

AFCA Meeting-Neighborhood Issues

AFCA invites you to join our monthly Zoom meeting on Wednesday, January 17, at 7 p.m. We will discuss a range of neighborhood issues, including traffic safety, park bridge projects, Sparrow Pond restoration, and more; in addition, a county representative will discuss Arlington's Deer Management Project.

To join the meeting, enter the following URL into your browser between 6:50 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 17: https://tinyurl.com/3z8t6m4s. (If you have never used Zoom, you can view a short tutorial at https://zoom.us/resources by clicking on Joining & Configuring Audio/Video.) Alternatively, you can dial in to the meeting at 301-715-8592, where you will be prompted to enter meeting number 885 9839 1866 and passcode 931691. You might also be prompted to hit the # sign one or more times. This call-in number will be active starting at 6:50 p.m.

AFCA November 2023 Meeting

On November 15, 2023, AFCA President Esther Bowring opened the Zoom meeting with 42 people in attendance. AFCA Treasurer Jeff Horwitz reported that 242 households (out of more than 800) had paid their \$20 annual dues—more than last year at the same point—so AFCA was on the way to balancing its fiscal year budget. Advertiser rates in the newsletter will rise beginning in January 2024, raising even more revenue. Thanks to all who bought pizza from Bricks for the AFCA fundraiser last fall, though only about \$100 was raised. One Forester offered to coordinate a bake sale in tandem with a spring Bricks fundraiser for AFCA. Esther proposed exploring the feasibility of a concert fundraiser at the Lubber Run Amphitheater.

Arlington County Board member Takis Karantonis was in attendance, along with three county staffers (Christine Baker, Jason Widstrom, and Kyle Kling), and most of the meeting was devoted to traffic concerns, especially the planned traffic signal at the intersection of N. Park and N. George Mason Drives. Forester Bev Johnson recapped the safety issues at that intersection and acknowledged improvements there, such as flashing yellow beacons and the slow zone (20 mph) for Barrett Elementary School. County staff announced that completion of the traffic signal project would move up to the end of 2024. Forester Lora Strine inquired about interim safety measures before the new signal is installed. Takis said that speed cameras are expected in early 2024, with locations based on school slow zones and Vision Zero analyses. Christine pointed out that temporary signals and stop signs aren't feasible for a four-lane road like George Mason; instead, the county will use temporary barriers to keep cars from crossing George Mason.

Forester David Howell summarized Arlington's near-final Forestry and Natural Resources Plan, scheduled for presentation to the county planning commission on December 4 and for a county board vote on December 16. The plan takes a new integrated approach to planning for natural resources in Arlington County.

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AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. January 17 Through Zoom

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The Arlington Forester is the official publication of the Arlington Forest Citizens Association, Arlington, VA. A nonpartisan, nonsectarian publication serving the residents of Arlington Forest, the *Forester* welcomes articles and photos focusing on issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish monthly from September to November and January to May. The deadline for submissions is the first of the month. Email your submission of up to 400 words—preferably with a photo—to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Articles on controversial issues are welcome but do not necessarily reflect the views of AFCA and will be marked as opinion.

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AFCA November 2023 Meeting ...continued

Incorporating a more ecological orientation to environmental planning, it will improve the stewardship of Arlington's natural and biological resources.

Esther noted the approaching deadline for applying for homeowner credits in the county's new system for stormwater utility fees; she urged homeowners not to wait. She also announced that Stephanie Martin would be leading a team in pulling invasive weeds in Lubber Run Park on December 2. Forester Rick Epstein spoke about the latest Arlington County Civic Federation meeting, where stormwater management issues, new fee structures, and county property acquisitions were discussed. He encouraged people to attend these meetings or listen to the recordings for all the great information they provide.

Halloween Festivities



Last October 29, neighbors met at 4 p.m. for a Halloween Parade. About 40 kids, plus parents and a few dogs (some also in costume), gathered at Edison Park in Greenbrier and paraded up N. Edison St. to 4th St. N. After turning into Lubber Run Park, they ended up at the Lubber Run Amphitheater for a dance party. Party organizers blasted out tunes ranging from "This is Halloween" to "Thriller" and "Halloween Freeze Dance" while passing out treats and Halloween favors. Thanks to Bridget O'Brien for the story!

On the same day, neighbors in Greenbrier held the Third Annual Galveston Halloween Dog Parade. About 25 dogs strutted their stuff, and there were prizes for best costumes. Thanks to Kristen George for the story and photo!

December Holiday Party By Allison Kennett

Santa rides again! On Friday, December 8, Santa arrived at Barrett Elementary School on an Arlington County fire truck with lights ablaze. Waiting for him were throngs of young Foresters eager to relay their Christmas wishes. The kids enjoyed crafts and snacks inside the cafeteria while Santa took requests and listened to festive live music courtesy of Chris Bosch and Ken Schellenberg. Thanks to both! Many thanks also to Andy Browne, who loaned Santa's outfit; to Natalie D'Itri and Michael Caron, who helped with props and supplies; and especially to Mark Riley, who filled the protagonist role. Also a bittersweet thanks to the late, great Chris Scheer, who supplied the Christmas tree!

On a side note, we are hunting for someone to fill Santa's boots next year. Please contact allison.kennett@gmail.com if you are interested or know someone who might be.



Free Apps for Identifying Plants and Animals

Ever heard a bird sing and wondered what it was? The Merlin app will tell you for free. You can download Merlin from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology onto your device, and it will help you identify birds you hear—or see. A photo app matches the picture you take to a regional database of birds; and a sound app matches every



song you hear to the right bird. Cornell uses the Merlin app for citizen science to track birds through the eBird program, which you can join if you wish.

Another app, iNaturalist, does something similar for plants (but also recognizes animals as well as fungi, mosses, and algae). It works entirely through photos. iNaturalist compares plants in the photos you take to a plant database and matches them to particular species, which makes it another great tool for citizen sci-



ence. You can use iNaturalist to join a project like the annual spring City Nature Challenge, which records your observations by location in our area. Or you can use it just to satisfy your own curiosity. Merlin and iNaturalist are a great combination for your device, and both are free.



The 1st St. N. Culdesac: A Special Place By Mark Riley

I was born in the small town of Auburn in the Finger

| our neighbors—longtimers Alma, Larry and Chris, Sue

Lakes region of central New York. I met my wife Susie at the University of Arizona in Tucson and moved to Arlington in the summer of 1979, where we lived at Washington and Lee Apartments across from Fort Myer. We moved to Lyon Park in 1982, then to 223 N. Greenbrier St. in 1988. We purchased our home in Greenbrier's 1st St. N. culdesac in 1994.

Forty-five years ago, Arlington—now a booming part of our metropolitan area—was a rather bucolic county. One of my first memories was of Chris Scheer, our dear friend, who welcomed us to this friendly neighborhood. Recently, I spoke with David Mog, another longtime Forester, who suggested a series of newsletter articles featuring Greenbrier's seven culdesacs. This is the first installment.

As Arlington has continued what many consider its "relentless drive to

densify," the First Street culdesac has been our sanctuary, along with other favorite neighborhoods like Shirlington and Westover, as well as Good Company Donuts and Café, our home away from home. We love

and Gary, Rob and Sally, Ken and Robert, Chris, Shelley and Tom, Mike and Judy, and Adriana and Jim. And I would be remiss not to mention our two Bettys, Hunter and Dauma, who have graced our neighborhood for decades. We are also blessed to have welcomed the "newer" guys, Nomugi and Justin, Brett and Dan, Caitlin and Tom, Matthew, Guy Alain and Alex and Amy. Our culdesac has a certain magic mix of individuals and families who look after and care for one another in a most respectful way.

Like many neighborhoods, First Street has our annual block party going back for over 30 years now. Recently, we have been treated to the Mister Softee ice cream truck, the truck that visited my neighborhood as a boy, with the same ice cream and a most distinctive jingle. As the years and seasons come and go and I reflect on

the past and anticipate the future, I am grateful for our friends and neighbors. The First Street culdesac is warm and inviting, and we are most fortunate to have moved over 30 years ago to this special place we call home.

Just a few short weeks ago, the *Fannie Mae* forecast was for 3.9% appreciation in 2023. In the forecast that just came out, that projection was updated from 3.9% to 6.7% for the year. This increase goes to show just how confident experts are that home prices will net positive this year. So, if you believe home prices are falling, it may be time to get your insights from the experts instead – and they're saying prices aren't falling, they're climbing. Questions on your home? Let's talk!





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SAMUEL DAVIS

Swimming Hole Near Arlington Forest?

By Hutch Brown

From the paved Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) Trail below Southside, you can take a gravel-strewn side trail down to the confluence of Four Mile Run with Lubber Run. Here, sunfish use a relatively wide and deep pool for seasonal nesting. The pool is normally no more than 3 feet deep, but ground water levels in the past were much higher. In

the 1800s, the pool was wide and deep enough for swimming, which made it part of a popular local attraction.

The site has been wooded throughout its recorded history. In the 1700s, John Ball and his family cleared and farmed the upland terrace south of Four Mile Run, now covered by suburban homes. In about 1742, the Ball family built the first home, a one-room log cabin with a loft; improved over time, it is known today as the Ball-Sellers House. In 1766, the John Ball estate sold the house and the surrounding 166 acres to William Carlin. Carlin's heirs continued farming the property until it was platted in 1887 as Arlington's first planned residential subdevelopment, now known as Glencarlyn.

In the 1850s, the W&OD Railroad was built along Four Mile Run on what is now the W&OD Trail. Though never reaching beyond Bluemont in Loudoun County, the railroad was originally intended to connect the national



capital area to farms in Shenandoah Valley and coalfields in West Virginia. The railroad had a station just north of the Carlin farm, where Arlington Blvd. now crosses Four Mile Run. In 1872, taking advantage of the station, John E.F. Carlin opened an amusement park at the Carlin Springs, two natural springs near Four Mile Run. Now all but dry, the springs are still clearly

visible, marked by a sign near the foot of the paved trail below 2nd St. S. in Glencarlyn. John Carlin constructed two woodframe pavilions, both 30 by 80 feet in size, near what is now Glencarlyn's northeastern corner. The pavilions became centerpieces for a popular attraction—a dance hall and a 250-seat restaurant and ice cream parlor. In addition, visitors could enjoy the gushing Carlin Springs and the nearby swimming hole at the mouth of Lubber Run. On summer weekends, crowds would arrive by train from Alexandria and Washington, DC, to visit one of the area's premier destinations for socializing in a bucolic setting.

In 1887, the Carlin family sold its property to some of Arlington's first residential developers. The developers razed the pavilions in 1893 but retained the wooded slopes down to Four Mile Run as what would eventually become Glencarlyn Park.



Paul Cachion, MBA 571-216-6802 CachionHomes@gmail.com

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Barcroft School News By Samantha Bell

December was a short month for schools, but there were several fun events at Barcroft. The PTA hosted the first Snowball Just for Kicks Soccer Games on December 9. It was a great opportunity for our school community to gather and enjoy soccer. The PTA also provided Happy Holiday treats for the teachers and staff ahead of Winter Break on December 18. The school held its ever popular annual Winter Assembly and Singalong. The students loved singing along to the Twelve Days of Christmas with the teachers and staff dressed up as each day's gift.

Upcoming events include a Restaurant Night Fundraiser on January 23 at Lost Dog (2920 Columbia Pike, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.); Barcroft Adult Night Out on February 3 at Barcroft Community House (800 S. Buchanan St., 7-10 p.m.); the PTA Online Auction on February 3-11; and another Restaurant Night Fundraiser on February 28 at Sloppy Mama's BBQ (5731 Langston Blvd, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.).

You can support the Barcroft PTA by linking your Harris Teeter card (www.harristeeter.com/ together-in-education); the Harris Teeter Barcroft code is 4238. You need to relink every year. Follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @BarcroftEagles and on

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Community Calendar

Next AFCA meeting: Wednesday, January 17, 7 p.m.

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup: A Saturday in April 2024

Annual AFCA Picnic: Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Annual Yard Sale: A Saturday in May, 2024

Turnaround Day: A Saturday in June, 2024 (tentative)

AFCA Meetings

Topics are tentative.

January 17, 2024: Neighborhood issues (damaged bridges and more)

February 21, 2024: School issues

March 20, 2024: Native trees and gardens

April 17, 2024: Pedestrian/traffic safety

May 15, 2024: Neighborhood traffic

Facebook at Barcroft Elementary School PTA. You can contact barcroftptapresident2024@gmail.com if you would like to support the PTA and have any questions.

<section-header>

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County News

Stop for People in Crosswalks

As of July 1, the Virginia State Code (§46.2-924) has required drivers to come to a complete stop for pedestrians in crosswalks, even if the pedestrian hasn't reached the lane of the driver. County crews are replacing signage at crosswalks with new "Stop Here For Pedestrians" signs. Stop bars are also being installed, replacing previous yield lines. Completion is expected in spring 2024.

Rising Homeowner Costs

Last April, according to ArlNow, the Arlington County Board approved a \$1.55 billion budget for fiscal year 2024. The budget, which went into effect last September, represents a 3.3% increase



over the previous fiscal year, funded largely through rising residential property assessments—in part because the vacancy rate for commercial property has risen from 15.4% in 2019 to 21.7% in 2023 and the commercial share of the tax base has fallen accordingly. This year, the average Arlington homeowner pays about \$450 more due to higher assessments and fees, including a \$98 increase in the trash collection fee and \$26 for higher water rates.

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Drought, winds, and low humidity elevated wildfire risk across northern Virginia last fall, precipitating public warnings to prevent ignitions. Wildland fire is natural in our area, and Virginia's forests benefit from low-intensity fire. Land managers use seasonal wildland fire across large forested landscapes, especially in the Blue Ridge and points west. In our heavily populated area, however, wildfires pose unacceptable risks.

Revised Elements of Arlington's Comprehensive Plan

On November 11, the Arlington County Board approved an updated Historic and Cultural Resources Plan, which guides Arlington's historic preservation goals and actions. The updated plan establishes five main focus areas—community engagement; incentives; partnerships; regulations; and technology, information, and tools. On December 16, the Arlington County Board adopted a new Forest and Natural Resources Plan, which sets forth ways of sustaining trees and conserving Arlington's natural assets in the spirit of biophilia.

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Around the Forest

Dangerous Intersection

Since 2017, more than 20 accidents have occurred at the intersection near the Lubber Run Community Center at N. Park Dr. and N. George Mason Dr. Last year, Arlington County announced plans to install four-way stoplights in about 3 years. In view of rising neighborhood concerns, the county has expedited its plans, announcing that it will install the stoplights by the end of 2024. In December, the county installed interim barriers and traffic arrows to keep cars on N. Park Dr. from crossing or turning left onto N. George Mason Dr.

AFCA Dues Lottery

Your AFCA dues of \$20 per year go toward charitable donations, funding for neighborhood events, and more. To encourage neighbors to pay their dues, AFCA held a lottery in fall 2023: dues payers qualified for the lottery, which selected three winners at random (one each from Greenbrier, Northside, and Southside) whose dues were then refunded. At least one lucky winner chose to donate the amount back to AFCA. AFCA's emphasis on dues paying has paid off: as of November 2023, AFCA had collected more than \$4,800 since September 1 alone, compared to \$4,350 in dues and donations in 2022-23 for the entire fiscal year.

New Tree Plantings

On December 16, the Arlington County Department of Urban Forestry planted 37 saplings along the grassy strip of state-owned land between Arlington Blvd. and the service road over Lubber Run. The trees include oaks, dogwood, American elm, and more; all but Kentucky coffeetree are native to our immediate area. The planting was done by a county contractor with help from volunteer tree stewards; the purpose is to expand Arlington's tree canopy.

Sparrow Pond Renovation

Sparrow Pond is a stormwater retention facility in Glencarlyn Park at the lower end of Arlington Forest Branch below Southside. Arlington County is removing sediments and improving the pond's ability to capture and filter stormwater runoff. Last fall, the paved Four Mile Run Trail was closed to let workers construct a new outflow for Sparrow Pond. In late January, the W&OD Trail will be closed for 6-7 weeks; users can go to the reopened Four Mile Run Trail.

Parks Recovery

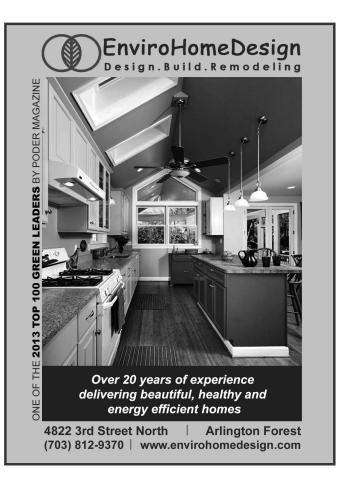
In the 2010s, improvised trails through Mary Carlin Woods (behind the Arlington Forest Club) and Glencarlyn Park below Greenbrier saw use by mountain bikers, causing erosion. Arlington County put up signs and used deadfall to discourage bike use. Today, the areas are recovering, with few remaining signs of bike use and erosion.

Invasive Weed Removal

On October 21 and again on December 2, teams of volunteers sponsored by the Arlington Regional Master Naturalist Program pulled invasive weeds in Lubber Run Park. The volunteers focused on English ivy on the wooded slopes below the Lubber Run Community Center as well as on English ivy and bush honeysuckle on the slopes below Greenbrier. More volunteer opportunities for pulling invasives are coming in 2024.

Bridge News

A spur trail in Southside connects with neighboring Barcroft over Arlington Forest Branch. The footbridge, damaged by storm-toppled trees a few years ago, has now been removed, with the trail barricaded at both ends and posted as closed. Arlington County has priced out a replacement bridge and is working with Dominion Energy to take ownership of the land along the trail before installing the new bridge. In addition, the county is planning to replace one of two Lubber Run footbridges destroyed by floods in July 2019. Construction is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2024, with completion in the third quarter.



Kids for Hire

These Arlington Forest youths are ready to help. To be added or deleted, email newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.

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