



The Arlington Forester

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Arlington, Virginia

April 2025

Virtual AFCA Meeting: Pedestrian and Traffic Safety

AFCA invites you to join our monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 7 p.m., through Zoom. Experts on our local pedestrian, biker, and traffic safety issues will talk about what our neighborhood is doing to work with the county and with other citizens' associations to reduce incidents and accidents. We will also have a discussion on Arlington's tree canopy and the GetGreen app. In addition, Arlington Forest's representative in the Arlington County Civic Federation, Eric Lotke, will summarize CivFed's position on a recently proposed bill (HB 2768) to change the composition of the Arlington County Board and to introduce single-member districts.

To join the meeting through Zoom, enter the following URL into your browser between 6:45 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 16: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9p8nty>. (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 870 4556 1343 and passcode 875967. You might also be prompted to hit the # sign one or more times. This call-in number will be active starting at 6:45 p.m.

AFCA March 2025 Meeting

By Char Mahoney, Recording Secretary

On March 19, AFCA President Sal D'Itrio introduced several speakers (Cheryl Roesel, Bev Johnston, Janet Irwin, and Susan Graham), who presented the benefits of gardening with native plants. The ecological benefits include supporting insects, which pollinate 90% of the Earth's flowering plants; our native oaks alone support more than 500 species of moths and butterflies. Climate change, habitat loss, and pesticide use are devastating ecosystems, and native plant gardening is a way to combat them.

Practical tips for starting a native plant garden include replacing a small portion of lawn with native plants to get started. You simply cover the area with cardboard and mulch and allow the grass to decompose. You can choose native plants for a variety of conditions (sunny, shady, damp, dry, and so on); moreover, natives can coexist with other plants, and you don't need (and shouldn't use) fertilizer. The Plant Nova Natives guide is a helpful resource for selecting native plants suited to conditions in our area (see <https://www.plantnovanatives.org>). The National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder lists local native plants by zip code (see <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org>). The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Virginia Native Plant

Finder site allows searches by plant name and characteristics (see <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/native-plants-finder>). The Northern Virginia Bird Alliance's Wildlife Sanctuary Program offers advice on creating wildlife sanctuaries in your yard (see <https://www.nvbirdalliance.org/wildlife-sanctuary-program>).

It's important to make sure that plants are native to our area so they can maximize their benefits to pollinators. Conventional nurseries can carry plants labeled "native" that are not native to our area, and "nativars" (cultivated varieties of native plants) can have reduced value for our local insects. Local vendors specializing in native plants include the Virginia Native Plant Society's

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AFCA Virtual Meeting 7 p.m. **April 16** 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 Meeting ...from page 1

sales in Alexandria (first Wednesday of each month starting in April); the Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale (April 26); Green Spring Garden Day in Alexandria (May 17); the Nature by Design nursery (see <https://www.nature-by-design.com>); and the Earth Sangha nursery (see <https://www.earthsangha.org/wpn>). You can join the Arlington Forest Gardening listserv by sending an email to AFGardens+subscribe@groups.io.

A discussion followed on how to keep deer and other animals out of your garden. Excluding deer with an 8-ft fence might be necessary, especially near parks. Native plants like spicebush, pawpaw, and river birch are deer resistant.

AFCA Elections Coming Up!

At the AFCA picnic/meeting on May 21, AFCA will hold elections for officers in the coming year. Elected offices include President; Vice Presidents for Greenbrier, Northside, and Southside; Recording Secretary; Corresponding Secretary; and Treasurer. Current officers have indicated their willingness to serve again, but anyone is welcome to run for office. If interested, please contact Nominating Committee Chair Art Schwartz at arthur.edward.schwartz@gmail.com.



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Faces of the Forest: The Lotke/Mortimer Family in Northside

By Christiana Campos

Even on the rainiest days, the butterflies, vibrant flowers, and hungry caterpillar painted on the exterior of the Lotke/Mortimer family home bring sunshine and warmth to all who pass by. The stunning mural envelops this unique four-bedroom, three-and-a-half bath brick colonial with nature's most beautiful splendors.

Eric Lotke and Amy Mortimer moved to the DC area from Connecticut in 1994 and began their quest to become first-time homeowners in 1996, when they learned they were expecting their first child, Isaac (now 28 and at Georgetown Law School). They aimed for settling into a new house by spring 1997, then found their lovely Arlington Forest home in December 1996, months ahead of their nesting schedule! They fell in love with the house's close proximity to trails, parks, the community center, and Ballston with its metro.

Eric and Amy purchased the house from children of the original owners and, according to Eric, received a "gift" during closing: the paperwork from the home's sale to the original owners in 1939. The papers revealed that the house originally sold for \$8,000 (including an additional \$800 fee for a fireplace!) in a year when the buyer earned \$10,000. (The \$8,000 cost of the original home in 1939 would be about \$184,000 today, a small fraction of today's home prices in Arlington Forest.)

Two years after they moved in, Eric and Amy welcomed their second child, Marika, now 26 years old and working with the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. In 2002, they decided to amplify the original home by adding a top floor above their existing addition, as well as an uber-cool loft to chill, decompress, and absorb views of the outdoors. During construction, they found signatures on the beams from the original construction crew, so they followed suit and had their own construction crew sign their names before adding the drywall.

In 2018, the house was in need of an exterior paint job. Coincidentally, Eric and Amy were dreaming of creating a one-of-a-kind mural using their home as a canvas. Little did they know that the painter they settled on, Langston Urrutia, was an artist on the side whose true passion was drawing and creating artwork. Langston offered his original art consisting of two larger-than-life monarch butterflies, a caterpillar crawling up the chimney, and dandelions and sunflowers as a mural on the home's white exterior. The house is now known locally as the "Butterfly House" and has been featured on local blogs and websites.

By day, Eric works at the National Education Association in Washington, DC, and bikes to work



"unless it's snowing, icy, or pouring down rain." Outside of work, he is an activist, scholar, and published author. One of his novels includes a pizzeria that was named after our own local Bricks. Amy, his "forever girlfriend," works with Opportunity@Work, an organization that advocates for accomplished workers who are overlooked for higher wage jobs because they have no bachelor's degree. She enjoys running on Arlington's trails in her free time. For more information on Eric and his work, visit www.ericlotke.com.

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Additional Safety Improvements Coming to Carlin Springs Road

By Bev Johnston



AFCA is once again partnering with the Bluemont Citizens Association (BCA) to improve pedestrian safety and encourage safer driving behavior on Carlin Springs Rd. The BCA gained approval for the exploration of intersection improvements along N. Carlin Springs Rd. between 2nd St. N. and N. Galveston St. through the

county's Arlington Neighborhoods Program (ANP). Proposed plans include permanent corner curb extensions; an updated crossing at N. Harrison St.; and bus stop upgrades within the proposed project area.

Homeowners adjacent to specific safety improvements will soon be contacted by representatives of the ANP to indicate their approval/disapproval of the proposed upgrades. At least 60% of affected property owners must approve the project in order for final design development to proceed. The AFCA and BCA have submitted letters of support to the ANP for the project. More information on the history of the project can be found on the BCA website at <https://www.bluemontcivic.org/northcarlinsprings.php>.

Please note that survey crews are expected to be in the project area in the coming weeks to collect site information. Please be sure to be safe when driving and give them a brake.



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New Season at Lubber Run Farmers Market

By Cheryl Roesel

The Lubber Run Farmers Market began its eighth season on April 5. The market, in the Barrett Elementary School parking lot at 4401 N. Henderson Rd., will be open every Saturday, rain or shine, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon through November 22.

The market welcomed seven new vendors this year. Big Boy Biscuits and Good Company Doughnuts bring new breakfast options that will pair nicely with Harvest Hue's 100% natural, cold-pressed juices. For snacking, choose from several flavors of POPcorn Perfected, air-popped fresh at the market! Or add cow's milk cheeses from Village Cheeseworks to your cheese board to complement the goat's milk cheeses from returning favorite Faerie Springs Farm. New dinner options include Shawneehaw Cattle Co., with Angus beef cuts, and Tasaane, with lumpia (Filipino-style eggrolls) and other Filipino-style foods.


Even if you missed opening day, you haven't missed out on a chance to visit with some of Faerie Springs Farm's baby goats. Expect return visits during the season. The market remains a great place to shop for seasonal fruits and vegetables, potted herbs and garden plants early in the market season, fish and pork products, cheeses, sweet and savory baked goods, and a wide variety of prepared food and drink. Or just sit, sip, and chat on Saturday morning while listening to live music. Coming up: On April 19, the Virginia Native Plant Society, Potowmack, will be at the market with lots of information and folks to answer your questions about native plant gardening.

Due to school construction, no parking is available this year from the Henderson Rd. entrance to the school parking lot. But plenty of parking is available in the nearby Lubber Run Community Center garage at 300 N. Park Dr. starting at 8 a.m. Follow us on Instagram (LubberRunFM) and Facebook (LubberRunFM) for the latest updates.



Noise Alert


By county ordinance, work with lawn mowers, leaf blowers, and other outdoor power tools is not allowed before 7 a.m. on weekdays and before 10 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays—and after 9 p.m. on any day. Please respect this quiet time for your neighbors.



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can provide references.

Graduating Seniors Group Portrait

By Liz Vance

Kids. They have ONE JOB: To grow up and be awesome. And these Forester kids are rocking it! Now if they'd just slow down a tiny bit. Because in a hot minute, they will have turned 18 and graduated, and left for college, for jobs, for adventures yet unseen. And then they will be adults!! (Ish.)

And—as many of you know—every year, I want to capture that last moment of who they are before they head off in different directions toward who they will be. So, once again, we will be doing a High School Senior Group Portrait at the Barrett Elementary School playground. Here are the deets, as they say:

Date/time: Sunday, April 27, 6 p.m.

Place: Barrett Elementary School, the “big kids playground”

Who: All high school senior Foresters, past and present.

If you (a) lived in Arlington Forest at any point during your childhood, and (b) you are a high school senior, then you're invited. Seriously. It's all about the cohort at the playground. Did you live here in 4th grade and go to a private school? But you're a high school senior in Fairfax now? You're still in. Once a Forester, always a Forester.

If you know someone who used to live here who is still in the area somewhere, please pass along the



Arlington Forest seniors graduating in 2024.

information and invite them to join us. Also, this is rain or shine. If it's raining, bring an umbrella. We make it work every year.

(For those with younger kids, the Back To School Portrait for the rising K-6-9 kids will be on Sunday, August 24, at 6 p.m. That is the last day of APS summer vacation. There will be a reminder in the last Forester newsletter before the summer break.)

And, in the meantime, here's to the 2024 Cohort! If they are not home already, they will be soon! WITH SO MUCH LAUNDRY! Squee!! If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at LizVance@gmail.com.

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School Updates

By Samantha Bell

Barcroft Elementary School. The PTA hosted Bingo Night at the school on March 12 with pizza, snacks, and prizes. Dr. Duran, the Arlington Public Schools superintendent, came to visit the school on March 19 and met with the Student Council Association officers. The PTA is looking to fill several officer positions for the 2025-27 school years. You can email the PTA president if you are interested in joining the PTA board.

Upcoming events include Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week on May 5-9. Follow us on X and Instagram at @BarcroftEagles and on Facebook at Barcroft Elementary School PTA. You can contact barcroftptapresident2024@gmail.com if you would like to support the PTA or have any questions.

Kenmore Middle School. Congratulations to Octavia Knigge for being named the Arlington Public Schools Assistant Principal of the Year. Ms. Knigge is currently the assistant principal for 7th grade. Congratulations also to the Kenmore Wrestling Team for winning the 2025 County Championship.



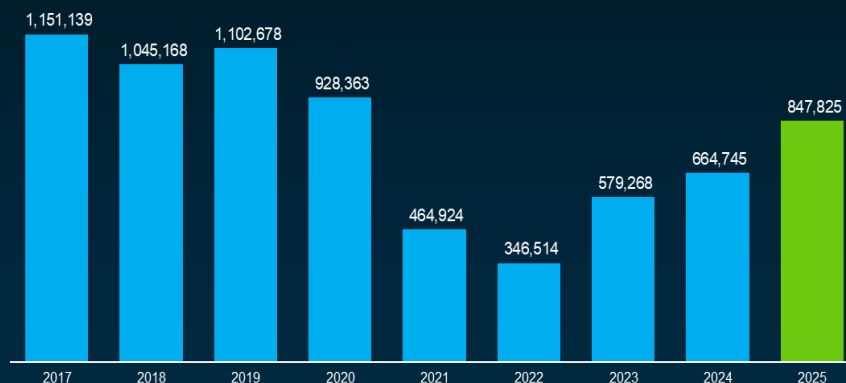
Upcoming events include Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week on May 5-9. In addition, the annual Kenmore Middle School 5k race will be held on Saturday, May 10, starting at 9 a.m. The race, open to the community, is on a USATF-certified 5k course in Bluemont Park; you can register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Arlington/KenmorePTSA5k>. We are looking for event sponsors to support this race, with sponsorship levels starting at \$500. Contact kenmoreptapresident@gmail.com if you are interested in sponsorship or have any questions.

The PTSA is looking to fill several officer positions for the 2025-27 school years. You can email the PTSA president if you are interested in joining the board. Follow us on X at @KenmorePTA or on the PTSA page of the Kenmore Middle School website at <https://kenmore.apsva.us/pta/>. You can contact kenmoreptapresident@gmail.com if you would like to support the PTA or have any questions; volunteers are always needed. Donations to the PTA are always appreciated at <https://kenmorepta.memberhub.com/store>.

The number of homes for sale this February was higher than it's been in any of the past five Februarys – and that's great news for buyers. The graph below uses the latest data from *Realtor.com* to show the supply of homes on the market has grown by 27.5% in just the last year throughout the US. Put *my 40 years of local real estate experience* in your neighborhood to work for you. We can discuss your situation, questions and best options.

There Are More Homes for Sale Than in Recent Years

Active Listing Count, February of Each Year



Source: Realtor.com



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News Bits

New Traffic Signal

Since completion of the new Lubber Run Community Center in 2020, the intersection of N. George Mason Dr. with N. Park Dr. in Arlington Forest has seen an uptick in crashes. Arlington County has installed a new four-way traffic light at the intersection, with plans for finalizing it this spring. The intersection is also getting curb extensions on all corners, increased street lighting, and marked crosswalks.

Spring Celebration on April 19

Get ready for Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 25) at the annual Spring Celebration and Plant Sale at the Glencarlyn Library Garden on Saturday, April 19, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nature-related activities and products will be available, sponsored by the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia. An educational tree walk will start at 1 p.m., and the Small Trees Make Big Canopies program will be giving away saplings during the event.

Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale

You will find native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade! Ten or eleven vendors from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania will be at this annual event, the largest native plant sale in the metropolitan region. It's on Saturday, April 26, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the parking lot of The Church of St. Clement at 1701 N. Quaker Lane. Parking in Christ the King's parking lot, across the street on Oakcrest, will be allowed this spring. Vendors are listed on the sale website at www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org.

Arlington Deer Drone Survey

The Department of Parks and Recreation conducted its second deer population aerial drone survey on March 17-21. The data will guide the county's deer management strategies, reducing overpopulation and protecting native plant communities. The survey covered all of Arlington except for Federal lands. Technologies included thermal imaging, visual spectrum imagery, and GPS for precise data collection. The Federal Aviation Administration and other federal agencies reviewed and approved the survey, which used low-resolution imagery to ensure privacy.

Georgetown Assists Fired Feds

In March, Georgetown University began offering resources to federal public servants who have lost—or might lose—their jobs. Support includes scholarships for tuition reduction and career resources for recently separated federal employees. You can find out more online at Georgetown University Federal Workforce Transition.

Community Calendar

Next AFCA meeting: Wednesday, April 16, 7 p.m.

Lubber Run Farmers Market:

Open Saturdays 8 a.m.-noon through November 22

Annual AFCA Picnic: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Annual Yard Sale: A Saturday in May 2025

Lubber Run Amphitheater: Schedule due in May

Turnaround Day: A Saturday in July 2025 (tentative)

AFCA Meetings

Topics are tentative.

April 16, 2025: Pedestrian/traffic safety

May 21, 2025: Neighborhood picnic

Reporting Stream Pollution

With spring here, cleanup activities can lead to dangerous chemical spills into our local streams. If you notice illegal discharges discoloring streams in our neighborhood parks, you can report it at www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem. They will not be able to respond outside of business hours, but they will investigate and get back to you. You can find out more online at Report Stream Pollution Arlington.

Ravens Nesting Again

A pair of ravens has nested in recent years on a support for the Route 50 bridge over Four Mile Run in Glencarlyn Park. The common raven looks like an American crow, only bigger, and it has a deeper call resembling a croak. Though native to Virginia, ravens have a home range largely restricted to the Appalachians, so having a local nesting pair is new. You can see the nest from the W&OD Trail on the far support for the bridge, where you might also see the raven pair—and, in time, the chicks.

Dog Leash Law

By law, Arlington requires dog owners to keep their pets on leashes while out in public. Even a “good dog” let off leash in a park can be injured by cars, wild animals, or other dogs, and unleashed dogs can frighten passersby. Arlington's 10 dog parks are for letting dogs run free, including the Glencarlyn Dog Park in Glencarlyn Park (with access through the road to the Long Branch Nature Center); anywhere else, the owners of dogs off leash can be fined. Find out more online at Dog Leash Laws Arlington VA.

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