

A Tribute to Maywood

Traditions, history, and memories of the neighborhood of Maywood

By Erica Wargo (Yorktown Class of 2024)

I have always had a deep fascination with the neighborhood of Maywood. A former trolley suburb of DC, Maywood is arguably one of the most picturesque communities in Arlington. The neighborhood was founded in 1909 but before that, the land was country. In the first half of the twentieth century, Maywood was a self-sufficient community with a school, grocery store, and icehouse, all run out of a neighbor's home. One of my earliest friends lives in Maywood. Whenever I would go to her house, I was enchanted by the quaint streets and the enormous presence of nature. Maywood is truly a corner of paradise.

When interviewing my friend, Siobhan, I asked about the traditions Maywood had. It was interesting to hear how on each holiday, the neighborhood would come together for an activity that had been done for generations. For example, on Easter, Siobhan recalls an easter egg hunt taking place in the Mini Park. On Halloween, there would be a block party with a chili contest, also in the mini-park. On Christmas, neighbors would come together to carol. Every August there would be a block party with a dunk tank, a slide, and a baking contest which Siobhan and her sister won when they were younger. On the Fourth of July, there would be a bike race amongst the younger kids, one of the oldest traditions in Maywood, which Siobhan remembers fondly. Siobhan's favorite holiday to celebrate in Maywood, however, is Easter since she enjoys the Easter egg hunt.

One of the things I've noticed over the years of going to Siobhan's house; her neighborhood has a very strong sense of community. Siobhan admitted that when she was younger, the feeling was much stronger. She remembers that every day she and her friends would go out and play tag together. Today, the community is connected through dogs. Siobhan stated that "a lot of the times when we were younger, like when we'd walk to the bus stop, all the parents would go down after with their dogs and they would play." She confessed that "you see a dog walking down the street every ten or twenty minutes." Spending time outside was an integral part of growing up in Maywood.

One of my favorite parts of Maywood is that preserving the history of Maywood is so important to the community. The neighborhood, visually, hasn't changed much over the decades, however, Maywood used to have a network of trolleys. Siobhan's father recalls finding slabs of cement in their backyard that were part of the trolley system. Siobhan revealed that since Maywood is a historical neighborhood, there are many rules and regulations in place on the changes made to any of the homes. Most of the homes have stayed true to their original look, like the paint color.

One of the coolest parts of interviewing Siobhan was hearing a story that her dad told me. During Siobhan's family's renovation, they found an old newspaper in one of the walls in the basement. The newspaper was dated 1922, the year the house was built. This was how homes were dated when the neighborhood was first built. Another interesting part of the story is the front headliner in the newspaper. The story was titled, "De Valera's Hotel Target of Shells in Dublin Battle." This was fate for Siobhan's family who is Irish.

The two hubs for outdoor activity in Maywood are Thrifton Hill Park and Mini Park. Thrifton Hill park has a unique history since it is right next to I-66, which was supposed to be expanded. There were houses along the park that were knocked down, which are the old walls leftover from the houses. The Mini Park is used most by the daycare but it is still an integral part of the neighborhood. The presence of nature in Maywood is abundant. One of Siobhan's favorite aspects of Maywood is how she is surrounded by nature.

When interviewing my friend Siobhan and her father, I wanted to know how living in a historically significant area shaped their view on history. Siobhan notes that growing up in Maywood not only made her more aware of Arlington's history but also made her appreciate the unique architecture of the neighborhood. The time and effort put into the construction of her home is not lost on Siobhan. Siobhan likes the feel of the houses in her neighborhood and admits that it "feels more like home."