animals, not pets, and we need them to remain wild and keep their fear of humans. If a fox comes near you (accidentally or on purpose) don't run away. Stand your ground, wave your arms, yell, and act threateningly—it will run away from you.

If a fox acts aggressively or oddly, call Fairfax County's non-emergency number at 703-691-2131, describe the fox's behavior that concerns you, and ask to have an animal control officer dispatched. Foxes often "steal" newspapers, so if yours is missing, don't automatically blame the delivery person! A fox might be the cause instead. Foxes are a natural and beautiful part of our environment – enjoy your sightings!

For more information, see <https://fairfaxgardening.org/foxes/>.

## Flashbacks

Glenn Ferri, Historian

Flashback 1760

You are probably aware that Stratford Landing sits on land that once belonged to George Washington. You may have heard land near us referred to as River Farm. How did that come to be?

The first land patent - for 1800 acres, including our area - was issued to the Brent family in 1653/54. Giles Brent and his sister Margaret, Catholics originally from Maryland, were the first English settlers in Northern Virginia. Giles Brent married a Piscataway princess, so our area was first named Piscataway Neck. The patent was issued in the name of Giles Brent Jr., an infant at the time. When Giles Jr. died, the land passed on to his cousin George Brent, and then to his brother-in-law, William Clifton in 1739. Piscataway Neck then became Clifton's Neck.

In 1760, enter George Washington! Bankruptcy forced William Clifton to sell his property around what is now Little Hunting Creek. George Washington purchased all 1,806 acres from Clifton for 1,210 pounds sterling. (This is equivalent to roughly \$250,000 in today's money.) Also in 1760, Washington purchased an additional 238 acres from George Brent. Washington changed the name to River Farm. This is the northernmost of Washington's five farms. Though Washington loved and pursued farmland, he never lived on or worked the land of River Farm. Instead, he rented it to tenant farmer Samuel Johnson who paid a portion of his tobacco crop to Washington for the privilege. In 1773/74 he gifted it to his personal secretary, Tobias Lear, as a wedding present.



George Washington's plan of his farm on Little Hunting Creek in 1766

## Call for Submissions

What would you like to contribute to our bi-monthly newsletter?

The content of this and future editions of The Landing Page come from neighbors like you. What are you willing to create and share? Can you write Foliage of the Month? Share your favorite seasonal recipes? Do you have a penchant for creating crossword puzzles or sharing snaps of the area? Reach out today and let us know what talents you want to showcase to Stratford Landing and beyond.



# Invasive Plants of Virginia

Celia Boertlein, Treasurer

## What are invasive plants?

Invasive plants are described as introduced species that can cause health, economic, or ecological damage in their new range. Some of these plants were introduced accidentally through shipping, such as stilt grass (*Microstegium Vitineum*), which was used to protect delicate china and other fragile items in transit. Others, such as Japanese barberry (*Berberis Thunbergii*), English ivy (that bastion of English gardens), Bradford pear or Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*), and mile-a-minute (*Persicaria perfoliate*) are planted in gardens as ornamentals. However, they quickly disperse and become invasive plants that are seen throughout our area.

## Why are they bad?

With few natural limitations, these plants can grow rapidly and uncontrollably, displacing native plants. Many provide minimal food or shelter for native animals. For example, the vine Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus Orbiculatus*), kills trees by girdling the trunk and weighing down the branches. Japanese Barberry creates dense thickets that shade out saplings and other plants. Invasive species are becoming an increasing and major problem in many parks and rights-of-ways.

## What can you do to help?

Learn more about invasive species -- By favoring native plants, we can restore and sustain biodiversity. You can help stop the spread of invasive plants by replacing them with native species in your own landscape. Research which native plants have fruits, flowers, etc., that provide shelter and food for our birds, insects, and other animals. Native species are those that occur in the region in which they evolved. They are adapted to the climate, soils, timing of rainfall, drought, and frost. Once established, they require minimal upkeep, including watering. Take actions to prevent the spread and establishment of invasive species -- Encourage your local plant nurseries to carry more native species and educate their customers on why they should not plant invasives in the first place. You can join in events in your local area to control and remove invasive plants. You can also re-create nature in your yard.

**WANTED**

These members of the “Green Winter Gang” are wanted dead for being non-native invasive foliage. They’ve been spotted around Stratford Landing and posses are encouraged to pull or prune on sight. They pose a risk to native plants and offer poor habitat and sustenance to birds and insects. As a general rule, if a plant is green in winter in these here parts, it should be removed.

	<b>English Ivy</b> aka <i>Helix bedera</i> . This crawling vine is wanted for strangling trees, burying ground plants, and taking over yards.		<b>Bush honeysuckle</b> aka <i>Lonicera Spp.</i> Lures birds to spread its seeds far and wide, all while climbing over anything it can reach.
	<b>Wintercreeper</b> aka <i>Euonymus fortune</i> aka Fortune’s spindle, wanted for escaping from ornamental gardens and hiding out in forest areas.		<b>Privets</b> , <i>Ligustrum Spp.</i> Known to muscle out other shrubs and tries to be the only plant under the tree canopy.
	<b>Japanese honeysuckle</b> aka <i>Lonicera japonica</i> known to climb up structures and other plants, and crawl across yards. Lawnmowers have little affect.		<b>Bradford pear</b> , <i>Pyrus calleryana</i> , aka Callery pear. A mutant creation, it spreads quickly and has 4-inch thorns.

Stratford Landing Citizens’ Association • Christopher Morgan, President  
www.stratford-landing.org

For tips on controlling or eliminating invasives as well as lists of invasive plants and native alternatives, visit Plant NOVA Natives at [www.plantnovanative.org](http://www.plantnovanative.org), the Virginia Native Plant Society at [www.vnps.org](http://www.vnps.org), and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation at [www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov)



# Holiday Home Decorating Contest Winners

**Congratulations to all of our SLCA Christmas Decorating Winners!**

All winners received a yard sign as well as a \$25 GC to Village Hardware.



Tracy and Elizabeth Hutchinson and Jojo spreading cheer in the annual SLCA Holiday Parade



Best Night Time Décor - Doreen & Justin at 2317 Creek Drive



Best Day Time Décor - The Burch Family at 8703 Stockton Parkway



Most Festive Overall - Scott & Jennifer at 2611 Childs Lane



Most Humorous Award - Greg & Gillian at 2404 Culpeper Rd



# Get Involved, Meet Your Neighbors

While we have seen an up-tick in volunteers for our board, and for block captains, we are still looking for others to become involved.

## Recreation Committee Chair

There will be no Easter Egg Hunt this Spring unless we have a volunteer for this position within a few weeks. The SLCA has historically hosted various community events throughout the year. You would be taking the lead on planning, preparing, and running events that make sense for the members of our community. The ideal candidate wants get to know members of the community and has a penchant for working together and motivating team members.

## Military Family Liaison

This person is in a position to engage the sizable military community living in Stratford Landing and serve as a sort of Block Captain at Large. The ideal candidate would be the spouse of a senior active duty service member. It's also completely acceptable if you're only able to commit to a term measured just in months.

## Environment & Recreation Representative

The E&R Committee serves in an advisory capacity and is asked to weigh in on large construction projects in the district, changes to the Comprehensive Plan and County Code, parks projects, and legislative issues.

# Become a Block Captain

Stori Zimmerman, Membership Chair

Howdy to our current & future SLCA members & volunteers. I wanted to take a brief moment to highlight a vital volunteer role within our association – Block Captain. “What is a Block Captain? How does volunteering as a Block Captain help our community? How can I become a Block Captain?” These are all great questions that I hope to answer here.

First & foremost, I wanted to give a huge THANK YOU to all of the Block Captains who have served & are currently serving. One thing that we have learned over the years is that blocks with representation have more neighbors engaged within the community & the SLCA. This is FABULOUS & it could not be done without each & every one of YOU!

With 54 blocks (approximately 774 households) within the SLCA boundaries, Block Captains play a SUPER important “boots on the ground” role in driving engagement within our community. From welcoming new neighbors into the community to getting the word out for neighbors in need, sidewalks that need repair, street lamps/posts needing repair, Block Captains play a crucial role in helping us better meet & serve the needs of our community. This engagement culminates during our annual membership drive as Block Captains connect with the households within their block(s) for membership renewals and/or to join the SLCA.

Currently, 7 blocks are in need of a Block Captain. If you are interested in volunteering as a Block Captain, please feel free to reach out to Stori Zimmerman, at [membership@stratford-landing.org](mailto:membership@stratford-landing.org).



Fairfax County will pick up yard debris. Please visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/recycling-trash/county-collection/customers/special-pick-up> for more information.

For downed power lines or power outages, call Dominion at 866-366-4357 or visit <https://www.dominionenergy.com/virginia/report-outage-or-emergency>

# Contact Us

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