

ALCOVA HEIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Alcova Heights Neighborhood | Arlington, Virginia

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APRIL 2008

NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

Arlington County's Annual Neighborhood Day is just around the corner: Saturday the 10th of May. The county has several events planned:

8 A.M. - Neighbors invited to **WALK FOR THE ANIMALS**. Find out how at www.awla.org

9 A.M. - Get a team to run in the **BATTLE OF THE BOULEVARD 10K**. The neighborhood with the most participants will get \$500 to be given to the nonprofit of its choice. Learn more at www.battleoftheboulevard.com. (We understand there are some serious runners in Alcova Heights. How about it!!!)

Other activities are to put together a **NEIGHBORHOOD FLOAT** in the Neighborhood Day Parade. Register at www.arlingtonva.us; keyword: 2008 Neighborhood Day.

Participate in the county's **FREE TREE EVENT** and order yours from Lois Koontz or Martha Gibbons. The deadline for orders is April 16. (See the article for the Tree Giveaway for more information.)

4:30-7:00 P.M. - The **ANNUAL ALCOVA HEIGHTS PICNIC** will be held in Alcova Heights Park (8th St. and George Mason Dr., at the large pavilion on the north side). This is a great time to come out, show off the new babies, see how big the kids have grown, meet new neighbors and see the neighbors you haven't had a chance to talk to since last year's picnic. Meet some of the people who are Alcova Heights volunteers. We'll have games and activities for the children. AHCA will provide the burgers, hot dogs, veggie burgers and drinks. We ask you to bring a side dish or dessert. Watch for the colorful flyer that will have more information. We need grillmasters, folks to help with the food shopping, and people to set up and to clean up. Call or e-mail Marie at 703-979-1589 or mjv-ness@aol.com. See you there!!

The next Alcova Heights Citizens Association (AHCA) meeting will be held on **THURSDAY, APRIL 17** at the Baptist Church located at the corner of S. 7th and S. Monroe. Potluck at 6:30 p.m., and the meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. Babysitting provided.

We have lots to cover. We will be voting on the S. 6th/7th Street alley initiative; an update of the Conservation Plan; response to the National Guard expansion; Neighborhood Day; the formation of working committees; AHCA's contribution in memory of Rev. White; and more. Look forward to meeting many of the new neighbors.

Don't forget your dues: \$10 per household. And remember the church's food pantry. It's a small way we can show our appreciation for being able to use their space.

2008 NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 15: Barcroft Book Swap. 6:30 to 9 PM, 625 S. Wakefield St.

APRIL 16: Deadline to order trees from the County's Tree Giveaway

APRIL 17: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

MAY 1: Barrett Elementary School's Book Sale, 6 - 8:30 PM, 4401 N. Henderson Rd.

MAY 10: Neighborhood Day and Alcova Heights Picnic

JUNE 19: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

JUNE 21: Columbia Pike Blues Festival

SEPTEMBER 18: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

OCTOBER 25: Halloween Parade

NOVEMBER 20: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

DEC (TBA): Caroling in the Park

NOTES FROM THE FEBRUARY CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETING

By Marie Van Ness



Thanks to Sue Johnson for coordinating February's program for our association's meeting. Martin Ogle and his staff from Potomac Overlook Park gave a top-notch presentation. I'm sure the first nice day we're going to be in our yards tackling the invasive species. Jan Kennemer has a book on Potomac Overlook Park that the presenters gave us. I encourage all to go to the North Arlington park and see what a wonderful resource we have in our community.

The next step for updating the Conservation Plan will be the community survey, which will most likely be attached to one of our upcoming newsletters.

Those present passed a motion in support of the Arlington Methodist Church and the Arlington YMCA to seek a User Permit to conduct an after-school program at the Church.

Neighbors on S. 7th (between Monroe and Glebe) have been working with the county to see what traffic-calming devices can be implemented. There have been accidents involving vehicles traveling on 7th St. and vehicles leaving the alley that runs between 6th and 7th. A change to the alley's direction has been discussed.

Accessory dwellings proposal was briefly discussed, and there was little interest in having the school board candidates come to the April meeting.

The Alcov Heights Directory has been published and is also available in electronic format. Contact Mark Cole at treasurer@alcovaheights-va.com if you are interested in receiving one.

The next meeting is Thursday, April 17th.

BARRETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S USED BOOK FAIR

WHEN: May 1, 6 - 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Barrett Elementary at 4401 N Henderson Rd., Arlington, Va., 22203

Barrett Elementary is having a used Book Fair on May 1. The public is welcome, and there will be many books, especially children's books, at really cheap prices. Do stop by and stock up for your summer reading!

Also, if you have any books (children or adult), videos, DVDs and/or CDs that you come across while spring-cleaning, consider donating them to this school fundraising event. Contact Suzanne Manlove to have your donation picked up, or you can drop them off at her house at 3414 S. 8th Street anytime before May 1.



BARCROFT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S ANNUAL BOOK EXCHANGE

WHEN: April 15, 2008, 6:30-9:00 p.m.

WHERE: Barcroft Elementary, 625 S. Wakefield St.

On April 15th, the Barcroft Elementary School PTA will sponsor its fourth annual book exchange. This is a great FREE event for the families of our community. Everyone brings books to simply swap for others. We will have a cafe set up with coffee, cocoa and treats. A storyteller will be on hand to bring stories to life for the kids, and there will be other fun activities for the kids in addition to swapping books. We will be celebrating the 556th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's birth with a birthday cake too!

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP....

If you have children's books for any age, baby through high school, and you are ready for them to be loved by the next generation, please bring them to the Barcroft front office to be used to "seed" the swap. This will give the early birds a good selection of books before everyone else arrives. We are especially interested in books for the higher grade levels so that the upper grades will have books to "trade up." Barcroft is located at 625 S. Wakefield St. in the Barcroft neighborhood just off Columbia Pike and S. George Mason Drive. There is usually someone in the office until about 5:30 p.m. weekdays (703-228-5838). If you have trouble delivering the books during business hours, please send an email to Carol Hunter at cahunter@erols.com, and she will arrange a pick up for you.

This year we have also decided that we will accept books that are above the children/young adult range and will create a parents' corner. If you have books for parents, please donate them (summer reading, parenting reference books, etc.). Any leftover children's books will be made available to all the students of the school following the exchange, and any other leftover books will be donated.

If you have children who would enjoy swapping books or you just want to come and be a part of this fun evening of community, please join us! The event will be open from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Thank you for your support!

RECIPE CORNER

Marinated Spring Lamb



By *Zuraidah Hoffman*

Welcome spring with your favorite cuts of lamb (or chicken, or beef) on the grill. The marinade is my mother's concoction that never tastes the same twice, but is always delicious. She used lamb chops and popped it in the broiler, but we've used different cuts and grilled them, and they're just as good.

MEAT:

3-4 pounds lamb (chicken pieces, flank steak or London broil are also great)

MARINADE:

1/2 cup chopped shallots

3 cloves garlic

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

2-3 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon allspice

1/4 cup soy sauce

1/4 cup sweet soy sauce (You can substitute brown sugar, but I recommend getting the "kicap manis" from the Asian store -- a great staple to have in your pantry.)

Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Put the meat and marinade in a large Ziploc bag or a covered shallow dish. Refrigerate for at least an hour.

IN THE OVEN

Preheat oven to 350 F. My mother puts the shallow dish with the meat and marinade in the oven, and spoons the juices over the meat once or twice until it's done. Cook about 20 minutes or until meat reaches desired doneness, longer for bone-in chicken. Always use a meat thermometer to ensure you don't end up with overcooked or raw meat.

ON THE GRILL

Remove the meat from the marinade and cook over medium heat. Close to the end of cooking time, brush the marinade on the meat and cook until the marinade begins to caramelize.

Enjoy!

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MILESTONES

Welcome to **Shawn Norton**, our new neighbor on 9th St. Shawn has moved into Alcova Heights from Ballston, but originally came from Elmira, NY, and works for Booz Allen Hamilton. You will probably see Shawn jogging around the neighborhood with his labradoodle when the weather is nice. Shawn's hobbies include triathlons, restoring and designing furniture, and working on his new house (it's his first!).

Congratulations to Kevan Miller, Steve Schaible, and big sister Phoebe on Lincoln Street, and welcome to new baby **Noah Francis Schaible**. Noah was born February 18, 2008, weighing 9 lbs 7 oz. Neighbors report he is a witty conversationalist and all around great guy.



More congratulations to Reidy Brown and John Fontaine of 8th Street on the birth of their daughter, **Harriot (Hetty) Louise Brown Fontaine**. Hetty was born on March 24th and weighed in at 7 lbs 13 oz. Big sister Sarah is very excited!

Do you know of someone celebrating a milestone in the neighborhood? Email editor@alcovaheightsva.com for inclusion in the newsletter.

ARLINGTON COUNTY TREE GIVEAWAY

Order a Tree TODAY

As part of its Neighborhood Day activities on Saturday May 10, Arlington County is sponsoring the annual tree giveaway to county residents. The two species available this year are native trees highly recommended for this area.

The **ALLEGHENY SERVICEBERRY** (*Amenlanchier Laevis*) is a small, flowering tree (15-25 feet) with year-round interest and high wildlife value. It prefers part sun to shade and can tolerate a moist location. Check these websites for more information:

<http://mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=B250>

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/trees-new/amenlanchier_laevis.html

The **YELLOW POPLAR/TULIP POPLAR** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is a fast-growing, large canopy tree (70-100 feet) also with high wildlife value. It prefers a full- to part-sun location. Check these websites for more information:

<http://www.cas.vanderbilt.edu/bioimages/species/litu.htm>

http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/trees-new/liriodendron_tulipifera.html

The trees will be delivered in one- or two-gallon containers, and their height should range between three and five feet. This is a good size for transplanting and future growth success and is small enough to handle with ease.

Alcova Heights residents need to place their order for trees by April 16 so that we can submit our neighborhood order on the 17th.

To order your trees, please contact either Lois Koontz at 703-746-0446 or ltkooontz1@yahoo.com, or Martha Gibbons at 703-685-7127 or mgibbons49@yahoo.com

Note the species and quantity you prefer and provide contact information including name, address and phone number.

Lois Thomas Koontz has offered her driveway as a tree repository. Trees will be available for pickup Saturday, May 10. We are hoping to have a county tree steward on hand to give planting and maintenance tips and general guidance. We will send a reminder out a few days before the trees are delivered.

Don't miss out on this great chance to get highly recommended trees for your yard at the same time that you are helping to replenish our declining tree canopy.



IN THE GARDEN

By *Alice Nicolson*

RECYCLING GIFT PLANTS

Ah, Spring! As I write this, spring has arrived with VERY chilly north winds and a hard frost predicted for tonight. So our seasons go in the mid-Atlantic!

As the days grow longer, we are all seized by the desire to buy those pots of daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, azaleas, or hydrangeas to bring spring inside. Or someone gives us a plant for a birthday, Easter, Mother's Day or other occasion. We enjoy the blooms for a few days or weeks, but at some point the flowers have faded and we don't know what to do with the plant. Sometimes we put it in a sunny window and keep watering it, hoping to plant it outside as soon as the weather warms up. Will this work? Well, it depends.

Hyacinths will usually come back and bloom for you for many years, if you wait until about mid-April and then dump the pot out, separate the bulbs and plant them in a sunny spot of your yard. Be sure to put them deep enough so the top of the bulb is buried. Water them once and let them be. The leaves may stay green for a while but will eventually die down. With luck you will get a small bloom next year. I have a patch of bulbs, some dating back 30 years, that are in full bloom now, mostly blue but a couple of whites and pinks too. A lit-



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tle Bulb Booster in spring is all they need.

Under the same treatment, some daffodils will return for you, usually not as well. Paper whites usually do not. They are too tender for our weather here. Smaller daffodils will do best.

Tulips are less successful planted in the garden. They will sometimes send up a little foliage the next year but rarely settle in well. The early, shorter species, especially the ones with dappled leaves, are more successful. If you do try to recycle these bulbs, be sure to plant them quite deep, 6 or 8 in. down.

As for shrubs, the hothouse plants are often varieties that are tender, and even if cared for quite well, they often die if planted outside, or if they live, they may have their flower buds frozen off every year. Give them a try if you want to, but don't get your hopes up too high.

PRUNING

Grass is starting to sprout up, and any day now we'll hear the first lawnmowers. We're out there raking the leftover leaves we missed last fall and cutting down the dead perennial stalks and the big clumps of pampas grass or Miscanthus. This is also a great time to prune some of our shrubs. But only SOME! This is NOT the time to prune the spring bloomers like forsythia, azalea, lilac or spiraea. Wait until these ones have finished blooming before you cut back.

Why should we prune? If it's to control size, perhaps you need to rethink where the plant is. Years ago it was standard to plant an evergreen on either side of the front door, and foundation plantings all around the house. After a few years, that arborvitae or spruce or holly has done what comes naturally and is now covering half of the walkway or blocking the light at the window. If a shrub or tree has to be cut back every year, you need to seriously consider removing it. Replace it with a plant that naturally tops out at 5 to 6 feet for under the windows or 3 feet wide next to doorways or paths.

Good reasons to prune a shrub are to shape the plant (as with bonsai) and to rejuvenate and keep it healthy. When you prune a shrub, do it in steps. First, cut the dead wood out. Next, cut out crossing branches. If there is a lot of thick old wood, remove about a third of it, cutting back to the ground. If there are a lot of thin wispy branches, cut them down to the ground. If you need to cut out any branches, prune them back to the ground or to a living, healthy bud or branch- definitely NOT in mid-branch. A stub is sure to die back and may allow decay to enter the plant. DO NOT SHEAR! Compare the appearance of the forsythia now in full bloom in Alcova Heights Park on 8th Street with the sheared-back plants along the north side of the Methodist Church. I think the natural bush in the park is far handsomer.



ROAD SLURRY SEALING

The Arlington County Department of Environmental Services, Water/Sewer/Streets Bureau will be conducting street sealing between May and September of this year. This will involve the temporary closure of streets, and Alcova Heights neighborhood will be affected. Residents on affected streets will receive a flier in the mail in advance of any street closure, and door hangers with information on the activities will be distributed.

A detailed map showing proposed work locations can be found at: [www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/Environmental Services/cpe/pave/EnvironmentalServicesSlurry.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/Environmental%20Services/cpe/pave/EnvironmentalServicesSlurry.aspx). Anyone with questions, comments, or concerns should contact Alex Portillo at 703-228-7844 or aporti@arlingtonva.us.

RENOVATION WILL CLOSE JACKSON STREET BRIDGE OVER ARLINGTON BOULEVARD FOR SUMMER 2008 - SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS TO FOLLOW

By Nancy Van Doren

On January 30, County Board members approved a \$514,052 project to renovate the pedestrian bridge over Arlington Boulevard. The project is slated to take about three months. The bridge will be closed during its renovation. The County Board committed to make the alternate crossing at Irving St. as safe as possible during this time. County Board members also urged staff to coordinate the bridge renovation project with a Walk Arlington initiative to build a sidewalk from the bridge landing to 1st Place North.

The pedestrian bridge renovation will begin right after Memorial Day. According to the staff proposal, the three goals of the renovation are: 1) to comply with Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, 2) to provide features for improved safety and usefulness for pedestrians and cyclists, and 3) to reduce the effects of weather on the durability of the bridge. The need for the work was found as a result of a biennial bridge inspection recently completed. Major work items will include repairs and installation of new sections of the existing structural steel handrail, replacement of non-slip galvanized metal decking, painting of the entire existing structure, replacement of the security fence on the sides of the bridge, concrete repairs, installation of a new bridge roof dome, and other miscellaneous repairs.

While the bridge is under renovation, the county will provide



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temporary signage at the construction site to direct pedestrians and cyclists to the North and South Irving Street intersection, which has a stoplight. This intersection will serve as the designated alternate crossing route while the bridge is closed. Arlington Public Schools, however, has assured parents of Jefferson students that it will provide bus service for students rather than requiring them to cross Arlington Boulevard on foot at Irving Street both in the morning and afternoon while school is in session. Longtime residents remember that the bridge was built after a girl was killed crossing Arlington Boulevard-with the light-at Irving Street.

Up next, hopefully within the next year, will be a much-awaited (originally planned in 1954) sidewalk running along the East side of North Jackson Street from 1st Place North to the bridge steps just feet from Arlington Boulevard. This has been a dangerous intersection for some time as often fast and inattentive drivers turn off Arlington Boulevard onto North Jackson. Pedestrians step directly into Jackson Street with no sidewalk upon exiting the bridge stairs. Jefferson Middle School students travel this bridge every day, as well as many, many other community members using the sports fields, the Community Center, the adult education programs and other activities located at Jefferson.

GREEN LIVING AND GARDENING EVENTS

from Arlington County's website - see website for full descriptions, locations and more workshops
<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/EnvironmentalServices/EnvironmentalServicesearthday.aspx>

WILDFLOWER SALE - Long Branch Nature Center, Saturday, April 13, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL COLLECTION AND RECYCLING EVENT (E-CARE) - Saturday, April 19, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Safely dispose of household hazardous materials, such as paint, motor oil or other chemicals, at this event. Used bicycles will also be collected by Bikes for the World for recycling. Computers, televisions, and other electronic materials will be collected for recycling as well. Thomas Jefferson Middle School parking lot, 125 S. Old Glebe Rd. One block east of Glebe Rd. and one block south of Rt. 50. The entrance will be marked. Call 703-228-6832 for more information, or check the E-CARE website.

RAIN GARDENS FOR HOMEOWNERS - Town of Herndon, Saturday, April 26, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOPS - Multiple Dates and Locations.

PARKFAIRFAX NATIVE PLANT SALE - Alexandria, VA, Saturday, April 26, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.



GREEN KITCHEN & BATH 101/GREEN KITCHENS AND BATHROOMS - Shirlington Library, Monday, May 19th, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

GREEN HOME AND GARDEN TOUR - Arlington, Sunday, June 1st, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

13TH ANNUAL COLUMBIA PIKE BLUES FESTIVAL

SATURDAY JUNE 21

We are back on the street! Plan to attend the 13th Annual Columbia Pike Blues Festival, to be held on S. Walter Reed Drive at Columbia Pike. Join us on Saturday, June 21 (Note: This is the date pending final approval from Arlington County) from 1 to 8 p.m. for great music, great food, cold beer, arts and crafts, kids activities and more. CPRO is working on the line-up and will announce the names of the performers as we book them in the months ahead. Don't miss the best street party in South Arlington!

Neighborhood Real Estate News



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4000 7th St.	\$499,900	5BR, 3BA	9,021 SF
3712 7th St.	\$535,000	3BR, 2BA	8,147 SF
3822 8th St.	\$725,000	6BR, 3BA	15,575 SF
902 Quincy	\$780,000	5BR, 4BA	6,916 SF
839 Monroe	\$812,000	4BR, 2BA	6,916 SF
3953 9th Rd.	\$387,000	3BR, 2BA	Dundree Knolls



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\$729,750 is the New Maximum Loan!

FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac announced that they have raised loan limits set by the economic stimulus bill.

FNMA and FHLMC will only purchase jumbo-conforming mortgages that are originated through 12/31/08. Mortgage lenders will assist customers with implementation by providing reference materials including an online loan limit reference tool and guidance on loan limits based on a property's geography.

Prior to the change, FHA was capped at \$362,790 and Fannie and Freddie had loan ceilings of \$417,000. Before the credit crunch, rates on jumbo loans were about .25 percent higher. Now with tighter credit, jumbo rates are almost 1% higher.

The FHA plan will open up some great opportunities. Here are some highlights:

- *FHA allows credit score as low as 620
- *The borrower has to put in 3% of the sales price into the transaction.
- *All 3% can come from a gift if necessary. You need no cash reserves.
- *Qualification ratios can go as high as 50% for debt to income ratio.

- *The seller can pay up to 6% of the sales price toward closing costs; the borrower still MUST put 3% into the transaction.
- *All single family homes and townhouses are eligible for FHA financing. Condos must be approved for FHA.
- *FHA does not have an issue with declining markets (Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac do)
- *This will really help with first time buyers, or buyers who have slightly below average credit and little cash.
- *FHA mortgages are consumer friendly loans made by private banks that are insured by the government, making them attractive because the government guarantee enables lenders to easily sell off the loans.

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