

UPCOMING EVENTS

**12/17 HOLIDAY HOME CONTEST
ENTRY DEADLINE**

**12/18 SANTA ON A FIRETRUCK
1:00 PM**

**12/19 HOLIDAY HOME CONTEST
WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

THE LANDING PAGE

The Official Newsletter of Stratford Landing

SLCA Leadership

- Christopher Morgan**, President
- Matt Dunne**, Vice President
- Matthew Moores**, Treasurer
- Sierra Carman**, Secretary
- Patricia Barron**, Public Safety
- John Bioty**, Transportation
- Nicole Vitale**, Recreation
- Stori Zimmerman**, Membership
- Leah Chapla**, Planning and Zoning
- Glenn Ferri**, Historian/Website
- Keith Kettell**, Rules

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.



The State of Stratford Landing

Christopher Morgan, President

What a great year 2022 has been in Stratford Landing. As we prepare for Christmas and other holidays, let's take a moment to look back on the gifts we've already received throughout the year.

First, I'd like to take a step back and level-set our organization. The SLCA is not an HOA. We cannot force membership. We cannot levy taxes. We cannot issue fines. We are the collection of neighbors living in this area who for the past 65 years have worked together. Worked together for events. For public safety. For local advocacy. For making Stratford Landing great.

Everything the SLCA accomplishes, and does for the neighborhood is because of the time that volunteers have been willing to give. It's our Block Captains, and our Executive Committee who put in the work to run this group. This includes not just the monthly executive committee meetings that often go late into the evening. It includes serving at our events, dealing with copious email threads, and running errands to mundane places like the bank and print shop. If not for our volunteers, we would not have a citizens' association.



This year, we welcomed several new volunteers to our executive committee and we thanked those who have moved on.

Celia Boertlein retired as Treasurer after serving since 2005, and Anne Holloway stepped down from her work managing our social media accounts.

While we thank them for their service, we welcomed several new faces to the team this year.

Patricia Barron, who grew up in the neighborhood and now lives here as an adult joined as our Public Safety Chair, and has the mandate to coordinate and consolidate our efforts to keep the neighborhood safe.

Nicole Vitale who moved to Stratford Landing relatively recently with her family has jumped into her role as Recreation Chair and has already produced several terrific events, such as our Egg Hunt, and summer food truck event.

Jarret Brant and his wife also recently moved to the neighborhood after separating from the US Marine Corps. Jarret volunteered first as our Secretary, then Treasurer, and now recently in a new capacity.

At our Annual Membership Meeting held on October 25th, we even had two neighbors volunteer from the floor to serve on our Executive Committee.

Matthew Moores volunteered to serve as our Treasurer and Sierra Carman volunteered as our Secretary. We welcome them both.

The State of Stratford Landing

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Then there are our veterans, including John Bioty, Keith Kettell, Leah Chapla, Glenn Ferri, Stori Zimmerman, and Matt Dunne who have dedicated years and years to the SLCA and serving our neighbors. Without this backbone, we simply would not have the legs to stand up, let alone run.

In addition, a special thank you to Stephen Schlacter who coordinates our neighborhood blood drives.

A special thanks to our Block Captains. Part ambassador, part recruiter, our Block Captains serve on the front lines and we appreciate the work each of you puts in.

Finally, we'd love to have you. Yes, I'm talking to you. There is no limit to the number of volunteers the SLCA can have and we need good leaders to keep advancing our goals.

We have accomplished much in the past year, and have done several new things which the SLCA hasn't ever done in its six-and-a-half decade history.

Let's look back over 2022.

October

- A year ago we created our first official SLCA email accounts using our stratford-landing.org domain. The email accounts will ensure continuity within positions as volunteers change, and additionally protect volunteers personal email accounts should the association ever be faced with a discovery order. The email addresses also make it easier to reach our executive committee members.
- We also added a new mass email system to distribute messages and our newsletters. Prior to this tool, we had to copy and paste hundreds of email addresses into 3 separate emails 15-minutes apart. Now we can see our email open and read rates, along with other metrics. Additionally, we can now send out timely emails more-quickly, such as for any safety or crime alerts.
- In addition to those new things, we of course kept the old. Our traditional Halloween costume parade was extremely well-attended, on a very warm day and it was great to see so many kids and parents out and about, wearing only masks that were part of a costume.

November

- Our by-laws define the requirement for a bi-monthly newsletter, and this year we've published all 6. The November-December newsletter took on a new format with some updated branding. We've been calling it the "Landing Page", which I personally find very clever as a juxtaposition between Stratford Landing and the term used for entry web pages. We added new features such as a "Bird of the Month" article, and historical "Flashback" articles. And we reintroduced the graphic element originally used back in the 1960's; the "Cryer", a little man who's shouting the news. I think that in itself is incredibly appropriate as we maintain our traditions even with a modern look.
- Also, we collected and uploaded all the historic newsletters we could get our hands on to our website. This is a great way to learn the history of our area and understand where we have been. We have issues from as far back as 1968, and we hope you read them online.

December

- After a break of several years, we brought back our Holiday Home Decorating Contest to encourage everyone to celebrate the season and decorate their homes. In order to not only help organize the event, but with the goal and benefit of driving traffic to the Association Facebook page, we created an opt-in process where entrants were required to reply to a post to explicitly enter. We had great engagement, selected 4 winners, and each of those received a gift card to Village Hardware. In addition, for this year's Holiday Home Decorating Contest, those 4 winners are going to be invited to help judge this year's contest alongside our Executive Committee members.
- Another long-standing tradition is Santa parading through the neighborhood on a fire truck. This was held on a Sunday afternoon in December.

January

- In January, along with the Friends of Little Hunting Creek and the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, we hosted a series of cleanups at the NVCT property at 8610 Stockton Pkwy. This is a "parklet" owned by the NVCT and utilized as a conservation area on the creek. Over several weekend sessions, trash was picked up, vines and invasives were pulled, logs were placed to make trails, and new trees were planted. Some of the afternoons were pretty chilly, but folks were still out there working to improve this community space.

April

- After a brief hiatus, our traditional Egg Hunt resumed in April just before Easter. We went through 700 eggs, although I'll be the first to admit that they were less "hidden" than strewn about Stratford Landing Park. Over 50 children attended with their families on a beautiful spring day.
- In April we also launched only our second capital fundraising campaign to repoint the bricks on our 3 entryway signs. Through the generosity of neighbors, we raised over \$6,000 and successfully repointed and protected the brick pillars. Still outstanding is the removal of invasive plants and new plantings near the signs. That delay is not financial, but due to the manpower of our all-volunteer board.

May

- In another brand new activity, the SLCA donated snowcones to the Stratford Recreation Association. What this means is that the SLCA made a donation to the SRA of \$200 for the purpose of paying for snow cones at the pool's "Super Sunday" kick-off event. At this event, new pool members come to visit the facility, you can meet the swim and dive team coaches, and there is a swimsuit swap. SLCA leadership manned the booth that afternoon and handed out 175 snow cones in 4 flavors. And that's before you count the syrup combinations.
We did this activity for several reasons:
 1. Being a high-traffic neighborhood event, we got the opportunity to talk to members and potential members about the SLCA.
 2. It provides another value-add item to the list for, "what does the SLCA *do* for the neighborhood?"
 3. SRA members got a refreshing treat.
 4. SRA received a small donation and had a service provided for their event.
- In the past several years, there has been zero collaboration between the SLCA and SRA and this is the first of hopefully more joint events between the two organizations. When you look even "next door" to Riverside Gardens, you can see the joint events the RGCA and their pool organization do together, such as their Oktoberfest.

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Meet Your New Officers

Matthew Moores, Treasurer

"Hello, all! My name is Matthew Moores and I'm the new treasurer for the Stratford Landing Citizens Association. I'm a program manager for a clothing company, and I'm also a retired U.S. Marine Corps tank commander. I was born in Delaware, but have been living in the DC area since 2014. My wife, Marisa, and I moved to Stratford Landing in 2020 from DC. We have one daughter who was born in 2021. I'm glad to serve as your new treasurer and I look forward to getting to know you all better in the months and years to come."

Sierra Carman, Secretary

"Hi everyone! My name is Sierra Carman, and my husband and I moved to Stratford Landing in August of this year with our dog, Hank. I'm a project manager for the Bureau of Diplomatic Security at the State Department and a Marine Corps veteran. I volunteered to be the Secretary because I love this neighborhood (and have since the first time I stayed with a friend over on Childs Lane) and I want to contribute to keeping our community a wonderful place to live for everyone."

Halloween Home Decorating Contest Winners

Our first-ever Halloween contest was a great success with multiple homes entering via posting on our Facebook page. Winners received a yard sign prior to Trick-or-Treating, a gift card to Village Hardware, and bragging rights for an entire year! Thanks to an anonymous neighbor for underwriting this event with a generous donation.



Scariest - Randy and TJ Myers, 8709 Stockton



Funniest - Andrew Bauer, 8509 Camden



Most-Creative - Katie and Shawn Stafford, 2502 Turbridge



People's Choice - Rachel Lilly, 2632 Childs

Holiday Home Decorating Contest

Our annual tradition of rewarding the best-decorated homes continues for another year.

Categories are Best in Daylight, Best at Nighttime, Best Traditional, and Most Humorous.

How to enter: Post a photo of your home on the contest's Facebook post as a comment. Please make sure your name on Facebook matches our SLCA membership database. We ask for posting on the Facebook page as a way to ensure members are explicitly entering and are comfortable with images of their homes being shared in our newsletters, emails, and over the Internet. **The deadline to enter is Dec. 17th.**

Prizes include a yard sign and a gift card. Winners will be announced on Dec. 19th.

Santa on a Firetruck

We have it on good authority that while the reindeer are finalizing their conditioning training, Santa plans to patrol Stratford Landing via firetruck to check on the boys and girls of the neighborhood. We're expecting him on Sunday, December 18th starting at 1:00 pm.

See the Facebook page for the planned route. If you would like to join Santa for his ride, email [Nicole Vitale](mailto:Nicole.Vitale@recreation@stratford-landing.org) at recreation@stratford-landing.org for coordination details.

Halloween Parade

Sponsored by the Alexandria's Children's Theatre (ACT), the costume parade and party were great fun. The weather certainly wasn't scary and we experienced a beautiful afternoon.



Thomas Stockton Dies; Director of Planning For Fairfax County

Thomas Jefferson Stockton, director of planning for Fairfax County, died at his home Monday night after a short illness. He was 61 years old.

A pioneer in the planning and zoning of Fairfax County, Mr. Stockton suffered a heart attack which led to his death after a short illness. He is survived only by his widow, the former Miss Josephine Harrison, whom he married in 1945.



Mr. Stockton.

Mr. Stockton was born in Kansas, but his family moved to Washington when he was 2 years old. He was educated in the Washington public schools and attended George Washington University.

He began working with the Coast and Geodetic Survey, then went with the Southern Railroad until his family bought a farm in Fairfax County near Burke, Va., in 1914. There he lived until his death.

He was named to the Fairfax County Planning Commission in 1938 and was one of the men who drafted the county zoning laws. He became county planning engineer in 1943 and was director of planning when he died.

During World War II he also served as an official in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration.

Mr. Stockton was a member of the American Society of Planning officials and the Washington Board of Trade.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Truro Episcopal Church in Fairfax. He will be buried in Fairfax Cemetery.

Truman Is Invited

Flashbacks

Glenn Ferri, Historian

Flashback - 1950

Most of you have probably noticed that a portion of Thomas J. Stockton Parkway was closed off for several months due to the sewage line replacement project. Now that the project is completed, the road has been restored with new curbs and repaving. This may bring up questions that have been asked in Stratford Landing for a long time: Just who was Thomas J. Stockton, and why is it called a Parkway?

Part of the answer can be found in his obituary in the Evening Star (Washington) Jan 11, 1950, page A-2. Rumor has it that at one time the plan was to construct a parkway on this side of Little Hunting Creek similar to the George Washington Memorial Parkway on the other side. I think we can all agree that Stockton Parkway turned out just fine as it is.

Mysteries remain! Why would a street platted in the late 1950s be named for him, why name a street after someone who never lived here, and why would developers from Long Island so honor the former planning director? If anybody has any more information, we'd love to hear from you.

Little Hunting Creek Parklet Celebration

On an absolutely beautiful and unseasonably warm Sunday afternoon in October, the Friends of Little Hunting Creek, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, and Stratford Landing Citizens Association celebrated the Little Hunting Creek Preserve and the improvements made over the past few years.

The improvements included two new benches, three new wood duck nesting boxes, new signage, and fewer trash and invasive vines, all made possible by volunteers' time and your donations.

Supervisor Dan Storck rode his bicycle over to join the festivities and thanked the committee for coming together to improve the space.

The site was once co-owned by about 18 Stratford Landing families. In 2022, the parcel was donated to the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, who placed the 1.8 acre wetland parcel into a conservation easement.

The NVCT posted an article about the event on their website as well: <https://www.nvct.org/post/community-gathers-for-little-hunting-creek-grand-opening>



Transportation Talk

John Bioty, Community Improvements and Transportation Chair

Bridge 12 Reconstruction on the Mount Vernon Trail - Complete!

In the April/May 2022 Newsletter, we announced that the National Park Service (NPS), in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration and Virginia Department of Transportation would be working to replace Bridge 12 along the Mount Vernon Trail. First opened on April 15, 1972, the Mount Vernon Trail spans over 18 miles from George Washington's Mount Vernon to Theodore Roosevelt Island near Arlington.

During Bridge 12 Project, located near Fort Hunt Park, trail users were detoured around the construction area. To protect trail users, concrete barriers were placed on the George Washington Memorial Parkway and drivers were guided into one lane. This concrete barrier restriction on the Parkway was bothersome to many drivers, especially when bus traffic was encountered in the opposite direction. We're happy to report that the project is complete and the concrete barriers have been removed.

Ultimately, NPS' reconstruction involved relocating Bridge 12, expanding it to 14 feet in width, installing upgraded railings, and resurfacing the trail from Waynewood Blvd to Fort Hunt Road. The modification now allows for a straighter path and a reduced grade leading to and from the bridge which has reduced the severity and frequency of bike crashes on this section of trail. Bridge 12 is first of four (4) planned projects along the Mount Vernon Trail. Ribbon cutting took place early this fall and Mount Vernon District Supervisor, Dan Storck, and Virginia State Senator, Scott Surovell, were among the officials who attended. NPS' next reconstructions for the Southern section of the Mount Vernon Trail will focus on Bridges 23 and 24 between Belle Haven Road and Tulane Drive. NPS plans to replace four bridges in the next five years. SLCA would like to thank the National Park Service for this neighborhood safety improvement.



New By-Laws

At our Annual Membership Meeting, we ratified two amendments to our organizational by-laws.

We expanded eligibility to join the SLCA as an Associate Member to folks who don't live within our neighborhood boundaries. If you've moved out of Stratford Landing, but want to remain involved, this is an opportunity for you.

We also removed the "hardcoding" of the annual membership fee being set at \$10. While there are no current plans to change the fee, the flexibility of being able to modify it will be more efficient.

Our By-Laws are available online: <https://www.stratford-landing.org/aboutslca>



Wild Animals

We're lucky to live with so much natural beauty and wild fauna in the neighborhood. If you do see a wild animal that appears injured, seems sickly, or is behaving odd, contact the Fairfax County Animal Protection Police through the police non-emergency line at (703) 691-2131.

Every year there are also reports of hawks and eagles attempting to grab small dogs, and cats disappearing when the fox population increases, so please keep your animals safe.

The State of Stratford Landing

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June

- To celebrate the official start of summer, on the first Friday after the school term, we hosted the Dogs on the Curb food truck at Stratford Landing Park. The event started at 5 pm and there was a steady stream of eaters until around 7:30 pm.
- June also saw the installation of 2 park benches at the NVCT parklet at Londonderry Rd. and Stockton Pkwy. SLCA had made a donation for these benches with other groups a while back and it's great to have them in place. Additional signage is still forthcoming and should be in place by early November.

October

- More recently, this October, we have introduced another new event. We are currently in the middle of our Halloween Home Decorating Contest. Similar to what we do around Christmas, the goal is to get neighbors excited about decorating, engage interest in spooky sights, and ensure Stratford Landing is a festive fun place to celebrate the seasons. If you haven't posted a picture of your home to the Facebook page, do so before we vote for the winners on Friday. Or simply Like the entry you think is the best to help select our People's Choice award.
- On Sunday, Oct. 30th, we held our Halloween Parade and Party, which was graciously sponsored by the Alexandria Children's Theatre (ACT), and we concluded our first-ever Halloween Home Decorating Contest.
- Our Annual Membership Meeting was conducted via Zoom on Tuesday the 25th, and we passed several updates to our by-laws after a healthy discussion.

What Does the Future Hold?

- Let's get all the bad news out of the way. We need more involvement. Membership is down, and we're currently at 50% of eligible households in good standing having paid their 2023 dues. That represents a trend of year-over-year drops. There are 774 homes in Stratford Landing which are eligible to become members of the Association, and our goal is 100% participation.
- Twice in the past 3 years, we've held fundraising campaigns for capital projects, both being related to our entry signs. We very likely will continue the strategy of keeping extremely low annual fees and utilizing formalized donations for capital projects, as well as events. At \$10 a household, even at full participation, we cannot afford the traditional events at 2022 prices. What those capital projects may be depend entirely on what the neighborhood wants. There is much we can do and we're limited only by our collective creativity.
- We also expect the events we hold will require underwriting going forward and we will be actively soliciting sponsorships. Halloween candy isn't free. Plastic eggs are not free. Prices are high, but thankfully many pockets are deep.
- Similarly, we are continuing to look for Newsletter advertising sponsors. This is a great opportunity for hyper-focused marketing and if you have a business – or just want to be a patron – we'd love to have you sponsor all or some of the bi-monthly newsletters.
- 2022 saw us maintain traditions and introduce new initiatives. The SLCA did quite a bit and in order to maintain that same momentum, we do need your help.
- What can you do throughout the year? Talk to your neighbors, let them know about the SLCA. Volunteer. We are looking for volunteers across the board, from Executive Committee leadership, to Block Captains, to folks willing to work on a committee. It's a great way to meet your neighbors and learn more about what's going on in our part of the world. Share the newsletters and recommend the Facebook page. Contribute articles to the newsletter. Attend the neighborhood events.
- I really believe that Stratford Landing is currently going through big changing shifts, and I look to all you to ensure we all shift in the right direction. We will continue our efforts in 2023 and hope for another tremendous year.

Contact Us

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Advertise Here

Whole and partial-page advertisements are available for future editions of The Landing Page. Get your ad or special message out to a hyper-local audience bi-monthly.

Contact treasurer@stratford-landing.org for details.

