

# The Rambler

Newsletter of the  
Rose Hill Civic Association

## President's Message

### Security and Strawberry Shortcakes,

#### On May 24<sup>th</sup> RCHA Menu

The Rose Hill Civic Association will hear Lee Walters talk on security, followed by the serving of strawberry shortcake at its Tuesday, May 24 meeting starting at 7 p.m. in the community room of the John Marshall Library. Those of you who have heard Lee talk on what to do in case of injury know we are in for an informative and interesting evening. Lee will provide some pointers and reminders as to how you can protect your person, property and possessions. And after all the rain, the berries should be bursting with flavor. We'll mix business with pleasure as we update everyone on any other news, answer questions and take nominations for Rose Hill Beauties. Join your neighbors for an interesting presentation and strawberry shortcake.

Mark your calendar for the Fish Fry on Tuesday, June 28. Bring a side or dessert and enjoy fried fish that will melt in your mouth. RHCA members are free. RHCA provides the fish, lemonade and all the necessary paper products and utensils. Nonmember families are asked to contribute \$10 toward the cost of the main course and bring a side or dessert to share. The meal will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will

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continue until the food runs out. The event will be held in the front yard of the Nichols residence at 6416 Rose Hill Drive. Walk if you can or park on one of the nearby streets and be careful crossing Rose Hill Drive.

Also put the annual Night Out to honor our First Responders. This free event will be held on Tuesday, August 2, also in the Nichols' front yard. RHCA will provide hot dogs, lemonade, paper products and utensils. Bring a side or dessert to share.

Remember RHCA does not meet in July or August.

### Rose Hill Shopping Center Incidents

Residents are advised to be on the alert for a presence of a scam involving a person claiming damage to his automobile, then asking for money to make repairs. There have been several incidents of this type in the shopping center recently. The person approaches another driver, usually a woman, in a high agitated state claiming that the driver has hit and damaged his car. If this happens to you, call 911 immediately. That usually causes the scammer to leave because there is no damage and he is making a false accusation. If you can't call, or your phone doesn't have service, ask for help if there is anyone nearby. If not, go immediately into the nearest business and ask them to call the police. If you can, get the license tag number of the car the person is driving. RHCA already has reported previous incidents to the police at the Franconia station.

### ROSE HILL VOLLEYBALL

Join Linda and Dave Nichols every Thursday night at 6pm for volleyball at Lee District Park. Postponed in the event of inclement weather. Join the fun! Meet your neighbors! Free workout! Rose Hill has a court reserved every Thursday. Special thanks to our neighbors at Lee District Park.

### RHCA Officers

**President:** Carl Sell, 703.971.4716, sellcarl@aol.com

**Vice President:** Linda Nichols, 703.971.0755,  
dovefellow@aol.com

**Secretary:** VACANT

**Treasurer:** Carolyn Slenska, 703.922.4135,  
Carolyn.slenska@lycos.com

**Editor, The Rambler:** Susan Jones, scheungjones@gmail.com

**Neighborhood Watch:** VACANT, rosehillwatch@aol.com

**Webmaster:** Jim Sapp, jimsapp7@msn.com

**RHCA, P.O. Box 10891, Alexandria, VA 22310**  
**www.myrosehill.com**

## **County Fee Increases**

In addition to the four cent increase on the tax rate (see Supervisor McKay's report on Page 9), Fairfax County has increased fees associated with sewer service. There also has been a slight increase in the storm water service district tax. The sewer service charge has been increased to \$6.68 per 1,000 gallons. This is an increase of three cents. The sewer service base charge has been increased to \$24.68 per quarter. You currently pay \$20.15. The storm water service district tax has been increased to \$0.0275 per \$100 of assessed real estate value. The current rate is \$0.0250. There has been a decrease in the Phase I Dulles Rail Transportation tax rate from \$0.19 to \$0.17 per \$100 of assessed value. The Tysons Service District tax rate will remain at \$0.05 of assessed value. Neither of these service districts affects the tax rate for Rose Hill residents. Two sports related fees also are being increased. The individual participant application fee for rectangular field users will be increased to \$8.00 from its current \$5.50. Tournament team application fee for rectangular fields has been increased to \$50. The current fee is \$15. All of these changes will take place July 1.

## **Meals Tax Proposal**

On another tax issue, the Board of Supervisors will vote June 7 on whether to ask voters to approve a meals tax in a referendum as part of the November Presidential election November 8. The meals tax will be added to all prepared food costs, including fast foods, sit down restaurants and cafes and takeout food from grocery stores. It will be added to the current six percent levy. Many of the Board members favor the new tax, which is estimated to bring in almost \$100 million annually. The proposal envisions 70 percent of the revenue going to the schools and 30 percent to other county services. More than 50 percent of the County's total budget already is spent on schools although only 30 percent of households have children in schools. The County is required by Virginia law to ask the voters for approval of the new tax. A similar proposal failed back in 1992.

A meals tax also would be on top of the four-cent increase in real estate taxes for the fiscal year that begins July 1 of this year. That will result in a tax increase of approximately \$300 on your tax bill for the year. The

amount depends on whether the value of your property and/or house was raised or lowered by the assessment earlier in the year.

In addition to the Presidential race, we will have another hot topic on the ballot in the form of a meals tax. The hungry beneficiaries are already jockeying for a seat at the table.

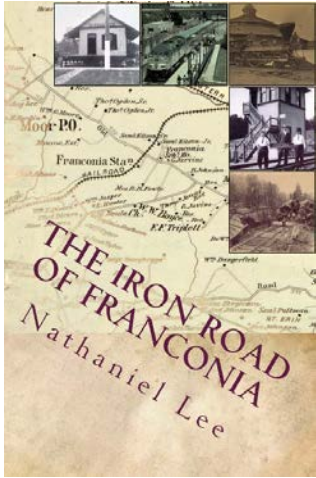
## **Rain Slows Beauty Judging**

Because of the prolonged period of rain, the list of 2016 Rose Hill Beauty properties was not available in time for this edition of the Rambler. Hopefully, the work will be completed in time for the June Rambler. We encourage homeowners to nominate their own property or that of their neighbors for this coveted award. Take a look in your block and see if there are others who deserve recognition. Call or e-mail Linda or I. Remember, only members of RHCA qualify for signs. For those of you who already have signs, please don't discard them. We will replace them if they are damaged. If not, we will add a sticker signifying the property is a 2016 Beauty!

## **Franconia Railroad Book**

Nathaniel Lee, a member of the Franconia Museum Board of Directors, has written an informative book on the history of the railroad that basically separates Franconia from Springfield, at least as far as the Post Office is concerned. Titled "The Iron Road of Franconia," the book follows the creation of the railroad after the Civil War up to today's tracks owned by CSX Railroad to haul freight and used by Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express for passenger service. Metro's Blue Line parallels the tracks. Although the tracks have been moved slightly in some spots over the years, the railroad serves the same route as it did in the beginning. Nathaniel locates stations such as Bush Hill, Clermont, Franconia and Newington, telling the history of each. The book costs \$20 and is on sale at the Franconia Museum, located in the Franconia

Government Center, 6121 Franconia Road. The Museum is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. As you enter the Museum, look straight ahead and just over the display cases on the far wall you'll see the sign for the Franconia Station!



### More Members

The following residents have signed up since publication of the April Rambler: Larry & Connie Fulk, 6410 Cottonwood Drive; Trigg & Beverly Flannagan, 6514 Haystack Road; Charles and Ana Kimberly, 6504 Cottonwood Drive; Tom and Alice Mangum, 6413 Rose Hill Drive; Barbara Peyton, 4601 Apple Tree Drive and Marie Sherfey, 6414 Rose Hill Drive. We are *not* publishing the entire list of names this month, but if you want to check to see if yours was listed last month go to [myrosehill.com](http://myrosehill.com), click on the Rambler and check the April Rambler. If not, please print out the membership form and send it, along with your check, to RHCA, PO Box 19891, Franconia, VA 22310. Remember, only RHCA members qualify for Rose Hill Beauty signs.

### Volunteers Needed

RHCA needs someone to help with our growing e-mail network. It involves keeping the list current and sending out meeting notices and any important community updates in between meetings. At present, we have more than 200 addresses. We do not share the addresses with

anyone for other community or commercial purposes. If you are willing to help, please call or e-mail either Linda or myself.

### Unsightly House on Rose Hill Drive

The grass is overgrown at this vacant rental house across from the shopping center. The house is in disrepair. It is owned by an absentee landlord. The County has notified the owner that he needs to cut the grass or the County will do it and he will have to pay for it. If he doesn't pay, it will be added to his tax bill. RHCA complained about the grass and the condition of the house. The location on Rose Hill Drive is an unattractive first impression of Rose Hill. As you drive by, note that the two adjacent properties are immaculate!



-Carl Sell

### Around Rose Hill

#### John Marshall Library

6209 Rose Hill Dr, 703.971.0010. Call ahead to register for events.

Hours: M, T – 10am – 9pm; W, F – 10am – 6pm; Th. – 1pm – 9pm; Sat 10am – 5pm

CLOSED MAY 30<sup>th</sup>!!!

- \* **Ongoing Event.** English Conversation. Each Thursday at 2:00pm. Conversation group for people learning English. Adults.
- \* **Ongoing Event.** Friday Morning Movie Time. 1030am. Age 2-5.
- \* **Ongoing Event.** e-Book Workshop. Saturdays at 1pm.
- \* **Ongoing Events.** Fun for 2s and 3s; Tots and Tales; A

to Zoo Storytime. Mon and Wed at 1030am.

**Thomas Edison High School**

5801 Franconia Rd. Alexandria, VA 22310  
Office – 703.924.8000; Fax – 703.924.8097

**Mark Twain Middle School**

4700 Franconia Rd. Alexandria, VA 22310  
Office – 703.313.3700; Fax – 703.313.3797

**Rose Hill Elementary School**

6301 Rose Hill Dr. Alexandria, VA 22310  
Office – 703.313.4200; Fax – 703.313.4297

\* **May 30.** Student Holiday.

**Advertising in *The Rambler***

Listing in the business directory is free to Rose Hill residents who are members and own their business, but placing an actual advertisement is open to all with rates per month as follows:

- \* Business card: 3 ½" x 2", \$10
- \* Quarter page: 3 ½" x 4 ¾", \$25
- \* Half page: 7 ½" x 4 ¾", \$50
- \* Full page: 7 ½" x 9 ¾", \$100

Ads may be bought for either one month only, month-to-month, or as many months in advance as desired. Our newsletter is published 9 times a year, excluding July, August, and December.

Advertising in *The Rambler* is an excellent way to reach the 700+ homes in our community. In addition, the ads are placed on our website, [www.myRoseHill.com](http://www.myRoseHill.com), for the world to see.

Anyone interested in placing an ad may call me at 703.625.7046. Artwork can be sent to [scheungjones@gmail.com](mailto:scheungjones@gmail.com) in tiff or jpeg format or hardcopy mailed to P.O. Box 10891, Alexandria, VA 22310. Checks made out to RHCA should be included with advertisement and sent to the P.O. Box.

**Only those residents who are members of the Rose Hill Civic Association or provide services in kind will qualify for a FREE listing in the business directory. Membership dues are the source of funds for the printing of *The Rambler*.**

**Heating and Air Conditioning**

**Dove Heating and Air Conditioning.** We service and install heat pumps, air conditioners, furnaces, hot water heaters, and humidifiers. David and Linda Nichols, 703.971.8897. The Nichols have been in business for 30 years and have lived in Rose Hill for 41 years.

**Real Estate**

**Re/Max 100.** Steve Dougherty, 703.746.8720. [www.stevedougherty.com](http://www.stevedougherty.com). Steve and his family have lived in Rose Hill and been active in civic affairs for 30 years. He has been a Realtor of 20 years and specializes in service to his neighbors in the community.

**Lawn Services**

**Fortney Lawn & Garden.** David and Jimmy Fortney, 703.960.8869. Although they live in Virginia Hills, the Fortneys work closely with RHCA to maintain the median landscaping on Rose Hill Drive.

**House Cleaning**

**Everclean Maid Service.** 703.971.7160. Owned and operated by Nour Barakat and Mike Zalatoris. Our residential cleaning business is celebrating 30 years of service in Alexandria and for the last 26 years from our home in Rose Hill. We offer reliable and affordable home and office cleaning for all local residents, and we are happy to offer a 25% discount to our neighbors to celebrate our anniversary. Call for a free estimate and to schedule your cleaning. Thank you Rose Hill for being our happy home! (See our ad in this newsletter.)

**Photography**

**Tisara Photography.** Nina Tisara, 703.838.8098. Tisara Photography is a family business with a studio in Old Town Alexandria since 1990. They specialize in portraits and special events. Nina lives on Hayfield Place.

### Need Help?

Pet services (dog walking, vet appointments); errands (pharmacy, dry cleaning, drop off/pick-up product repair); personal shopping (grocery, post office, exchange and item returns); vehicle services (vehicle license and emission renewal, vehicle service repair, vehicle inspection); home services (house sitting, light yard work, wait at home for service personnel); travel and transportation (to and from); medical concierge services (doctor appointments, pre-/post-operation assistance). Contact David Sell at 703.971.4716, or email [dksell@hotmail.com](mailto:dksell@hotmail.com).

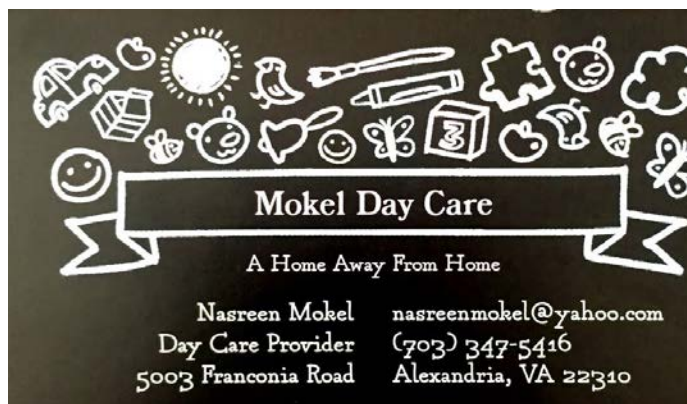
### Handyman

Your honey-do list getting out of hand? Call my honey! Offering free quotes and estimates. Please call Rick at 703.943.7102.

### Ocean City, MD Beach Rental

**Two bedrooms, two bath condo** available for RHCA members only at a discount price. Noon Sunday to noon Sunday to beat the traffic. Quiet complex in North Ocean City residential neighborhood. Four blocks from Atlantic Ocean. Steps to private pool. Cable TV. Fully equipped condo. You clean when you leave in exchange for discount price. Limited weeks available in August. Call Carl Sell at 703-971-4716.

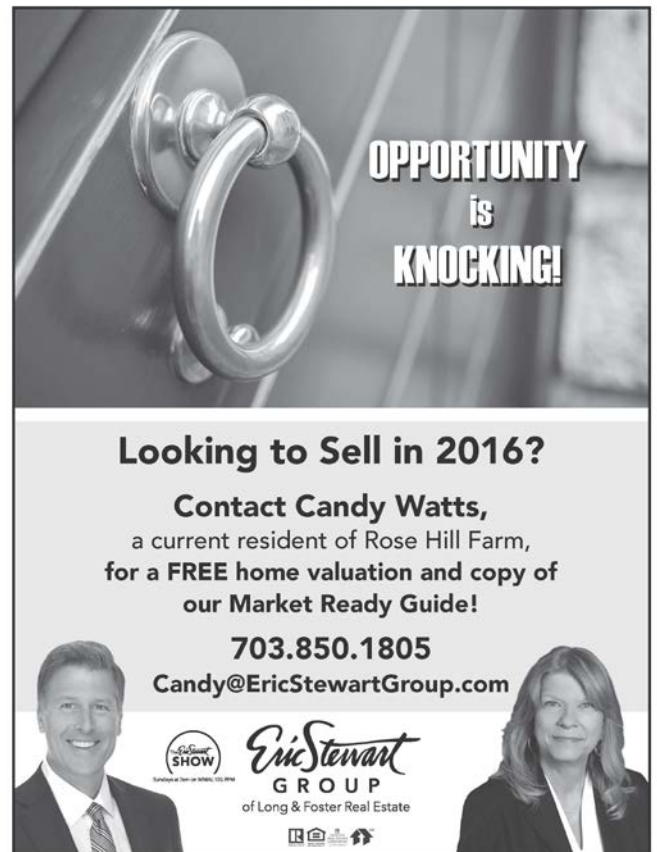
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## SIX Common Misconceptions about Roofing and the Roofing Industry:

**Misconception #1.** You should wait as long as possible to re-roof your home.

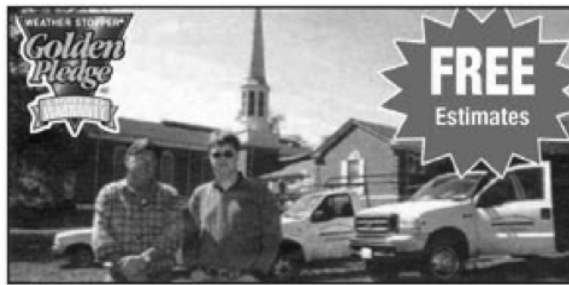
No! Your roof takes a beating every day from sun, wind and rain. Your shingles become brittle and crack with age and have a tendency to blow off and fail at an alarming rate with age. This exposes the roof decking (the sub-structure that literally, "keeps you out of the rain") to moisture which slowly deteriorates and rots the wood beneath, leading to leaks and more extensive damage.

Further, the metal flashings around chimney areas and at adjoining exterior walls (or rooflines), the penetration collars (around plumbing and heat stacks) and all other vents become worn and prone to water infiltration.

Next time you're outside, take a close look at your roof (most people don't pay attention to it until there's a problem). How does it look? Is it rough and weathered? Are the shingles "curling" or cracking? Is one section very distinguishable from all other areas? Finally, are you proud of the way your roof helps "show" your home, or are you embarrassed by its appearance?

**Remember:** By the time you have waited "as long as possible," you have probably waited too long and will end up spending your hard earned money on interior and sub-structure repairs, as well as a much needed roof replacement.

To see all six misconceptions, visit [www.bguide.net/timothysroofing](http://www.bguide.net/timothysroofing).



Call Russ Robertson (manager) to schedule your FREE estimate on a new roof.

## Roof Leaking? Winter storms will only make a bad situation worse.

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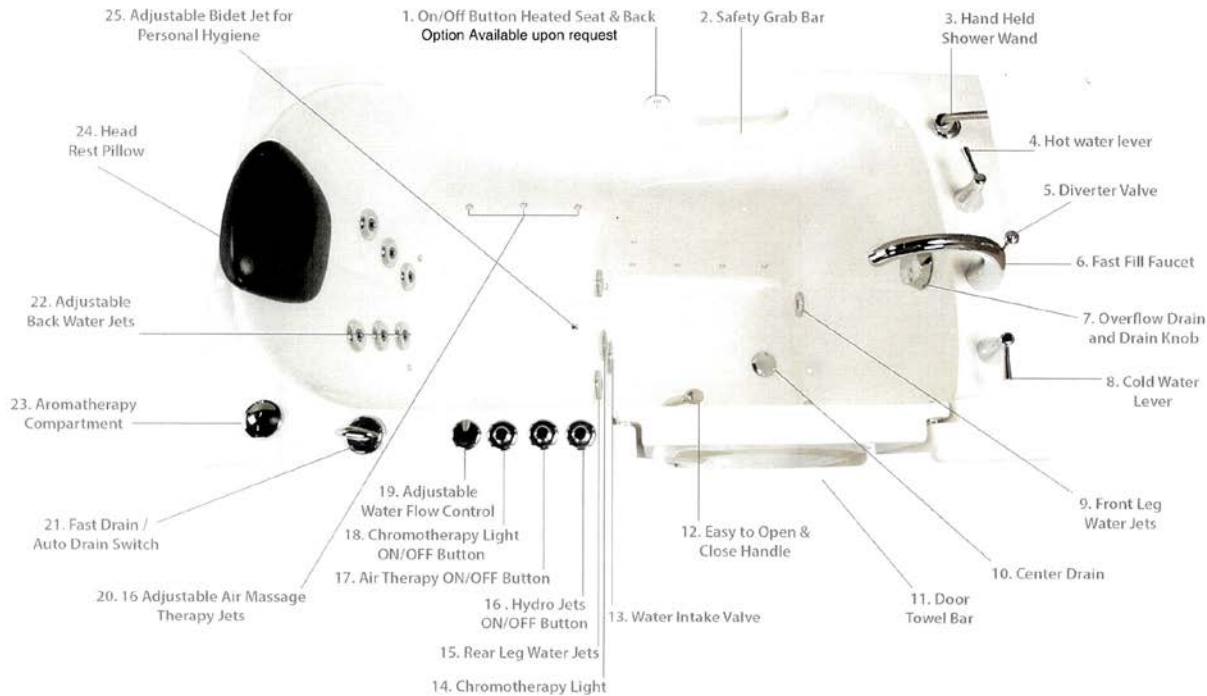
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Source of data: MRIS (Metropolitan Regional Information System)

## **Supervisor Jeff McKay Reports on Adoption of County Budget**

### **Budget Adoption for FY 2017**

On April 26, 2016 the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors voted to increase funding for schools by \$104 million and made strategic investments that protect the quality of life in Fairfax County. By way of a 7-3 vote, the Board voted in favor of a \$1.13 tax rate for FY2017, an increase from the FY2016 rate of \$1.09 per \$100 of assessed value. The 4-cent increase will generate approximately \$93 million in additional County revenue that will invest in valued County services such as education, public safety and human services.

As our Board's Budget Committee Chairman, I've been working to strike a balance between all of our great County services and the financial challenges that many of our homeowners are feeling. We listened to hundreds at hearings, town hall meetings, in letters, emails, phone calls, etc. about their strong opinions and budget advice. I believe that this budget addressed what we heard.

We're committed to investing in what makes our County great: its schools, its employees, and its services. Education is absolutely a top priority -- and this budget reflects that. I'm also pleased to be able to make crucial steps forward in the areas of public safety, human services, parks, libraries, and many of our other vital County services. I have no doubt that our Board's investment today will have a major positive impact on Fairfax County.

The major change the Board made to the County Executive's Advertised Budget was to provide an additional \$33.6 million to Schools. This was done by allocating an entire penny of the tax rate and using reallocated funds from Third Quarter Review. With FCPS receiving 52.7% of the County's General Fund budget, the elected School Board will have enough funds to increase teacher pay and begin working to decrease class sizes.

In this budget package, the School Operating Transfer increased by \$88.4 million, or 4.84% over FY2016. Including School Debt Service and School Capital Needs, total support for schools increased by over \$104 million, or 5.18%. By comparison, the non-school side of the County's General Fund Budget increased by 4.35% (or 4.91% including allocations to County reserves).

There was some good news specifically for South County in this year's budget, too. Funds for the maintenance and future use of Old Mount Vernon High School, as well as dollars towards the construction of a new police station in Lorton, were included. A new station in South County will reduce response times countywide, especially in Mount Vernon and Lee Districts. Getting more police on our streets has been a long goal of mine and this budget will do that.

It was no doubt a tough budget year. We know that many of our citizens are struggling in this sluggish economy and continued increases in the real estate tax rate are not sustainable. Collaboration between our Board and the School Board, revenue diversification from Richmond, and potential efficiencies in County programming are very important moving forward.

## HOW MUCH DOES THAT LOWER COMMISSION REALLY COST YOU???

You've seen the commercials where some real estate companies are offering lower commissions to sell your home for 4 ½% commission or lower versus the often used 6% commission. And then you start to do the math. But, have you really ever stopped to think how much that lower commission could be costing you?

When agents representing potential buyers don't like the commission split offered on a particular listing, they may boycott the property and not show the house to their clients. The result? Your house gets less exposure.

Is this an ethical practice? The National Association of Realtors' code of ethics states that Realtors "pledge themselves to protect and promote the interests of their client." So, technically, an agent who knowingly fails to show a client a house because it offered a lower commission, could be considered as not acting in their client's best interest.

Why does this happen? When the agent has a contract with their client that they will be paid the traditional 3% commission for representing their client in the purchase of a property, the client may have to make up the difference between the reduced commission being paid in the sales transaction and their contract commission of 3%.

So, when the client is putting together the offer to buy your house, they now have to figure in the difference in the commission they may owe their Realtor; either by offering a lower price or by asking for cash back at closing, or both. And, since they know that you, as the seller, are paying a reduced overall commission, they may figure that into the offering price also.

So ultimately, in the end, you, as the seller, may have to accept a lower offer

from the buyer, and end up paying more than you expected.

But where it gets tricky, is figuring the indirect cost of the lower commission. Since your house could be getting less exposure, it may end up sitting on the market longer than it would otherwise, and this could ultimately cost you, the seller, to sell at a lower sales price and still not save much in the overall commission paid.

The longer a house sits on the market it can become stigmatized in the eyes of potential buyers and become a prime target for lower price offerings.

Another potential cost could occur from a failure to sell your house during the prime target months of February, March or April before the market is flooded with competition, so your chances of receiving your higher list price are greater. If your house does not show and it sits on the market and you miss those prime target listing months, you may have to lower your listing price to be competitive with the greater competition you now have for the buyers out there. And, you may also have to pay the full commission to get your house shown.

To try to save a few thousand dollars in commissions could cost you many thousands of dollars in a sales price, plus the additional time spent on the market could end up costing you many thousands more for mortgage, insurance, taxes, utilities and maintenance.

Once you add up all the costs, direct and indirect, how much could that cheaper commission rate really cost you?

Here at the Eric Stewart Group, Long and Foster Real Estate, we expose your property far and wide in over a hundred websites for every potential buyer to see your house. We include interactive floorplans so potential buyers will see professional pictures of your house with *floorplans and measurements*. By the

time buyers are walking through your front door, they have viewed your house on-line. (*Did you know that 9 of 10 buyers will view a house on-line before they see it in person?*) A professional closing coordinator is assigned to your listing, so once your house is under contract, every step is monitored to ensure every contingency and deadline is met. We also offer a guarantee buy program, which will open opportunities for you to accept offers from more potential buyers.<sup>i</sup>

I am a Certified Contract Negotiator, so once we have an offer on your house, a fast and efficient negotiation will be done to get you, our client, the best possible overall outcome. All this, combined with my 14 years as a local Real Estate Agent and a Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser provides the knowledge, tools and experience for the best results tailored for each individual client's requirements.

My family and I live in the Rose Hill community. I have a personal, vested interest to ensure that every property sells for the highest possible value in the quickest amount of time.

If you are thinking of selling your home this year, please contact me for an in-depth market analysis, and visit [EricStewartGroup.com](http://EricStewartGroup.com) to download some of our free guides, especially our Market Ready Guide to help you prepare your house for sale, and our Right Size Guide for those who are thinking about downsizing. For those not on the computer, give me a call and I can deliver them in person. After all, I am literally just down the street.

I look forward to hearing from you very soon!

**Candy Watts 703-850-1805**

Send our questions to:

**[Candy@EricStewartGroup.com](mailto:Candy@EricStewartGroup.com)**