

Kindness, Pie, & a Strong Sense of Community

By Deborah Replier

When you think about it, Fearington Village is very eclectic, particularly in terms of neighborhood sections. Each neighborhood boasts its own unique character and charm, yet perhaps none more so than the OG—that is, the original section known as the "Historic District," which covers Phases I – IV. The very first of these homes (a model house built on Benchmark) dates back to 1976, with the more recent houses being built in the mid-80s.

Architecture-wise, these homes retain a similar look and feel, with all being single-family dwellings offering a mix of one and two levels on wooded lots with sun-dappled trees. Some houses include garages. Many feature courtyards and screened porches. Property size runs from just under a half-acre to up to two or three. Where the diversity comes in is in the residents themselves. While much of Fearington Village skews toward older adults with a median age of 72, the Historic District is home to all ages really, including a number of younger families with children.

Lucy and Sam Grist currently live in Phase I. They've sought out Fearington Village twice as their home in the past 30 years. Lucy tells me, "We love the eclectic and maybe even eccentric elements of the Historic District. Nothing cookie-cutter about it, and the people who choose to live here are the same. We have neighbors in all ages and stages of life. It is so interesting to meet our neighbors. We moved in July of 2020 during the pandemic, and while we had met so many nice people in the neighborhood while just out walking, we were not aware of any neighborhood events where we could gather for fellowship. We wanted to bring our neighbors together just for the fun of it."

The desire for fellowship is integral to both Lucy and Sam, perhaps stemming from Sam's work as a Methodist pastor. While contemplating ideas for how they might inspire community to come together, they crossed paths while out walking with the elusive Piebald deer—a creature that has patches of white across the body due to genetic variations. Lucy was so wowed by this magnificent animal so rarely seen in the Village that it made perfect sense for the Piebald to become a mascot. And thus the idea of the *Pie Party* was born.



Party goes Grady Morrison & Betty Forbes enjoy the company & the pie Photo by Deborah Replier

Yet while Lucy and Sam were the initiators of these neighborhood gatherings, folks have certainly stepped up to contribute, to weigh in on dates and times and frequency (Friday nights, quarterly)—and even to donate art, as one such gathering included an art swap. Turnouts have been a huge success. There's currently a Nextdoor group called *Historic District of FV Neighbors*, where discussions about Pie Parties, pie recipes, and other things not even related to pie take place. Lynn Ferguson points out that the Pie Parties have been a "good place to meet new neighbors and to learn of all the ways to make special pies."

The Pie Parties have been held at the bottom of Benchmark, next to the playground, picnic tables, and tennis courts. Participants have been varied, especially by age, and the events lots of fun. Musicians have volunteered to perform for pie. Kids play on the swings and run around racing and chasing. Well-behaved dogs on leash with tails wagging and eyes ever watchful for tidbits to drop meet and greet fellow dogs and humans alike. And the pie—oh my, the pie! There has been such a mix of platters appearing on the tables—and many liberal interpretations at that. From the most exquisite looking and tasting homemade endeavors (I'm thinking of Zora Maynard's pear tarte—equally as eloquent as it was tasty!) to home-baked veggie quiches to store-bought apple pie to takeout pizza pie! And of course, there's Grady Morrison's now somewhat famous, highly requested chicken pie.



So many yummy pies to choose from Photo by Lucy Grist



Sam, Lucy, & brand new Historic District neighbors Edelle & Marcia Photo by Deborah Replier

You'll find more photos of Pie Parties and news about upcoming gatherings when on the Nextdoor group. This group was created primarily for the Historic District residents, but in the spirit of community and hospitality, all are welcome—especially if you love pie!

Originally from Massachusetts, Deborah Replier moved to Chatham County in 2007—for the past 3.5 years, she's called the Historic District of Fearington Village home. More often than not, you can find her walking the trails with her two Standard Poodles.



Pie Party in the Meadow Fearington Village North of Village Way (NVW)

The magnificent Piebald deer that inspired our Pie Parties Photo by Lucy Grist



Mary Charlton & Ted Ehrhard playing for pie Photo by Lucy Grist



Fearington Village residents come from all over the country and beyond Photo by Lucy Grist