Volume 40 Issue 11 November 2026

IN THE Woods

A Monthly Newsletter for Residents, Owners and Golf Members of Farmington Woods

Mission Statement

To preserve and enhance the property values of Farmington Woods

Farmington Woods Master Association

200 Byron Drive
Avon, CT 06001

Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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Monday-Friday
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IN THE WOODS newsletter is published monthly and sent via email as a link. If you are an owner, resident, or golf member and you do not receive our email marketing and would like to be added to the email list, please email jennifer@farmingtonwoods.com.

Heading Into the Holidays

As the holiday season approaches, there's lots to celebrate at Farmington Woods! This month's issue of IN THE WOODS highlights the people, events, and traditions that make our community special, along with opportunities to give thanks and give back.

Inside, you'll find a holiday message from Master Association President **Gary Pellegrino**, important reminders about seasonal decorations, and details on this year's Staff Appreciation Appeal. We're also spotlighting the generosity of our neighbors, from the **Cooperative Garden's** impressive donations to the Farmington Food Pantry to the **Golf Committee's** support of Gifts of Love.

Looking for ways to celebrate the season? Mark your calendars for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet concert on November 14, Thanksgiving dinner at the Clubhouse, and our annual tree lighting and holiday karaoke celebration on December 5. You can also spread some holiday cheer by contributing to CONNECT's annual food drive.

Elsewhere in this issue, discover a resident-developed memory app, catch up on Women's Club and golf news, and enjoy seasonal gardening tips, cooking inspiration, and a delicious family recipe for Hungarian Chicken Paprikash.

As we reflect on another year in the Woods, we're grateful for the neighbors, volunteers, and staff who make this such a wonderful place to call home.

The Communications Committee wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!





Photo by Kim Alexander

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The **IN THE WOODS** newsletter is put together each month by the Communications Committee:
Taryn Murphy, *Chair*
Sherry Kasowitz, Dawn Nielsen, and John Sahm
Camille Donohue, *Ex-Officio*

All past issues are posted to the Farmington Woods website here.

A Holiday Message from MA President, Gary Pellegrino

To all our wonderful residents,

As the colorful autumn leaves slowly fall to the ground, we are reminded that the holiday season is upon us. Before we know it, the leaves will be gone, turkeys will be roasting in the oven, and football games will be enjoyed with family and friends.

Soon after Thanksgiving, the season of joy and celebration will officially begin! We hope you will join us for our Annual Holiday Tree Lighting at the Clubhouse or stop by the pub for our daily Happy Hours and enjoy the wonderful food prepared by Chef Roshan. These are special opportunities to celebrate with friends and neighbors and enjoy the spirit of the season.

For me, the most meaningful part of the holidays is sharing them with family, friends, and neighbors. In many ways, Farmington Woods has become an extended family to me.

When I moved here from Long Island, seven years ago, during the height of Covid, I was beginning a new adventure to be closer to family. Since then, so many wonderful residents have reached out and made me feel welcome. I am truly grateful for the friendships and sense of community I have found here.

I would also like to recognize our dedicated staff members, who work tirelessly throughout the year to make Farmington Woods such a wonderful place to live. Their kindness, hard work, and commitment deserve our sincere appreciation. During the holiday season, I encourage everyone to consider contributing generously to our Holiday Fund as a special way of saying thank you.

My heartfelt thanks also go to the members of our Master Association and District Board for volunteering their time, energy and expertise. Their dedication helps keep Farmington Woods moving forward.

To our committees and volunteers, a tremendous thank you for all that you do. Your contributions make a meaningful difference, and our community would not be the same without you.

With 1,084 homes in Farmington Woods, our goal is to continue making this a welcoming, enjoyable, and transparent community for everyone. We remain committed to open communication and encourage residents to participate in meetings, whether in person or through Zoom. Meeting information is available on our community website.

Continued on page 13

Holiday Community Reminders

Winter Holiday Decorations: Guidelines and Dates



As we approach the winter holiday season, to ensure Farmington Woods remains beautiful and harmonious, please review the following Design Review guidelines for displaying exterior holiday decorations.

Decorations may be displayed starting the day after Thanksgiving and must be removed by January 15th. Decorations may only be placed on your Limited Common Elements (front entry, porch, deck, or patio).

To maintain community aesthetics and prevent nuisances, the following items are not approved for exterior display:

- Inflatable figures
- Large plastic decorations
- Any item that would create a nuisance for other residents (e.g., excessively distracting, sound-producing or bright items).

If you live in a vinyl-sided unit, do not use nails or any type of fastener that will make holes or otherwise damage the siding or the casings around windows and doors. Per Design Review guidelines: "Nothing shall be affixed at any time to the vinyl siding, including but not limited to, decorations, wreaths, plaques, or any other personal property. Unit owners shall be liable for such damage to the vinyl siding."

The design and quantity of your exterior decorations must be in good taste and reasonable in size in relation to the available space. Decorations must be maintained in a neat and attractive manner appropriate for the season. Please make every effort to ensure that your lights, particularly blinking or bright lights, do not disturb other residents.

The Design Review Committee reserves the right to maintain community standards, determine if decorations are contrary to good taste and may require the removal of any decorations that generate complaint(s) or are deemed offensive in nature.

Thank you for helping to make Farmington Woods cheerful and pleasant for everyone this holiday season!

Staff Appreciation Appeal 2026

The employees of Farmington Woods are valuable assets and vital to the success of our community. The holidays are a time to express our appreciation and to remember and thank those individuals who, year-round, make our lives here at Farmington Woods more comfortable and enjoyable. Each year we ask our residents and members to consider making a contribution to the Holiday Fund. These funds are distributed to our dedicated employees in December, as a way of showing our appreciation. Past contribution amounts have ranged from $50 to $400, but please contribute any amount that you are able. Please note that all contributions to the Holiday Fund are anonymous. All funds are divided among all of our employees of Farmington Woods.

To contribute to this year's Holiday Fund, make your checks payable to: **FW Holiday Fund**, and put them in the mail slot at the MA office, or mail to: **FWMA Holiday Fund, P.O. Box 279, Unionville, CT 06085**.

Please join me in making this a joyous holiday season for our employees.
Thank you, Tom Baerlein, Treasurer, FWMA

Community News

Aging: The Challenge of Memory

Regardless of the advertisements on TV, as we age memory slips. For some folks it's the occasional confusion of names and faces, historical facts, and the right word coming more slowly. For others, the memory loss is quite serious and requires full time care.

Bob Japenga is a FW resident providing full time care for his beloved wife, Barbara, who suffers from severe dementia. Barbara struggles to remember family members' names. Bob has been in systems development and has developed an app, currently available through app stores and available for Apple and Android phones, iPads, and desktops, to help remember names of friends and family, and other topics for recall. It is designed as a game with increasing levels of challenge. Picture squares of photos where the participant is given a name and asked to select the matching picture. If a voice is loaded then a message can be chosen with the picture.

Bob designed the app to be used on Barbara's iPad to help her connect names, faces, and voices. You can load photo and voice recordings to create a personalized game. But it doesn't have to be family photos, it can be birds, pets, animals – anything that can help trigger memories.

Memory loss comes in a lot of degrees and is a universal challenge. Bob felt that developing a program like this may be of assistance. It is certainly worthwhile to check it out. I like it because it connects three things integral to memory: words, images, and voice. Visit the website to learn more details: **ListeningtoGod.org/WhozDat** or search for **WhozDat** in the App Store, the Google Play Store, or the Windows Store.

Avon Honored with 2026 Wellspring Award

Avon is Aging Well! We are pleased to share that we have been selected as the recipient of the 2026 Local Government Wellspring Award, presented by the Connecticut Age Well Collaborative, an initiative of Connecticut Community Care. This honor recognizes our community's ongoing commitment to fostering inclusivity and supporting older adults in aging well. As a participant in the 2026 Community Leaders Fellowship program, the Town of Avon has been collaborating closely with older residents to develop a comprehensive local resource guide grounded in the Collaborative's livability framework. The guide is available now at www.avonct.gov/agewell. We are grateful for this recognition and proud of the hard work, authenticity, perseverance, and collaboration demonstrated throughout the Fellowship process. Avon remains dedicated to strengthening community connections and ensuring that residents of all ages can thrive. You can learn more about the AgeWell Collaborative at **www.ctagewellcollaborative.org**.

What's Happening in the Woods

CONNECT Presents



This concert is FREE for Residents, Golfers and their Friends.
If you plan to dine at the restaurant, we ask that you make reservations in advance.
Please call the restaurant 860-673-2419.

See page 6 for information about CONNECT's Annual Food Drive

What's Happening in the Woods

FARMINGTON WOODS GOLF CLUB

Annual Thanksgiving Feast Buffet

$45++ per adult | $15++ kids under 10

Reservations Available: First Seating 12:00 PM • Second Seating 2:00 PM

STATIONARY STARTER & BREAD BAR

Self-Serve Station

Roasted Butternut Squash Soup
Velvety autumn squash soup drizzled with maple crème fraîche and topped with spiced toasted pepitas.

Autumn Harvest Salad
Mixed baby greens, dried cranberries, crumbled goat cheese, and candied walnuts with cider vinaigrette.

Artisanal Bread Selection
Freshly baked sweet cornbread and soft dinner rolls served with whipped honey butter and salted butter.

CHEF'S CARVING & ENTRÉE STATION

Carved to Order & Hot Display

Slow-Roasted Herb & Garlic Turkey Breast
Brined with fresh herbs and slow-roasted with garlic butter. Accompanied by rich house-made turkey pan gravy and tangy spiced cranberry-orange relish.

Slow-Braised Beef Brisket
Tender, pre-sliced beef brisket braised low and slow in aromatic herbs, served with a rich natural beef jus.

CLASSIC THANKSGIVING SIDES

Buffet Display

Traditional Sage & Sausage Stuffing
Artisan bread baked with sweet Italian sausage, celery, onions, and fresh garden herbs.

Yukon Gold Mashed Potatoes
Creamy, buttery mashed potatoes whipped with roasted garlic and cream.

Brown Sugar Glazed Sweet Potatoes
Roasted sweet potatoes coated in maple syrup, dark brown sugar, and pecans.

Green Bean Casserole
Fresh green beans folded into a rich wild mushroom sauce, topped with crispy fried shallots.

DESSERT STATION

Buffet Display

Traditional Pumpkin Pie
Classic spiced pumpkin custard baked in a flaky crust, served with fresh whipped cream.

Warm Apple Strudel
Flaky pastry filled with spiced local apples and raisins, served with vanilla bean sauce.

++Plus Tax and Gratuity



The CONNECT FOOD DRIVE will run from November 16 through December 16. We donate all gifts to the local communities of Avon and Farmington. Non-perishable food items and gift cards, are all very welcome gifts. Collection boxes will be located at the MA Office Board Room and the Clubhouse.

What's Happening in the Woods



News from Farmington Woods Women's Club

Giving Thanks and 2026 Highlights

As we enter into the Autumn season let us remember to enjoy the foliage and warm days. Let us, also, give thanks for our families, friends and good health.



Some highlights of the FWWC Lunch Bunch Plus trips in 2026 included a visit to the CT River Museum in Essex, a trip to the Puppet Museum in Storrs with a stop at the UCONN Dairy Bar for ice cream. In September, a large number of members dined at the Hopkins Inn on Lake Waramaug.

Happy Thanksgiving to all.







News From the Golf Committee

Greenskeeper;s Revenge Golf Tournament Follow Up

The annual Greenskeeper's Revenge Charity Tournament was held Sunday, October 18. Non-perishable food items and cash donations were accepted for the Benefit of Gifts of Love.

THANK YOU to all who donated to this great cause!

"Michael just stopped by to pick everything up and we are immensely grateful for your continued support! It certainly comes at a time when our clients are REALLY feeling the pinch! Please pass along our thanks to everyone who participated ... we are so appreciative," stated Nancy Carlson from Gifts of Love.



News From the Golf Committee

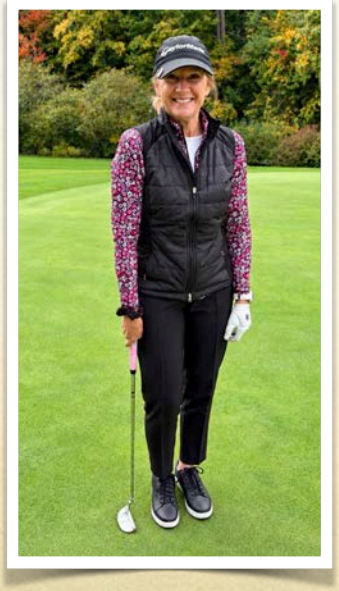
October on the Course: A Great Finish to the Season!

October brought plenty of excitement and friendly competition to the course as we wrapped up another memorable month of golf at Farmington Woods!

Our **Greenskeeper's Revenge Tournament** was a tremendous success, drawing a completely full field of participants! This fun and challenging event put our golfers to the test, and we want to thank everyone who came out to take on the course and make the day such a success.

We also celebrated two exciting club traditions with the **Men's Club Shootout** and **Women's Club Shootout**. Both events showcased great competition, determination, and camaraderie among our members.
Congratulations to our 2026 Shootout Champions!

- **Men's Club Champion:** **Dave Dawiczyk**
- **Women's Club Champion:** **Wendy Gill**





A special congratulations to Dave and Wendy on their victories!

As we close out October, we want to thank all of our members for their continued participation, enthusiasm, and support throughout the golf season. It's our members who make these events so special, and we look forward to creating even more memorable experiences together at the Woods!



Cooperative Garden at Farmington Woods

A Helping Hand: Garden Partnership Nourishes the Community



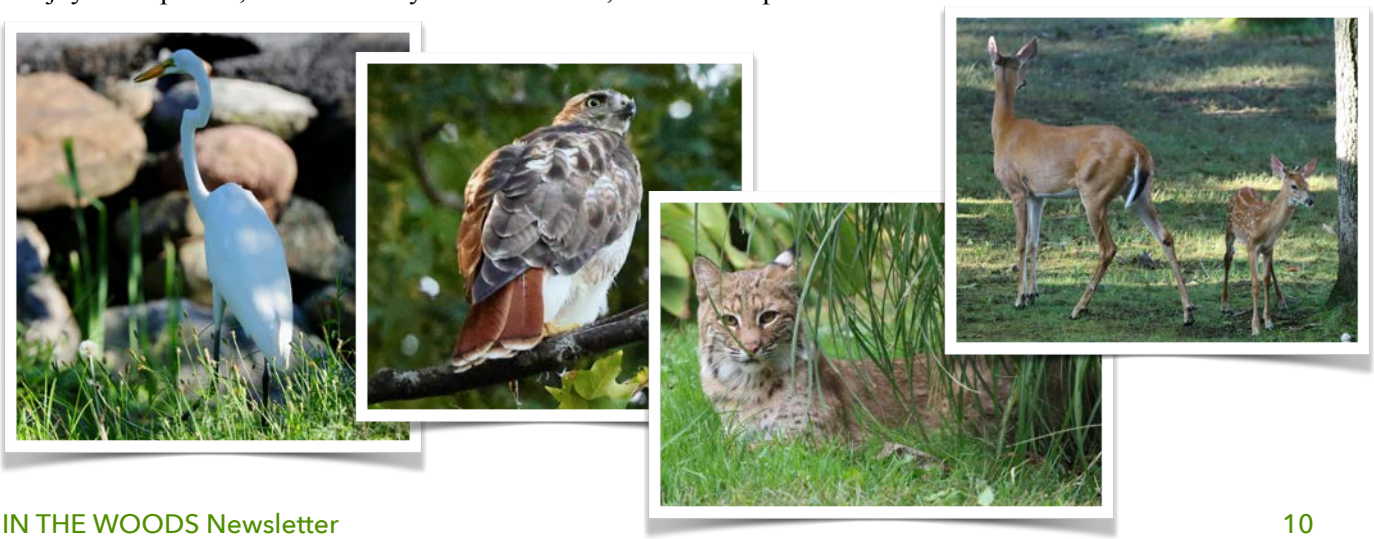
Fresh harvest, growing impact. The Coop Garden donated 274lbs. of fresh produce to the **Farmington Food Pantry** this year, up from about 160lbs. last year, the partnership's first season. The initiative began with Chairperson **Pat Figliola,** who saw an opportunity to turn a common gardening challenge into community support. Because many vegetables ripen at the same time, gardeners often have a surplus. Pat proposed directing that abundance to help address hunger in the broader community. The gardeners stepped up, transforming extra produce into a significant contribution to a worthy organization.

Serving Farmington for more than 30 years. The Farmington community has long supported the pantry's work assisting neighbors in need. Since 2006, the Farmington Food Pantry has operated from Amistad Hall on the campus of First Church of Christ in Farmington. Today, it serves more than 250 Farmington families through a "Clients Choice" program, allowing clients to select the items they like and need rather than receiving a pre-packaged bag of food. The Mission is to provide a respectful, empowering environment, where supplemental food and personal care items are available to individuals who need assistance in our community. All clients are pre-qualified by Farmington Community Services. Over the past 15-plus years, the pantry has adapted by establishing a program to fund purchases of fresh fruits, produce, and other items most needed on its shelves. It has also implemented a dairy program that provides milk and yogurt.

How you can help: You can follow the Farmington Food Pantry on social media to help share their message and find opportunities to donate. Food and monetary donations are always accepted and appreciated.

Wildlife in the Woods

Enjoy these photos, contributed by **Jeff Anderson**, of wildlife spotted here in the Woods.



Cooperative Garden at Farmington Woods

Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Winter

By *Christine Arena*

As the glory and drama of autumn transitions into a chilly winter, many of us are in the midst of garden chores, such as pulling up annuals, sharply pruning perennials, and planting new Spring bulbs (e.g., crocus, tulip, daffodil, hyacinth and scilla.) Those pesky squirrels apparently have an aversion to daffodil bulbs, so this year I have mixed my tulip bulbs in with the daffodils in hopes I might actually get some tulips to bloom in the Spring…







If you have any huge perennials, such as hostas, that are outgrowing their spaces, I have found it better to cut them back very close to the ground in the fall, then divide them in the Spring. This works well with daylilies and chrysanthemums.

And speaking of mums, I see many folks putting them out for trash pickup after the blooms have gone. Did you know that many of those mums, particularly those that say "hardy" and "hardy to zones 3-9" can be planted now and then repotted in the spring? We are in zone 5b, so they are good candidates to bloom again. Although many mums are sold as "florist" mums – meaning they are grown for their flowers at the expense of good root systems – I have had pretty good luck with them returning in the following years if you give them some attention now. If you un-pot them, mums should have a fairly extensive root system to make them good candidates for planting…give it a try!



Click on the image to the right to read this article from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences

Mums like lots of sun and well-drained soil. I usually deadhead flowers after they fade, but don't cut back the dry stems, as they provide shelter for the tender shoots, which arrive as early as April here. Farmington Woods is blessed to have many leaves in the fall, which can be used to good advantage to almost bury those mums when planted.

We'll talk again in the Spring about assiduous pinching in order to get many flowers!

Cooperative Garden at Farmington Woods

Paprika and Sage

By John Sahm

Paprika

My granddaughter cannot have deviled eggs unless there's a shaker of paprika nearby. You also find it on potato salad, chicken salad, egg salad, hummus, etc. etc. You will also find it in this month's In The Woods recipe. You would also find it in traditional Chicken Paprikash and Paella and might be led to assume that it's a staple in Hungarian or Spanish cuisine. You could be right, but you would be very wrong thinking it was native to Hungary, Spain, or the Balkans. It's Central and South American in origin. Now, what is it?

Paprika (Sweet or Regular Paprika) is made from sweet red peppers and mild chili peppers. Not the hot stuff. Yet. The vibrant red peppers are dried and ground. The ribs and seeds are removed, and the result is mild, fruity, and slightly sweet with virtually no heat. It doesn't register on the Scoville scale. The faint of heart can comfortably subscribe.

You can search for and find Hot Paprika. You simply find hotter peppers retaining more of their capsaicin and the seeds. You would experience more of a "kick".

Some recipes will call for Smoked Paprika (Pimentón). Found more often in Spanish cuisine, the peppers are dried and smoked over a wood fire before being ground. It will have a deep, smoky (Surprise!), bacon-like flavor.

Hint: gently warming paprika in a little oil releases its flavor and color, but please don't burn it.



As mentioned, it can be a garnish on salads, hummus, or soup. For cooking, stir it into stews,

Sage



It's November. Thanksgiving is coming. Dinners frequently include turkey with all the "fixins." The "fixins" almost always include dressing or filling to accompany the turkey. The dressing more often than not will include a generous dose of sage. This was NOT the norm for colonial period celebrations. Maybe wild turkey. Any dressing would not include the sage we include in modern dressing. Culinary sage (Salvia officinalis) is not native to North America but is Mediterranean in origin. It's a beautiful herb – grayish-green leaves velvety/downy in texture. You can obtain fresh from the garden, rubbed (coarse flakes), or ground into a fine powder. It is bold, musky, and savory in taste and strong and concentrated so it has a distinct presence in dressing or used as a seasoning. If you need it for a dish but don't have it, you can substitute with rosemary or thyme, so you can perceive its potency. Fried gently to a golden brown and added to butter it is an excellent sauce for fish, scallops, and ravioli. It is an ingredient in saltimbocca and gnocchi. Add the herb into your garden as a pollinator as well as a culinary delight.

However, White Sage and Pitcher Sage are native to California and the Great Plains. Indigenous people have used it in burning small bundles for cleansing rituals. My Dad was a huge fan of Zane Grey whose novel, 'Rider of the Purple Sage" referenced Scarlet Sage which is native to Texas.

What's Cooking in the Woods



This month's recipe celebrates family tradition. **Sharmayne Wesler** was born and raised in Connecticut, Sharmayne joined our community by way of Bridgeport and Trumbull. Family brings Sharmayne so much joy – she and her husband, Steve have a son and a daughter and are grandparents to six grandchildren. Sharmayne's love of cooking was inspired by her mom and especially her auntie, both of English and German heritage. Her recipe for Chicken Paprikash comes from her uncle's Hungarian mother, adding another wonderful family tradition to her kitchen.

Easy Hungarian Chicken Paprikash

A treasured family-style recipe inspired by a Hungarian great grandmother's kitchen. This recipe has been modified from its more soup-like style. The amounts are flexible, so adjust everything according to your own taste – rich or saucy. I like lots of onions and sour cream and this dish is wonderful as a leftover. The flavor comes from the sour cream, tomato base, onions and sweet paprika worked together, so have fun with it. You may use any chicken you prefer; I like boneless breasts, but dark meat with or without bones work too.

Ingredients

- 4 to 6 boneless chicken breasts, or your preferred chicken pieces
- 2 large yellow onions, sliced generously
- 2 cups vegetable juice or tomato juice
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons flour for mixing with the sour cream
- 1 pint sour cream
- 4 tablespoons sweet paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Noodles of choice

Instructions – Use a Dutch Oven or a large, deep frying pan

1. In a bowl, mix the sour cream with about 2 tablespoons of flour, then season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
2. Brown the chicken on both sides in butter and olive oil, sprinkling it with sweet paprika as it browns. Remove the chicken before it is fully cooked.
3. In the same pan, sauté the sliced onions, sprinkled with sweet paprika, until tender.
4. Return the chicken to the pan with the onions.
5. Add approximately 2 cups each of chicken broth and vegetable or tomato juice.
6. Cook gently until the chicken is thoroughly cooked, tender, and the sauce has begun to thicken. Season with additional salt and pepper if needed.
7. Stir in the sour cream mixture and warm gently until the sauce is creamy and thickened. Do not boil.
8. Serve over your noodles of choice. Broad noodles or cavatappi are especially good.

Bon Appétit!
Camille Donohue

If you are interested in being interviewed and share your favorite recipe, please email Camille at **camilled222@gmail.com**.



Photo by Eric Nielsen

Master Association Executive Board 2026-2027

Gary Pellegrino, President, District 8

Barbara Marsh, *Vice President*, District 9

Brenda Larkin, *Secretary*, District 10

Tom Baerlein, *Treasurer*, District 5

Susan Solomon, District 1

Janice McClutchy, District 2

Bill Mackey, District 3

Camille Donohue, District 4

Mike McDonnell, District 6

Joel Barry, District 7

District Board of Directors 2026-2027

William Verge, *President*

Tony Blaine, *Vice President*

Paul Boyer, *Treasurer*

John Sahm, *Clerk*

Sinan Baskan, *Director*

John Bergman, *Director*

George Hall, *Director*

Paul Murphy, *Director*

Donna Wellins, *Director*

A Message from the President – *Continued from page 2*

There are also many clubs and committees that welcome new members throughout the year. I encourage everyone to explore these opportunities, get involved and enjoy all that Farmington Woods has to offer.

As we celebrate this special season, may we remember that the true spirit of the holidays is found in friendship, kindness, generosity, and the joy of being part of a caring community.

We wish you and your families a happy holiday season and a healthy, joyful New Year!

Warmest Wishes,
Gary Pellegrino,
President, Master Association Executive Board

District and MA Meeting Notices

The District November Board Meeting will be held on **Monday, November 30 at 3 p.m. via Zoom**. Details can be found on the **www.farmingtonwoods.com** Member Central Calendar.

The Master Association has moved their November regular board meeting to **Wednesday, December 2, 2026 at 5 p.m.** This meeting is held both in person in the MA Board Room at 200 Byron Drive, Avon and also via Zoom. Details can be found on the **www.farmingtonwoods.com** Member Central Calendar.

All meeting dates as well as any meeting changes or cancelations will be noted on the **www.farmingtonwoods.com** Member Central Calendar.

Classifieds

FOR SALE: Women's, barely used, cross country skis - Fischer AirTec Crown, Base 700, 195 cm. Ski poles - NORDIC II - 140 cm. Women's boots - Salomon SR 301, US size 10, Euro size 41 $125 for full set. **Call 860-673-0561**.

FOR SALE: Men's, barely used, cross country skis - Fischer AirTec Crown Base 800, 215 cm. Ski poles - NOVA, Exel - 150 cm. Men's boots - Salomon SR 301, US size 12, Euro size 45 $125 for full set. **Call 860-673-0561**.